

Notice the signs

- John 2:1-23

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There is something fascinating that happens very early in the Gospel of John. Jesus appeared at the Jordan River, the people began to follow him... and then, three days later [almost immediately], Jesus revealed to them his glory, via a sign. Apparently, Jesus and his disciples were at a wedding in Cana, along with Jesus' mother, and the host ran out of wine. It was a problem. But then, on the request of his mother, Jesus told the servants to fill six jars to the brim with water... and when they did that... somehow that ordinary water turned into the finest wine imaginable [John 2:1-11].

It's an amazing story... but to me it strikes me as a strange way to begin. Of all the incredible things that Jesus could have done first, for humanity, for our brokenness and pain, why that? Why not, perhaps, something slightly more necessary, or addressing our larger problems? But no, this was the first sign, the first glimpse of Jesus' glory. And the disciples believed in him [John 1:11].

And that was the point. The disciples believed in him. That's what Jesus wanted more than anything, every day – for the people to know and believe him. And John, in his Gospel, went on to record further signs – the day when Jesus healed the official's son in Capernaum [John 4:51], and then the invalid by the pool [John 5:8], and then when he fed 5,000 people [6:11], and walked on the water [John 6:19], and healed the man born blind [John 9:7], and the list went on. Jesus had authority over everything – sickness, storms, need,

terror, distortion. And in all of that, Jesus wanted his disciples to be sure, to believe in him.

And I think, today, wherever we are in the world – in the remote villages of Mugu, west Nepal, or the colourful markets in Kathmandu, or surrounded by the challenges of modern, western living... what Jesus wants most for us is that we believe in him. Believe that Jesus is the Son of the Father, believe that he's the one who was promised. Believe that he's the Lord over everything, the one who can save us and provide victory over death forever.

Believe... because at the time when Jesus turned water into wine, the greatest sign was still to come, and Jesus knew it, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days." [John 2:19]

And he did. The temple Jesus referred to was his own body, and later, after he had been raised from the dead, his disciples 'recalled what he had said' [John 2:22].

Like them, we also need to remember, to notice the signs, to fix our eyes on the glory and authority of Jesus, to deliberately look at him, and consider the whole story of God – the sweep of his grace, and the amazing offer of salvation that he gives to every single one of us.

So let's keep noticing the signs, wherever we are... because that's what signs are for.

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