



By Neil Smith, King of Kings, 11 February 2018

WATER TURNED INTO WINE

INTRODUCTION

Today we are starting a new series in the book of John, called “**That you may believe!**” We are going to be exploring the miracles in John’s gospel, sometimes called signs. There are seven of them, and these messages are going to carry us through to Easter weekend. Today we are looking at the first one – where Jesus turns water into wine. Now I’ve always been fascinated by signs. Like this one I found stuck on the inside of my backpack...

- **(Slide with emergency signs)**

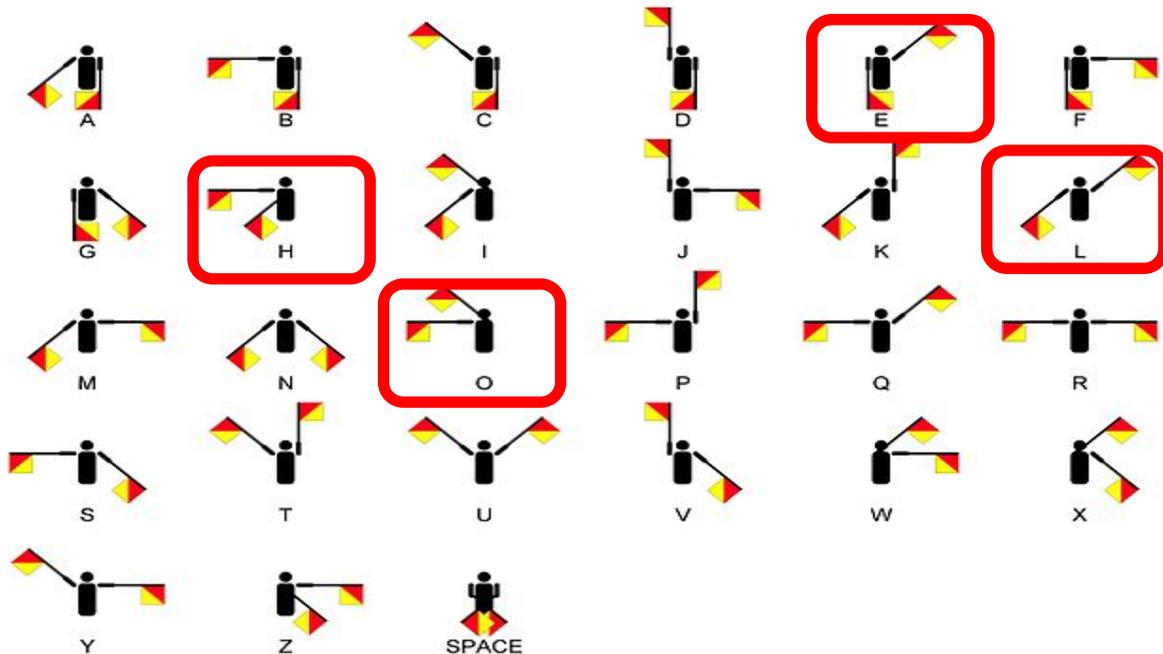
It gives you the basic emergency signs – or signals to aircraft. Standing like this “Y” means; “*Yes, we need help! Land here. Ja! Das good!*” Cause it’s written in German as well... Or, this “N,” means; “*No, we don’t need help! Don’t land. Nein! Nicht landen!*” Got to love the Germans 😊

I have also found this really cool way to communicate called Semaphore. Anyone know what Semaphore is? Well, here is how it works – there are signals... for each letter of the alphabet. And here they are...

- **(Slide with Semaphore)**

Semaphore is a way of sending messages through signs – “Sem,” meaning “sign,” and “Phore,” meaning “bearing.” So let’s give it a shot! Are you ready? Here we go!

“H-E-L-L-O”



Did anyone get that? That’s right – If you had no idea what was going on, I just said hello!

Now... can you imagine if I had to preach my whole message to you in Semaphore???? Crumbs, we would be here till next Sunday.

So this is a very old way of communicating.... But... while this a quite a complicated way of sending a sign... there are times in the Gospels that Jesus sent us a **very clear** sign of who He is.

Like I said, this week we are starting a series looking at the miracles that Jesus did - which are recorded in the Gospel of John. These were not just spectacular tricks... or stunts done to pull in crowds, but the bible is clear is that Jesus did miracles so that people may believe in Him – that they would catch a glimpse of the power and the awesomeness of God.

Interestingly, the word used for miracles in John’s gospel is “semeia” – very similar to our word “semaphore” it means a sign – a signpost pointing to God. So let me show you the verse in John that sort of helps the whole book to make sense, it’s from John chapter 20, verse 30-31. Listen carefully;

- **John 20:30-31; “Jesus performed many other signs (Semeia) in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written...**

(Right, here it is, here is the purpose of the writings of John's gospel – these are written...)

(Next slide with yellow font)

- **that you may believe** (There it is – that's our series name, that you may believe – and believe what???) **that Jesus is the Messiah** (Who is the Messiah??) **the Son of God** (And it does not just stop there, because believing results in a changed life, take a look at the last part) **and that by believing... you may have life in his name.**

I really, really like that. God's purpose... in doing the impossible, doing the improbable, breaking all the laws of nature that He created... is not for our entertainment or amusement, but rather so that we will believe... and receive life in His name... by believing.

So – let's take a look at this first miracle – this first 'semeia', or sign to us. And I really love this first one. Because it's so out of the ordinary. It's also got quite a funny dynamic between Jesus and his mother, Mary. Let's check it out. It's in John chapter 2, verse 1-12;

- **John 2:1-12; “On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”**

Okay, so just an interesting snippet or two... in our culture, most people get married on a Saturday. But here... it is noted that this wedding was on the third day, which some understand to have been a Tuesday. Scholars think that Jewish people liked to get married on the third day, because in terms of the Genesis creation timeline, on the third day... God said it was good twice – like a double blessing! And who doesn't want a double blessing on your wedding day!

You also see that Jesus's mother, and his disciples were at the wedding party. So many think that this was obviously someones wedding... that was known to them. Could have been family.

And to top it all off, Jesus's mother notices the wine has run out – and she comes to Jesus and says; “Jesus, there's no more wine!” I just love Jesus' response...

- **⁴ “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied.** (If I said that to my mom...there would be trouble! Men side note, don't address your wife, or your mother, or any other lady for that matter, as “Woman!” I'm sure this is one of those bad Greek to Hebrew translations! But Jesus says, why are you involving me!) **“My hour has not yet come.”**

(Interesting, nevertheless... his mom knows what Jesus is capable of, and so verse 5) **⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” ⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.**

Two things strike me here... the first... the line **“Do whatever he tells you”** from Mary. When you think about it. That’s quite a powerful line. We are going into a series about miracles, and let me say right up front, this is one of key’s to seeing God perform miracles in your life. **“Do... whatever... he tells you...”** You see, its real easy to pray, to give, to sing, even to preach and minister to others, to act all spiritual, but when it all comes down to it, you’re either doing what Jesus is telling you to do, or you’re not.

I want to challenge you to consider your obedience to Jesus Christ in your life. Investigate your life. Is there something you need to repent of? Is there something you need to step out in faith with God about? Yes, of course God loves our worship, our sacrifices of praise, but I tell you what he loves even more – obedience. Obedience is often the precursor to miracles. Let’s work on being more than just a great worshipping church, a great praying church, let’s be a obedient church.

Right, so then, here’s other thing. According to the story, near to were Jesus was, stood some stone water jars. He was checking them out. Here in Cape Town, they would have been buckets! Right? We’re all using the bucket system at the moment! We get this! Grey water from our showers, dishwashing water etc, used to flush toilets. And so you and I know, greywater is nasty water!!!! It’s got floaties. Yucky bits. It’s just gross! I guess ceremonial washing water much the same. Or even worse. Right, let’s just read on.

- **⁷ Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.** (Notice their obedience) **⁸ Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”** (Mmmm, risky... but...) **They did so,** (Notice their obedience again, despite the risk) **⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water... that had been turned into wine.**

Wow! Another thing Capetonians know is wine. Right? Well, on second thought, don’t answer that ☺. Wine. Now I don’t want us to get side tracked here today, and so I am not going to go into a whole diatribe about alcohol. I think we can all agree it’s a divisive issue. And I don’t

want to cause any unnecessary division around alcohol. Suffice to say, that I find it very interesting, that the first miracle Jesus does, is to turn water into wine. Now I know some of you bright sparks are thinking... Was it a Savignauc blanc? Was is a Merlot? A Pinotage? A Cab sav? I got no idea! And... that's not the point!

The point is... that it was a miracle, and, that is was a jolly good wine! Better than anything Cape Town has on offer, or France, or Italy, or anywhere else for that matter. Take a look at how verse 9 goes on...The master of the banquet...

- **He did not realize where it had come from... though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said... “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you... you have saved the best till now.”**

Like I said – good wine. The best. Once again. The point is not about alcohol, but it's about what Jesus can do. Also let me remind you of the biblical position. Getting drunk is living in disobedience to the word of God. That's black and white for us. No grey areas on that.

The bible says in Ephesians, do not get drunk on wine, but... be filled with the Holy Spirit! I've always thought being a pastor is the only job encourages getting drunk on the job! That's a joke people. That verse commands us to be controlled by the Spirit of God, and nothing else, no alcohol, no sin, no substance. So the word of God is clear about this. Verse 11 wraps it up...

- **¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.** (Once again, here is the whole point of the miracle – to believe in Jesus – the disciples believed, and it is written also, that you may believe. Verse 12) **¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.**

So there you have it. Let me preach a bit about this then... Point number 1.

- **JESUS IS GOD... AND GOD IS ABLE TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE!**

The first lesson that we learn in this miracle... is that Jesus is in fact GOD!

I remember when my wife and I were unable to fall pregnant, and I remember the words of a few doctors telling us the impossibility of us having children.

And I remember praying to the Lord one night parked in my car in the underground of Longbeach Mall. Very holy place that! And I said to the Lord; *“God, I’ve preached about you doing miracles, I’ve seen you do miracles in other peoples lives, and now I need you Lord. I need a miracle of my own.”* Well, it wasn’t long after that – that Shelley fell pregnant with Hannah. And soon after that God decided to throw Nathan in for good measure! My God can do the impossible. And Jesus’ mom comes to him because she knows he can do the impossible too! Verse 3;

- **“When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.” (and Jesus said) ⁴ “Woman, why do you involve me?” (John 2:3)**

Like I said, it is likely that this wedding was somehow connected to Jesus’ family and that His Mom, Mary was somehow involved on the catering committee. It was a huge shame to run out of wine at a wedding – the celebration was a weeklong event and it was a serious faux pas to run out of anything during that time- it would look bad for the groom and his family. But Mary knew who to talk to, to sort the problem out. She knew that Jesus had the ability to come up with a solution - she understood who He was and what He was capable of. He was capable of the impossible.

It leads me to this – where you and I find ourselves today. Let me say it like this, if Jesus could concern himself with the embarrassment of a wedding party running out of wine to drink. I think he concerns himself about your affairs far more than you may realize. He cares about you. He cares about your family. He cares about your children. He cares about your employment. He cares about your exams. He cares about your health. He cares about the things that weigh on your heart. And here’s the great thing – he is able to do the impossible. He is God. So don’t cut him out of your life. Cut him in.

If you’re here this morning, and you don’t know him as your saviour. I want to plead with you to make your life right with him. There is a heaven and a hell. And we all head to one of those destinations one day based on our status with Jesus. He is God. And he can do the impossible. Even save sinners like you and me. Put your trust in him today my friend. Don’t leave this service without doing that. But secondly;

- **MIRACLES HAPPEN IN GODS TIMING – NOT OURS**

I’m sure you’ve been in this situation – you need God to help you with something, and it’s urgent! And you need it and want it to happen now! Please God! But God’s timing is not our timing. In verse 3 Jesus made this comment;

- **“My hour has not yet come.”**

I realize that he was referring to revealing who he really was to the world, but it also points to the fact that supernatural miracles happen according to God's timeline, not ours.

Mary did not ask for a miracle... but Jesus knew that that was what she was hoping for! I am certain Mary was witness to things about Jesus that the rest of us have no idea about. Because they were not recorded in scripture. But I am sure of this – she had seen him do things that would blow our minds.

So in this situation at the wedding, it was important to Jesus... to see how this miracle would fit into the overall plan to bring salvation and forgiveness of sins – it was not just about saving face at a family wedding. Something far bigger was going on.

You see... the purpose of miracles or spectacular signs... are to draw people's attention to God – to make a statement about His power and His authority over all things. Mary was looking for a favour... while Jesus had His focus on God's agenda.

So often we pray for a miracle... and we do so like Mary... from our own perspective, not from a Kingdom perspective.

So let me remind you today - God is able, but He will only act... when the time is right.

But here's the cool thing about this story – the time was right! And Jesus did as Mary asked... and He did something amazing with water.

A water miracle. I think we can all agree we need another water miracle in our day! Right here in Cape Town. Perhaps we need to pray for the reverse miracle. We've got too much wine. So maybe we need to ask God to turn wine into water!

Here's the next thing I see in this passage though...

- **GOD DOES MIRACLES TO REVEAL HIS GLORY**

God doesn't show off. God has a purpose and a plan in everything that he does. And miracles reveal his glory. That is why the disciples were so quick to correct people who thought that they were responsible for the miracles. Miracles reveal God's glory. Verse 11 says;

- **What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee... was the first of the signs... through which he revealed his glory... and his disciples believed in him.**

The first of the signs that revealed his glory - Water turned into wine – And he did it mainly – to reveal His glory. Miracles are all about God and his glory – not the glory of man.

Here's an interesting thought ... it would appear, that the only people who actually witnessed this miracle... were the new disciples... and the servants – it seems the master of the banquet has no clue where the wine had come from! So once again, the miracle was not about wine, the miracle was about who Jesus is! He revealed His glory to the disciples – building their faith in Him... and also to the servants – can you imagine the gossip that went on behind the scene at this wedding! The amazement in the kitchen! Here's another amazing thing...

- **MIRACLES REVEAL A TRUTH ABOUT GOD (AND THIS ONE) THE FACT THAT SOMETHING BETTER HAS COME! (THE NEW WINE/ THE BEST FOR LAST)**

Jesus' miracle at this wedding... marked the start of His high profile ministry – He has gone public at this stage... and what was His message? Think about it... the master of the ceremony said...

- **“Everyone brings out the choice wine first... and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” (John 2:10)**

As I mentioned earlier, you had these ceremonial stone jars, with the dirty water inside. Like our bucket system. At Jewish meals...you always had these, not for drinking but for ceremonial washing – think spiritual hygiene rather than physical hygiene.

Later Jesus got into trouble with the Pharisees when his disciples did not ritually wash their hands before they ate. Jesus didn't transform drinking water into wine. The water supplied for this miracle was anything but clean. It was hand-washing water! Grey water. Definitely not the type of water anyone would voluntarily drink.

The funny part? Christ commanded the waiters to give it to the headwaiter, their boss! And when he tasted it, he proclaimed it was the best wine of the feast. Why did the headwaiter drink the hand-washing water? Well, John tells us the headwaiter had no idea where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew). I imagine the servants grinning as they handed the water to their boss.

I think there is a deeper meaning here that is easy to miss. Jesus' transforming the ceremonial water... that represented the religious enforcers of the Law... who Jesus bumped heads with so many times... was a signpost of things to come. Right at the start of His public ministry... Jesus put relationships above religious ceremonial law! It is just amazing that there is no record here... of a Pharisee or Sadducee having a melt down because of this

– but on this occasion... the revealing of God’s glory was for the increase of faith from the Disciples, not for confronting the religious leaders. What Jesus brought... is better than anything that has come before.

So let me apply this... maybe you have tried the religious way... maybe you’ve ticked all the boxes... tried all the religious formulas... the “ceremonial handwashing” if you like. Friends, I want to tell you today, that something better has come... Jesus. And even if your sin is as dark and dirty, his blood washes us white as snow. No dirty religious ceremonial water can do that for you. It is by grace that we are saved, through faith in Jesus Christ. So we must repent, and believe in Him. I will end with this.

- **DOES GOD STILL DO MIRACLES TODAY?**

I think that this is a question that many have. The famous preacher, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones asked the same question and answered it like this...

“It is perfectly clear that in New Testament times, the gospel was authenticated in this way by signs, wonders and miracles. . . Was it only meant to be true of the early church? . . . The Scriptures never anywhere say that these things were only temporary—never! There is no such statement anywhere.” (Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The Sovereign Spirit).

I believe that God still does miracles today. I want you to imagine Jesus looking at you right now. Just do that. Imagine him looking at you now. And listen to the words of Matthew 19:26;

- **Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible... but with God... all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26)**

So let me ask you a question. Do you believe that? Do you really believe that God can do the impossible in your life?

Let me ask you another question. Do we still need miracles today? Yes we do. Why? Because we still need God to reveal His glory, so that many come to **believe in Him**. This is the purpose of the gospel of John – that we may believe.

I also know that many of you are facing things where a miracle is needed. We need to see God’s power breaking through – in our lives, in the lives of family, in situations and struggles.

I want us to respond to the Word of God today... please stand.

I want to encourage you to come before Him my friend... in worship and in petition.

**Come before Him who has the power to do the impossible in your life!
Come to Him... just as His Mom did... knowing that He is able... and
asking if He was willing, if the time is right?!**

**And if God comes through for you... you just be sure to be a living
signpost for him.**

**We're going to have a time of ministry up front now... we're going to
play a song... and the next ten minutes or so we are just going to
respond in obedience to Jesus. Maybe you want to come to the front for
prayer... The team is here to pray for you... We're trusting God for
miracles in your life... Don't put your hope in a person... put your hope
in God.**

Let's pray... Oh Father...

**Possible response song: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-
auXYdMSGM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-auXYdMSGM)**