

John 2:1-11 God's generosity February 15th 2015

Today is the beginning of our Lent sermon series 7 weeks –all the congregations and at Hebron too, looking into John's gospel at the miraculous signs he did. This will take us up to Easter.

What do you now about signs? What are they for?

Road signs are to give you **information**-tell you where to go-directions to Morpeth, school ahead, exit. Are there any signs in church or the Stable Room? to the toilets, fire exits,

commands to tell you what to –must go at 30mph, stop, give way,

warnings- falling rocks, slippery road, uneven road, bends ahead,

In John's Gospel we don't have all the stories about Jesus' birth or his growing up as a young boy, or his baptism in the Jordan by John but we find him already a grown man beginning his ministry and calling people to follow him and become his **disciples**.

Remember that here at Mitford church we are talking a lot about **being followers of Jesus, being his disciples**.

Bible Reading John 2:1-11 ask yourself 2 questions as you listen to the reading:

What can we learn about Jesus from this story?

What can we learn about being a disciple of Jesus?)

So what do we learn about Jesus?

- He's amazing-

Tremendous miracle- water one minute, the next really expensive tasting, top quality wine. Water used by the Jews for ceremonial washing that is turned into wine. This water was kept in large stone jars kept for washing.

30 gallons = 240 pints, which is **160 bottles** of wine, or 960 glasses, per stone jar.

360 4 pint/2 litre milk cartons Total for 6 stone jars, is **5760 glasses of wine**: a spectacular gift for a wedding party!

- So very generous
- Very powerful like God
- He's kind, thoughtful, not boastful-keeps very quiet-only Mary and the stewards know v9

- Jesus is working out what it means to be God's Son on earth-wasn't ready at the beginning to do anything-ignored his Mum to start with-very human Jesus

Adults- A sign in the gospels, not only demonstrates the truth of what is said but authenticates the one who gives the message, signs back up what Jesus is doing and teaches us about who he is.

Funny thing about the first sign-very few people initially will have known at the time, only later will people have talked about it-unlike healings or feeding of the 5000 really obvious.

What is more significant is the nature of the miracle-changing water into wine-**God is doing something new in Jesus.** Bringing changes for the Jews and the Gentiles

What can we learn about being a disciple of Jesus?

We need to ask_What difference does this incident make to our lives? It is from God's word which is to help us know about God and grow in our faith and learn to be more like him, so in what particular ways?

- Mary tells the servants to 'do whatever he tells you'. They obey the instruction, and so make the miracle of transformation possible. **How obedient are we?** Are we going to be generous this Lent or just dismiss it, not bother?
- **Jesus relies on us** now, as he did then, to do what he tells us and asks us? Isn't this how the Gospel will be shared and Jesus will be known? If we his disciples don't do it who will?
- We have a really big responsibility to talk about our faith, about Jesus, and not just church
- Have you ever thought, **others will benefit from our actions when we follow Jesus?** If we talk about him? the difference he makes to us, why we live like we do? When we are generous it may affect lots of people, if lots of people are generous, lots more will be affected.
- Jesus doesn't seem keen to start letting people know he is the coming Messiah, but he does it in the end. **We need to take up our responsibilities as disciples and get on with the task of sharing our faith,** putting ourselves out for those who don't yet know Jesus, even if the timing doesn't seem right, even if it isn't that convenient. When will it be convenient?
- **Generosity puts people first.** You have to give of yourself, give something away-time, effort, money, love, people's opinion of you, you have to put yourself out, like God did when he gave Jesus to save the world and die on the cross.

- We serve a God who is willing to change plans in order to offer a practical, tangible demonstration of compassion to others. As his disciples, wanting to be more like him, what could this mean for us?
- If God in His generosity would change for us, **are we willing to change for Him?**
- Are we held back by fear, insecurity, doubt, pride? **How much are we willing to trust** in Him, as Mary did?
- Are we willing to believe that God can change us or **do we need to rethink some of our notions about what God can and cannot do through us?** What do we need to let go of in order to be transformed?
- **Will we allow others to encourage us to act generously,** and will we do the same?
- Do you sometimes feel there's a lack of transformation going on around us, well perhaps **we need to make the first move,** trusting that more will follow.
- What situations will you face within the next few days **where you could be used by God to pour out His loving generosity to others?**
- All of us are tools to be used by God; all of us have the potential to express His love and generous care for others.
- So this week and in the weeks to come let's focus on the ways in which God can use our attempts at generosity to bring people into contact with His generous love-let's do it and do it together

Going to have communion soon, where we see God's generosity towards us so clearly expressed in Jesus death for us. Can we thank him for his generosity as we receive it and commit ourselves to be channels of his generosity this Lent and if there is something stopping you do this then as you approach the communion rails consciously bring it to God, as you kneel down, offer it to him and ask him to lift it off your hands as you open them up to receive communion and to then fill your empty hands with his generous love and holy Spirit. Amen