

The evidence is in the lives that the great Wine-Maker touches and changes forever.

He's still changing water into wine, isn't he?

That preacher was right - he's done it again and again and again...and can do so right here, right now...

Pray that that is our experience as we leave this place today; to continue the business of transformation of our lives, our church and our community.

To the praise of the Name that is timeless and the Love that is boundless.

Amen!! Thanks be to God!!

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A Message from Mark!
Wine Enough for All

17 January 2010 - Epiphany 2

Scripture: John 2: 1-11

When I read this passage I always think of that story of the preacher with a half empty wine bottle on the front seat of his car. A policeman stops him and smells the alcohol even before he does a breath test. He asks about the bottle on the seat and is told, ***“No, Sergeant, that's not wine, that's water.”***

But when the policeman opens and smells it, he says, ***“Reverend, this isn't water. This is wine!”*** To which the preacher replies, ***“Praise the Lord! He's done it again!”***

Isn't it true that the human body is mostly water? I'm not sure the percentage but I seem to recall that it's somewhere like 90%.

In an old episode of 'Star Trek' the aliens refer to human beings as ***“mostly bags of water.”*** Anyone else recall that?

We come today to consider the ***“water into wine”*** account of Jesus' first public miracle. I wonder if the miracle in this story and the whole story of Jesus is not that water is turned into delicious vintage wine but that in Christ there is a power - a grace - that transforms we watery human beings into persons like Christ himself?

For how often I have seen others changed from ordinary water into extraordinary wine - persons - filled with joy, selfless love, servants...Remember old Zacchaeus? What a pot of stale old water he was. But with a few words and loving acceptance from Jesus, he was turned into a wine that brought love and caring to all those around him.

I recall a young fellow I worked with during my years as a Chaplain at the APM packaging plant, Scoresby. ‘**Anthony**’ was a hater of Christ, the church and anything related to God. A foul pool of water if there was ever one. But one day, when he was in the middle of some major life dramas, the word of grace flowed into that pool...he was immersed in the waters of baptism and came up a person filled with new wine, a whole new person who eventually became a keen Christian youth leader.

The wine that overflowed in his life has touched the lives of many others through him who were once just like him. What a vintage wine God made of him!

There's a book called ‘The Kingdom of God is a Party’ by Tony Campolo. In it he shows how often the image of partying and celebration are used in the Bible to communicate the message of God's will for the world. He points out that the problem with so many human parties is that far too many people are left out. They are for ‘**me and my kind,**’ while the party-goers so often turn their backs on the hungry faces of people at the window.

By comparison, God's party is intended for all. Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 3 verse 28 is one of the most important verses in the Bible because it shows how inclusive and all-encompassing is God's love.

I quoted it last week and I'll quote it again: Paul writes, “***There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free; there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.***”

All are one.

And the party dreamed-of in the Bible -
and the party to which we're all invited -
has this about it . . . **it is for everybody!**

Which is why we who are God's people are called to work:

- through our sacrificial giving of money,
- through our stand-out lifestyles and parenting,
- through our economic and political and environmental choices

We're called to work and to live so that the day will come

- when all the world can come to the party
- when all the world has enough to eat
- when all the world has cause to party!

Because that's what God wants. In the beginning was the word. In the end will be celebration. Until the end comes we're called to celebrate in anticipation of what God has planned.

And part of our celebration is to spread around the goodness of God just like manure has its best use when spread around:

- to love our neighbours,
- to love strangers
- to do random acts of kindness
- to love even our enemies because they, too, are invited to God's wonderful party.

There is a great love at the heart of the universe. It's a love that God has embodied in Jesus; God's self-revelation; the one who reveals the glory of God. And the glory of God is humanity -- and the whole creation -- fully alive.

How I also have seen this power at work in my own life and the lives of so many others...a mysterious power. In spite of making many dozens of bottles of hedge row wine during our time in England, I don't fully understand the chemistry of how fruit and water and sugar and yeast combine to make wine.

Neither can I fully understand the wondrous, mysterious power of the words and love and grace of God in Christ that can make such a profound transformation of we mostly bags of water into vessels of overflowing wine. But the proof is in the tasting, is it not?