

1. The New Wine

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Date: 09 September 2012

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[0 : 01] We're going to have our Bible reading now, and if you would like to turn with me in your Bibles to John's Gospel, and the second chapter, it's page 887 in our Church Visitor's Bibles.

John's Gospel, chapter 2, and beginning to read at verse 1. Edward is beginning tonight a short series in this early portion of John's Gospel.

And it begins on the third day, and there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. I said to Edward in the vesture earlier, it sounds like St. George's Tron. It seems to have been weddings every third day or so at the moment.

But on the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.

When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, they've no wine. And Jesus said to her, woman, what does this have to do with me?

[1 : 05] My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you. Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding 20 or 30 gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, now draw some out, and take it to the master of the feast.

So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water, now become wine, and did not know where it had come from, for the servants who had drawn the water knew, the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, everyone serves the good wine first.

And when people are drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now. This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.

And his disciples believed in him. After this, he went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers and his disciples. And they stayed there for a few days.

[2 : 28] Amen. May God bless to us. This reading of his word. Let's bow our heads again, and we'll have a further prayer.

In words that we've just sung. Lord, give us each day our daily bread. May hungry souls again be fed. May heavenly food sustain us.

And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, now, over the next few Sunday evenings, my plan, God willing, is to work my way through the second and third chapters of John's Gospel.

And I want to give this series the title, Reasons for Believing. Now, you could give a title like that to the whole of John's Gospel, because that is what John's Gospel is all about.

John is presenting us throughout his Gospel. John is presenting us throughout his Gospel with the person and work of Jesus Christ, so that everyone who reads his short book should come to believe in him.

[3 : 36] So, before we look at this story in chapter 2 of Jesus turning the water into wine, can we first of all turn to chapter 20 and verses 30 and 31?

Now, this will be familiar to many here, but not to all, I think. So, it's worth us looking at this again, because in chapter 20, verses 30 and 31, John the Evangelist, the writer, tells us exactly why he has written this Gospel.

So, chapter 20, verse 30. Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, here's his purpose, so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

So, looking at those two verses, we can see that John has been very selective in his writing. If he'd written down everything that he knew about Jesus, he would have filled the Mitchell Library.

He would have had a massive amount of material. But he's chosen to record just a very limited number of episodes in the life of Jesus. So that, verse 31, so that you, the readers, may believe. [4 : 51] So, he's saying to us, I'm setting out reasons for believing. Believing what? Well, as he says that Jesus is the Christ, that is the Messiah, God's anointed king.

And not only the Christ, but also the Son of God. For what purpose? Well, there it is at the end of verse 31. So that by believing, you may have life, eternal life, in Jesus' name.

So, John, the book's author, is being very kind and very loving to us. He's not just saying to us, believe. He's giving us a whole raft of reasons why we should believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God.

So, if you're not yet a Christian, and I do hope there are folk here who are not Christians, and you've come here because you're interested. If you're not yet a Christian, do let me encourage you to take time and sit down and read through John's Gospel carefully and thoughtfully over the coming weeks.

It is one of the greatest short books in the world. And this Gospel has helped a lot of people who have wanted to see how they can be Christians, truly to become Christians, because it has shown them the reasons for putting their trust in Jesus.

[6 : 03] All right, let's turn back then to chapter 2 and verse 1, on page 887 in our big Bibles. Now, you'll see that John begins verse 1 with a phrase that you might easily overlook at first sight, on the third day.

Now, why should John mention a third day? Let's look back to chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Word, of course, is Jesus. Now, John is undoubtedly echoing the very first verse of Genesis there, where we read, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

So, in his first verse in this Gospel, John is making the point, linking back with Genesis, he's making the point that Jesus is as eternal as God the Father.

God the Father was always there, always. And Jesus, likewise, has always been there. And you'll see in verse 3 of chapter 1 that John makes the point that through Jesus, the Word, God the Father has made everything.

[7 : 11] So, in verse 3, all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that has been made. So, John is introducing Jesus to us here as the Father's agent in creation.

Nothing in the whole created universe, he is saying, has come into being except through the powerful working of Jesus Christ. Now, modern astronomers make the calculated guess, the educated guess, that the universe contains about 11 trillion trillion stars.

And John is saying that Jesus made every last one of those stars. All right, let's look on through chapter 1. In verse 19, and the section verses 19 to 28, John records an incident in the life of the other John, John the Baptist.

And then at verse 29, John the Evangelist writes, the next day, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming. So, we have an incident recorded for us there. So, we've had a beginning, as in Genesis 1, followed by a first day of events, verses 19 to 28, followed by a second day, at verse 29, and look on down through the chapter, verse 35, the next day, something else happens.

And then verse 43, and the next day, something else happens. And then at chapter 2, verse 1, we're taken to the third day, after the four days recorded in chapter 1. Now, scholars of the text of John's gospel can't quite decide whether chapter 2, verse 1, takes us to a sixth day or a seventh day.

[8 : 51] But let's not worry our heads about that detail this evening. What is surely clear is that this opening section of John's gospel is intentionally mirroring the pattern of Genesis chapter 1.

So, John is saying the creator father is fully reflected in the figure of the creator son. And just as the old creation reached its climax and perfection on the seventh day, the Sabbath day, so the new creation is introduced as Jesus performs his first creative miracle, the turning of water into wine, at the end of this new sequence of seven days.

So, John is making the point that the new creation is being launched, and Jesus is the one who embodies it and starts it all off. The old creation had been marred and spoiled by sin, and was therefore in one sense no longer fit for purpose.

But the new creation, ushered in by Jesus, is the glorious reality that will continue forever. And John the evangelist is inviting us to believe in the one who has brought into our old and dying world a

new and glorious and everlasting quality of life.

So, this first story, chapter 2, verses 1 to 11, records the coming of the new wine. The next section, that's really the second half of chapter 2, is about Jesus as the new temple.

[10:18] That's our passage for next week. And then the very next section after that is about the new birth, where John is presenting us with Jesus as the one who brings in this new order of creation.

And this new order of creation, John is saying, is glorious and real and eternal. And to become a Christian, to start believing in Jesus, is to become part of the new creation.

So, the moment we put our trust in Christ, our identity is transformed. We no longer belong to the old world, which is characterized by death and despair. We're born again into a new order, the eternal kingdom of God, where life and joy and peace prevail, and where sin and suffering have no place.

Now, human beings, whether Christians or not, instinctively long for a new and better order. And that longing is expressed in our big utopian dreams of a reordered society, including the big political utopian dreams that people have.

But equally, it's expressed in our much smaller and more local aspirations. So, for example, a school gets a new head teacher, and everyone looks for an improved school with better results.

[11:37] Or even at home, you might buy a new cooker in the hope that the chips are going to taste better. You might even buy a new goldfish when the old one floats to the top of the tank and says to you that it can take no more.

Now, these little new beginnings, whether they're local ones like that or big political things, they can do no more than bring about a short-lived improvement. So the new head teacher comes and may indeed improve the school, but eventually he or she has to go.

The new cooker eventually breaks down. Even the new goldfish finally develops a hacking cough and goes the way of the old one. But by contrast, the new order brought in by Jesus is truly the regeneration of the creation.

And John the Evangelist and all the Bible writers are urging us and pressing us to become members of the new creation by putting our trust in Jesus, who has the power to recreate human lives.

Now, of course, we who are Christians, we have to endure weakness and pain and death because we're still involved in the old world. But every Christian has received a promise from Jesus that we shall be raised up at the last day, that the power of death will be broken for us and we shall enjoy eternal life in God's glorious kingdom.

[13:04] To believe in Jesus is to be assured of eternal life with him. The gospel is a promise about the big future. Now, all that about the new creation, that is the great truth that underlies every story and every event in John's gospel.

John is presenting us with the person of Jesus so that we should believe in him and thus enjoy eternal life. Well, let's turn more to this text now and this account of the wedding in the small town of Cana.

Cana lay, I guess, still lies, something like eight miles north of Nazareth in Galilee. Nazareth, of course, was where Jesus was brought up. So Jesus and his mother and his family would have known the family or families who were involved in this wedding.

It's even possible that Jesus' mother was part of the catering team because when the wine runs out, she seems to feel a certain sense of responsibility for the problem.

She doesn't just sit at the side of the hall and wait for somebody else to move. She makes a move herself. Now, let's notice three things then about this incident, this wedding.

[14:14] First, Jesus meets an embarrassing problem and that is the sudden shortage of wine. Now, we need to bear two things in mind about first century Jewish weddings so we can understand what's going on here.

The first is that wedding celebrations in that culture could last for several days even as long as a week. Now, in our culture, a wedding is all done and dusted in one day, isn't it?

And I don't suggest that we necessarily alter things. I think one day is probably quite enough. But in those days, there would have been several days of feasting and rejoicing and therefore, a great deal of catering was required.

But the second thing is that the bridegroom was financially responsible for all the supplies of food and drink. Again, our custom today puts it the other way around. It's the bride's family who are responsible and responsible for paying as well.

But in first century Israel, it was the groom who carried the financial can. And it would be not only embarrassing, it would be extremely shameful. This was a shame culture.

[15:20] Very shaming to the groom if he failed to supply enough food and drink. This point about the bridegroom being responsible for the supplies comes out in this story at verses 9 and 10.

Because when the master of the feast, I guess you might call him the head waiter, who would be employed by the bridegroom to oversee the meals, this man comes to the bridegroom and he says, normally, people serve the good wine first and then bring out the poor wine when everyone's palate is what you might call rather jaded.

But you have kept the best wine until now. See, he's the responsible one, the groom. So to go back to verse 3, when the wine is discovered to have run out, the person who is in danger of ending up with hot water, in hot water, is the bridegroom.

And Jesus' mother, feeling a certain anxiety and responsibility for the situation, turns to Jesus and says to him very simply, they have no wine.

Now the fact that she says they have no wine doesn't necessarily imply that she was asking him or expecting him to perform a miracle. After all, he hadn't performed a miracle up to this point.

[16:34] This was his first miracle. It's not as though he had form as a miracle worker. Probably she turns to him because he was the responsible and capable young son.

He knew, he was the sort of person who knew how to sort out problems. It can be very useful in a family if you've got someone like that. In our household, we're rather like that. In our house, we have a computer which is used by every member of the family except for one.

That's me. And this computer, as all computers do, goes wrong from time to time. And our eldest son, who's now 30, is very good with computers and he's pretty resourceful at fixing them.

So if he happens to be visiting and staying for holiday, his mother will say to him, Henry, could you please look at the computer and sort it out? See if you can fix the little problem. And he sits down and he taps away at the keys for 10 minutes and moves the mouse about and makes it squeak.

And then he turns to his mother and he says, it's okay, mom, I've fixed it. So that's a case of mother turning to the capable eldest son for practical help. And that's almost certainly what's going on here.

[17:40] Jesus, says Mary, the wine's run out. What are we going to do? And she obviously trusts that he'll manage the situation in the best possible way. because she says to the servants in verse five, make sure you do whatever he tells you.

So she trusts his judgment. But it's his reply to her in verse four, which is so interesting and frankly, so unexpected.

Look with me at verse four. Woman, he says, woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. Is he talking Greek, Sanskrit, or outer Mongolian?

I mean, what are we supposed to make of that? A very interesting verse. I don't pretend to understand it fully, but let me at least make a stab at it. First of all, this word woman, it sounds a bit rude to our ears and rather discourteous.

But apparently, that was a perfectly polite way of speaking to your mother in the ancient world. It's not a cozy, cuddly term like mummy, but it's thoroughly polite. Think of the way in which well-brought-up children in the southern states of the United States of America will sometimes say to their mother, certainly ma'am, I'll do that for you ma'am.

[18:54] It's the same sort of thing. But then he says this odd thing. He says, my hour has not yet come. And I think that's best explained if we think of Jesus' determined focus on the big goal of his coming to earth, which was the cross and the resurrection.

The hour that he speaks of here is the climactic episode of his dying and rising. And even now, some three years beforehand, it's filling his mind. John tells us later in the Gospel, in chapter 13, just as the Last Supper begins, that Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of the world to the Father.

And Jesus himself, at the beginning of chapter 17, just after the Last Supper, says in prayer to the Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.

So in John's Gospel, the hour is not only the twin events of the crucifixion and the resurrection, it's also the moment of Jesus' glorification.

salvation. It's in the events of his dying and rising that his glory is supremely revealed. Now, that's a very odd thing in itself, because if you think of a Roman cross, that's the most degrading, horrible, unglorious thing that you could think of.

[20 : 21] But in John's Gospel, the cross particularly, and the resurrection, but especially the cross, is the place where the glory of Jesus is revealed. So when he says here in verse 4, my hour has not yet come, he's really saying to his mother, the supreme revelation of my glory at the cross is not going to happen for a while.

I'm not ready for that yet. So I'm wondering why you're trying to get me involved in sorting out this problem with the wine. Nevertheless, I will sort it out, and that will give me an opportunity to begin to let my disciples know who I really am.

Yes, I'll work a miracle, and through it, I'll begin to give my disciples a glimpse of my glory. John tells us, just look on to verse 11, he tells us there why Jesus worked this miracle.

It was a sign or a signpost, an early indication of his true glory, revealed to those who had eyes to see it. Now most people, of course, would look at Jesus, and they would simply see a, n other young Jewish carpenter.

Just an ordinary young man with sawdust in his hair from the carpenter's workshop. No halo, no golden hair, and no blue eyes. We can be sure of that. But although his hour, the great hour of the revelation of his glory, had not yet come, Jesus was willing to take this opportunity to use this little local difficulty to manifest a little bit of his glory so that, as verse 11 puts it, his disciples should begin to believe in him, should begin, if you like, to step into the new creation.

[22 : 06] Well now secondly, let's move from the embarrassing problem to the extraordinary provision that Jesus makes. Verse 6. Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding 20 or 30 gallons.

Now that's a lot of capacity. We have something like between 120 and 180 gallons of water. A gallon is roughly five liters, so we're talking about six or eight hundred liters.

Now these jars standing there, they were not vases for wedding flowers, and they weren't storage tanks for drinking water. John tells us specifically that they were there for rites of ceremonial purification.

And in the context of a wedding feast, the water was probably there for two purposes. There'd be the ceremonial washing of certain utensils, pots and pans and so on, but also the washing of the guests' hands, so that they would be ceremonially clean.

So these six jars were all there to do with Jewish law and Jewish custom. Now Jesus says to the servants, the waiters, in verse 7, fill them up.

[23 : 19] And the servants, who've already been told by Mary to follow his every instruction, they go back and forth to the well, which was probably outside the house, until all six jars are full to the brim.

Now, says Jesus, take some, draw some out, and take it to the maitre d'hotel, to the master of the feast. So the servants obediently fill a few cups and take them to the head steward, who's probably by now looking very worried, because you can imagine the bride's uncle Alistair is sitting there with an empty glass, which he keeps looking at wistfully, and maybe even tapping on the table.

So the head steward hurriedly takes a sip, and he nearly chokes, and he says to the junior waiter who's brought him the glass, he says, where on earth did you get this from?

This is good enough for high table at St. Andrew's University. So, as verse 9 puts it, the head steward then calls the bridegroom over to him, and he says to him in astonishment, everybody normally serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine, but you've kept the best wine until now.

Well, now, what are we intended to understand from all this? I think one main thing, and that is that the old order of Jewish law and Jewish custom represents by the water of purification is now being replaced by the new wine of celebration.

[24 : 49] So, the implication is we don't need to keep on washing ourselves with water for ceremonial cleansing when we have a Savior who, by his glorious cross, cleanses our hearts and consciences and makes us acceptable to God forever.

The purposes of Judaism are now fulfilled. Judaism is finished. superseded. Any Jew who becomes a Christian will say exactly that.

Judaism has now been swallowed up by the gospel. Another way of putting this is to say that we're no longer waiting for the Messiah to arrive. He has arrived. Jewish people who are not Christians are still waiting forlornly for their Messiah to come, but he has come, and that's why we're able to celebrate and be filled with joy.

the Messiah has come, and incidentally, he's also the heavenly bridegroom, and this is why Christians can look forward so much to eternal life, which is pictured in the book of Revelation as a wedding banquet.

This wedding at Cana in Galilee gives us just a little foretaste of the joy and glory that awaits us if we belong to Jesus. The creation of all this wine here is not here to encourage drunkenness, but to give us a glimpse of celebration and the joy of being with Jesus in the kingdom of heaven.

[26 : 11] So John the evangelist, himself a Jew, is calling time on his own religion. He's saying something new and something better has arrived.

Ceremonial water is superseded by new wine. And he's going to tell us in the coming few verses that the old temple in Jerusalem is now superseded by a new and better temple and the old doctrines and attitudes of the Pharisees are now being superseded by the wonder of the new birth. Christianity is Judaism fulfilled. Christ is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets of the Old Testament. Now third, so an embarrassing problem is met by an extraordinary provision.

And let's look finally at an exemplary pattern set before us in verse 11. And this is a pattern which we are intended to follow. So here's verse 11.

This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.

[27 : 21] Now in a sense this is the key verse in these first 11 verses because in verse 11 here, John is teaching the reader how to understand the whole event. He's telling us here in verse 11 what effect the turning of the water into wine had upon the disciples of Jesus and by implication what effect it should be having upon us too.

The pattern shown by the disciples is the exemplary pattern for us to follow as well. So John is saying to us, if you have ears to hear, then listen carefully.

I'm recording this incident so that later readers should also come to believe in Jesus. I'm telling all my readers why Jesus turned the water into wine. It was not some conjuring trick to wow people and make them astonished.

Still less was it an invitation to the world to drink too much. Jesus turned the water into wine as a sign about his own identity. He wanted to manifest something of his glory so that his first disciples then and later disciples through the centuries should realize that they have solid reasons for believing in him.

Those first disciples who were with him at Cana at the wedding began to put their heartfelt trust in him because they began to glimpse something of his true and glorious identity.

[28 : 44] They began to see that he was not just a carpenter with sawdust in his hair. They began to see the creator of the universe displaying just a tiny touch of his awesome power.

power. Now when John says here that his disciples believed in him he's not implying that they understood everything about him at this point.

They didn't become professors of theology overnight. Far from it. And as you read on through John's gospel John makes it very plain that both he and the other disciples misread and misunderstood a great deal about Jesus even when they'd been with him for three years.

They were still very foggy and unclear about many aspects of his work and his mission. But despite all that the turning of the water into wine began to open their eyes to the truth of who Jesus was.

The truth that in the words of chapter 1 verse 3 all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

[29 : 47] The disciples began to see that this was their creator who fully shared the nature of God the Father and therefore they could begin to put their trust in him.

Now just look with me at the last three words of verse 11. Believed in him. Now it's not easy to bring this out in English translation but John's Greek phrase, the original phrase, literally means they believed into him.

And that tells us a lot about what it means to become a Christian. John is teaching us that becoming a Christian involves movement. A movement from one point across into another place.

It's rather like traveling by train from London to Glasgow. If you've ever done that journey, I've done it a number of times, you probably hear the conductor or the train manager saying over the loudspeaker system towards the end of the journey, we're now coming into Glasgow so please make sure that you've got all your bags and belongings together before you get off the train. We're coming into Glasgow. We've left Motherwell behind. We've even left Cambus Lang behind. We're coming into Glasgow. So into implies a definite movement from one place to another.

[31 : 10] Into. If somebody asks you in conversation, do you believe in God? God. All they usually mean is do you believe that there is a God?

Do you believe in the existence of God? Just as if they were asking you, do you believe in the Loch Ness monster? Or do you believe in the abominable snowman? But when John writes of believing in Jesus, he's not just talking about believing in the existence of Jesus.

He's talking about moving the whole of your heart and life, lock, stock and barrel, from its former residence into a new residence in a new world where Jesus is everything to us, king and lord and friend and rescuer.

To believe into Jesus is to move house, to leave a whole lot of stuff behind and to find a wonderful new home and new identity and new family and new companions and a completely new future, both in this world and in the world to come.

And all this involves trusting him. Now let me illustrate this in a very simple way. All of us know a great deal about trust because we exercise trust every day.

[32 : 25] For example, if you work in the city center and you go into Gregg's and buy a sandwich at 12 o'clock for your lunch, you trust the Gregg's staff, don't you? You don't send that sandwich off to a laboratory to have it analyzed before you eat it, just in case some brigand has slipped a little bit of arsenic into it.

No, you trust the staff at Gregg's and you eat the sandwich. Or if you're driving your car and you approach the Kingston Bridge, you don't, before crossing the bridge, demand to see the most recent structural engineers report on the safety of the bridge.

Not at all. You've often been over the bridge before, you hit the accelerator and over you go, not exceeding 50 miles an hour, of course. You have confidence that the bridge is going to support you. Let me give you another example.

I've brought one of these chairs. Let me just hold it up so you can see. There's this chair, one of these fine red chairs, exactly the same chair as you're sitting on down there. I'm going to entrust my weight to this chair.

As I look at that chair, I have sat in this particular chair before, but would you think it can take my weight? I'm not a very big fellow, but even if I were the biggest prop forward in the Scotland rugby team, I would be prepared to lift my feet off the ground and entrust all of my 19 and a half stone to this chair.

[33 : 41] I have confidence in the chair. You can't see, can you see my feet? I'm leaning the full weight of my little person on this chair, less than 20 stone, but it's all going on the chair.

Now, have a look at this Perspex thing here. It's a bit wobbly. Would I trust my full weight to this Perspex desk if I were to get a little ladder and climb up? Do you want me to do that? Good idea, will you?

No, no, I wouldn't, you see, because although this is a very fine desk and I love it dearly, I would not trust my full weight to this desk because I think there'd be an awful accident and the service would end in tears.

Why, then, do I trust the chair and not the Perspex desk? The answer is observation and experience. I've sat on many such chairs as these before.

They've always proved worthy of my trust. They have never let me down. That's why I'm happy to lean the full weight of my confidence upon them. Now, in the same way, Christian people learn to lean the full weight of our confidence on Jesus.

[34 : 50] What gives us confidence to move out of the old world where self is king into this new world where Jesus is king? Observing other Christians is a good starting point.

We look at other Christians and we notice how their lives are marked by integrity and joy and purposefulness. We see that they're beginning to serve the Lord and other people more than themselves.

We see a real change and that begins to arouse our curiosity. But even more compelling than that is what the Bible shows us. We read a story like this one where Jesus turns water into wine. We read the full accounts of Jesus's life and death that we find in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And we become deeply aware of the integrity and truthfulness of these writers.

We realize that these four evangelists are deeply persuaded that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. And as we read their books, we begin to see why they are so deeply persuaded.

[35 : 51] Why they've been given the confidence to believe into Jesus. And we realize that they are inviting us to do exactly as they have done. They're showing us the reasons why we too can believe into Jesus and lean the whole weight of our lives and our future and everything upon him.

And this story of the wedding at Cana, it's one of those compelling reasons. Jesus's friends observed him at work. They were eyewitnesses.

They realized that this was no clever conjuring trick. They saw the shock and surprise on the head waiter's face as he tasted the wine.

And they suddenly began to see that there was much more to Jesus than met the eye. They began to see that he was so much more than just another young carpenter. It was perhaps only a dim view at this stage, but they began to see a glimpse of his glory.

That's the word that John uses. They began to see that the one who is able to create 11 trillion trillion stars would find very little difficulty in creating a few hundred liters of wine.

[37 : 02] They began, as it were, to move house. They began to believe into him. So, friends, let me ask, have you done that?

Have you realized that it's time to move if you haven't yet moved? Time to leave the old realm where self is king. And be assured, self is a wretched master in the end.

It is time to move lock, stock and barrel into the new realm where Jesus is king. That's what John the evangelist is inviting us to do. And that is why he ends this story with these words.

Jesus manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him. Let's bow our heads and we'll pray. Lord Jesus, we do indeed accept and joyfully accept John's teaching that through you everything has been made.

[38 : 11] Without you was not anything made that has been made. And we thank you so much for these accounts, these true accounts of the things that you did.

Thank you that the purpose of them is to help us to believe. So we do pray, Lord Jesus, for those of us who are already Christian believers, that you will strengthen our faith and give us an ever greater confidence and joy in your ability to look after us in the world to come as well as in this world.

We trust everything to you. And we want to pray too for those here tonight who have not yet placed the weight of their confidence upon you. And we ask that lovingly you will draw them to yourself so that they may find in you peace, forgiveness, joy and the real purpose of human life.

And these things we ask for your dear name's sake. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.