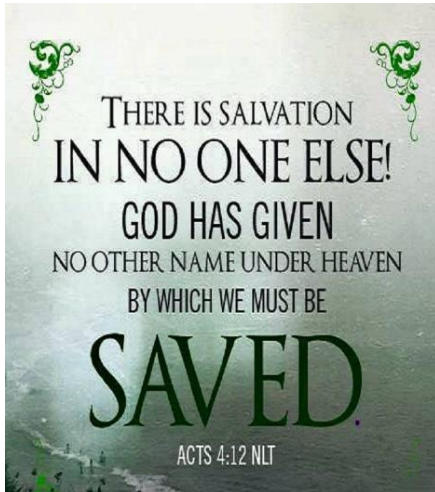


Guided by a cloud 22 (Exodus 13:21-22)

This week our family have been enjoying the very hot weather by the sea in Dorset. Naomi and Charlie have been with us so naturally conversation has often turned to weddings. Venues, food, dresses, and guest lists have all come up as discussion topics. So no surprise that my thoughts turned to the wedding in Cana told in John 2:1-11.



Worship time

[Come on and celebrate](#)

[Shine Jesus shine](#)

[I look upon the face](#)

If you were writing the story of Jesus and you had to make up a miracle to start his ministry you might choose raising someone from the dead or feeding thousands of people with one small meal. You probably wouldn't start with this one – it seems like quite an odd miracle and it doesn't really fit most people's idea of what God is like. Most people wouldn't go to a party expecting enough wine for three

bottles per person but, in fact, that is a fairly conservative estimate of how much there would have been based on the amount of water that Jesus turned into wine. Many people have a view of God that is more serious, stingier than this.

Also there is no sick or dying person in need of healing, no desperate and hopeless situation. Instead, some bad planning on the part of the wedding organiser. In the days of Jesus, wedding celebrations could last for over a week and food, drink, and entertainment had to be provided for all the guests by the bridegroom. It would be a disgrace to the family if there was not plenty throughout the time of the celebration. Jesus' first miracle is an act of completely unexpected generosity and extravagance, and it leaves the wedding host and Jesus' disciples stunned. John tells us that it is a sign. So what is this sign pointing us to?

The water jugs at the wedding were used for ritual purification and washing. They were there so that the wedding guests could comply with Jewish law. But Jesus came to transform the Law into something that was not just necessary, but joyful. The message that Jesus gave to the Jews at Cana he also gives to us. "I came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." Not just life, but abundant life...joyous life...life lived in freedom. This doesn't mean God promises us material wealth. It doesn't mean we are promised a life free from pain and suffering. It doesn't mean you'll never do another task you don't enjoy. But, it does mean, that when the water of our lives becomes wine through the touch of Jesus Christ, that life can have a richness and depth that it never had before.

Jesus changing water into wine is a sign that God is so much bigger and more generous than we often realise. That his kingdom is where he wants to bless us, to show his love for us in extravagant ways.

In the passage the change took place at the moment when the servants took Mary's advice to "do whatever he tells you". This passage is a challenge to us – are we willing to do whatever Jesus tells us to do and are we ready to be surprised by God's abundant generosity?

When has God shown up in ways you did not expect? How has he worked something good in your life that you could not have pictured?

"Cast all your anxiety on Him because he cares for you" 1Peter 5:7