

Scripture: John 2:1-11.

Text: John 2:11b -- "and his disciples believed on him."

Theme: Jesus and His Miracles.

PROPOSITION: Belief in Jesus can be strengthened by belief in the miracles and signs which he performed, but these should not be the chief basis upon which faith ^{rests} in him rests. to base

Date written: Jan. 14, 1955.

Dates and places used:

1/16/1955 - Wheatland, Wyo.

9/29/1957 -- Grace, Cheyenne, Wyo.

6/19/1960 - Wyo ARNG, Guernsey, Wyo

6/26/1960 - Sheridan, Wyo.

1/23/1966 Blanca & Alamosa, Wyo.

2/21/68 - Arroyo, Colo.

1-3-71 - Oakland Park, Fla.

John 2:1-11

Text: John 2:11b -- "and his
disciples believed on him"

Theme: Jesus and His Miracles

PROPOSITION: Belief in Jesus can
be strengthened by belief in the
miracles and signs which he per-
formed; but these should not be
the chief basis upon which faith
is based.

Date written: Jan. 14, 1955

Dates and places used

- 1/15/1955 - Wheatland, Wyo.
- 1/20/1957 -- Grace, Cheyenne, Wyo.
- 1/19/1960 - Wyo ARMC, Gering, Wyo.
- 1/20/1960 - Sheridan, Wyo.
- 1/23/1966 Blanca & Alamosa, Wyo.

Sperry - Cheyenne, Wyo.
1-2-55 - Wheatland, Wyo.

2 1. ~~In~~ the marriage ceremony of our church, ~~which~~ is similar to that of many other denominations, ~~are~~ the words "which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence in Cana of Galilee." This attendance by Jesus at a wedding has been used in Christian teaching not only to point up Christ's approval of marriage, but to stress the importance of his "miracles," because it was at this wedding that he performed the first recorded miracle.

2. In the last verse of the Scripture that we read today, John's comment "and his disciples believed in him," indicates that John's own belief in Jesus rested upon this and other miracles, and that he clearly thought the belief in Jesus by the rest of the first disciples was because of the miracles.

3. Many people today, particularly the Roman Catholics and ~~the~~ very conservative members of Protestantism, insist that the miracles of Jesus are necessary to a meaningful belief in him.

2. In the marriage ceremony of our church, wine is similar to that of many other denominations, and the words "which holy estate Christ abhorred and beautified with His presence in Cana of Galilee." This attendance by Jesus at a wedding has been used in Christian teaching not only to point up Christ's approval of marriage, but to stress the importance of His "miracles," because it was at this wedding that He performed the first recorded miracle.

3. In the last verse of the Scripture that we read today, John's comment "and his disciples believed in him," indicates that John's own belief in Jesus rested upon this and other miracles, and that He clearly thought the belief in Jesus by the rest of the first disciples was because of the miracles.

4. Many people today, particularly the Roman Catholics and the very conservative members of Protestantism, insist that the miracles of Jesus are necessary to a meaningful belief in Him.

4. Do you believe in Jesus chiefly because of the miracles which He performed? If not, upon what do you base your belief in Him?

5. We shall attempt to examine this Scripture, John 2:1-11, perhaps using pertinent passages from the other 3 gospels, to find just what place the miracles do hold in a sensible Christian faith. You may not agree with me, and that is your right. But if you disagree, or agree, with conviction, then you probably are concerned and thinking about the nature of Christian faith -- and the purpose of this sermon will have been accomplished.

I. Jesus was interested in those things that mean much to the average person.

1. He and his disciples were invited to attend the wedding -- they didn't crash the party.

2. Perhaps he attended it partly to please his mother, for John says "and his mother was there."

Q. Do you believe in Jesus
 chiefly because of the miracles
 which he performed? If not upon
 what do you base your belief in
 him?

A. We shall attempt to examine
 this Scripture, John 2:1-11, perhaps
 using pertinent passages from the
 other 3 gospels, to find just what
 place the miracles do hold in a
 sensible Christian faith. You may
 not agree with me, and that is your
 right. But if you disagree, or
 agree, with conviction, then you
 probably are concerned and thinking
 about the nature of Christian
 faith -- and the purpose of this
 sermon will have been accomplished.

1. Jesus was interested in those
 things that mean much to the ave-
 rage person

1. He and his disciples were
 invited to attend the wedding --
 they didn't crash the party.

2. Perhaps he attended it partly
 to please his mother, for John
 says "and his mother was there".

3. Jesus was concerned enough about the good time being had to help it keep going, even though he really did not wish to. Verse 4 of our Scripture says, as Jesus' reply to his mother when she asked him to help, "My hour has not yet come." But he helped, and there was plenty of wine for the rest of the reception.

4. Throughout his ministry Jesus continued to show concern about the things which were of importance to people: about their happiness, about their sickness, sin, and sorrow.

5. The teacher of a Sunday School class, having finished explaining redemption from sin, asked "Tommy, what must we do before we can expect forgiveness of sins.?"

Tommy, who hadn't been paying very close attention, answered, "First, we gotta sin."

Jesus probably would have laughed with Tommy, then have talked patiently with him to explain the idea of forgiveness. Jesus was interested in the average person, and in that person's problems,

3. Jesus was concerned enough about the good time being had to help it keep going even though he really did not wish to. Verse 4 of our scripture says, "As Jesus' reply to his mother when she asked him to help, 'My hour has not yet come.' But he helped, and there was plenty of wine for the rest of the reception."

4. Throughout his ministry Jesus continued to show concern about the things which were of importance to people: about their happiness, about their sickness, sin, and sorrow.

5. The teacher of a Sunday School class, having finished explaining redemption from sin, asked "Tommy, what must we do before we can expect forgiveness of sins?" Tommy, who hadn't been paying very close attention, answered, "First, we gotta sin." Jesus probably would have laughed with Tommy, then have talked patiently with him to explain the idea of forgiveness. Jesus was interested in the average person, and in that person's problems.

whether they were large or small.

II. The miracles which Jesus did were done to help people solve normal problems in a satisfactory way.

1. The party at which this first-recorded miracle was performed, must have been a big one, for the measurements given account for 100 gallons of water being changed into wine!

a. The change was a very satisfactory one, for we read, "When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine and did not know ^{where} it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now!"

b. Don't mistake this incident as proof that Jesus approved drinking and drunkenness. The word which we translate as "wine" also means "fruit juice." Without canning or refrigeration, as was the case in Jesus' day, fermenta-

whether they were large or small.

11. The miracles which Jesus did were done to help people solve their problems in a satisfactory way.

1. The party at which this

first-recorded miracle was per-

formed, must have been a big one

for the measurements given account

for 100 gallons of water being

changed into wine!

A. The change was a very

satisfactory one, for we read,

"When the steward of the feast

tasted the water now become wine

and did not know where it came from

(though the servants who had

drawn the water knew), the steward

of the feast called the bridegroom

and said to him, 'Every man serves

the good wine first; and when men

have drunk freely, then the poor

wine, but you have kept the good

wine until now!'"

b. Don't mistake this inci-

dent as proof that Jesus approved

drinking and drunkenness. The word

which we translate as "wine" also

means "fruit juice." Without

canning or refrigeration, as was

the case in Jesus' day, fermenta-

action quickly changed juices into wine, so probably it was wine.

But wines fortified with distilled alcohol were not then known, as distillation was unknown.

Since the wine that Jesus made was so much better than the rest, it could well have been fresh, unfermented fruit juice, or at most a weak, tasty, non-burning sort of drink.

2. The second miracle of Jesus, also at Cana, concerned a nobleman from Capernaum who came to Jesus asking help that his ill child might not die. Jesus said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The man believed, and started home. En route he met his servants, who told him that his son lived, and had begun to mend at the exact hour that Jesus had spoken to him (John 4:46-54). A normal matter of concern to parents is illness of their children, and Jesus was concerned with such matters and helped.

3. Many passages of Scripture could be quoted to show that to solve satisfactorily these and other types of normal problems of

John 2:1-11 of which chapters 5
could be quoted to show that to
quickly

with such matters and helped.
children and Jesus was concerned
to parents is illness of their
4:40-42). A normal matter of con-
fessing Jesus had spoken to him (John
1:10) and the exact point
was that his son lived, and had
come to meet his servants, who told
him he was betrayed, and started home, and
said "I have lived", the
child might not die. Jesus said,
Jesus asking him that his ill
man from Capernaum who came to
also at Cana, concerned a noble-
man. The second miracle of Jesus

drink.
a weak, tasty, non-burning sort of
mented fruit juice, or at most
could well have been fresh water-
so much better than the rest, if
since the wine that Jesus made was
as distillation was unknown.
and alcohol were not then known,
but wines fortified with distil-
wine, so probably it was wine
which quickly changed juices into

people, was why Jesus performed his miracles.

4. The wonders of Christianity that attract people today are usually the prospect of changed living and of eternal life--satisfactory problem solving.

III. The miracles were the grounds upon which his first followers based their faith in Jesus.

1. As we've mentioned, John's conviction seemed to be based on this first and other miracles; and in our text he pointed into the water-into-wine incident as the time when the other disciples first believed in Jesus.

2. Further, in verse 23 of John 2, are the words, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw his signs which he did."

3. Jesus recognized this element when he said to the nobleman from Capernaum, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not

people, was why Jesus performed his miracles.

4. The wonders of Christianity that attract people today are usually the prospect of changed living and of eternal life--satisfactory problem solving.

III. The miracles were the grounds upon which his first followers based their faith in Jesus.

1. As we've mentioned, John's conviction seemed to be based on this first and other miracles, and in our text he pointed into the water-into-wine incident as the first time when the other disciples first believed in Jesus.

2. Further, in verse 23 of John 2, are the words, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw his signs which he did."

3. Jesus recognized this element when he said to the nobleman from Capernaum, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not

BELIEVE."

4. Many Christians today find it necessary to base their belief in Christ on miracles. One outstanding minister of the eastern part of our country, wrote, "A long time ago, before the word "modernist" had been invented, a celebrated modernist, Jean Jacques Rousseau, made a character in "The Vicar of Savoy" say: 'Remove the miracles, and you will have the world at the feet of Jesus Christ.' Our liberal friends have reached the conclusion that you cannot preach a supernatural Christ to college students of the 'modern mind,' and therefore you must build up some theory by which the miracles can be deleted from the four gospels. In other words, the liberals like Rousseau in his day, would bring the world to the feet of Christ by abandoning the miracles.

"But you cannot discard the miracles without at the same time destroying the moral authority of Christ as a teacher. The only Christ who existed was the Christ who worked miracles."

BELIEVE

4. Many Christians today find it necessary to base their belief in Christ on miracles. One outstanding minister of the eastern part of our country, wrote, "A long time ago, before the word 'modernist' had been invented, a celebrated modernist, Jean Jacques Rousseau, made a character in 'The Vicar of Savoy' say: 'Remove the miracles, and you will have the world at the feet of Jesus Christ.' Our liberal friends have reached the conclusion that you cannot preach a supernatural Christ to college students of the 'modern mind,' and therefore you must build up some theory by which the miracles can be deleted from the four gospels. In other words, the liberals like Rousseau in his day, would bring the world to the feet of Christ by abandoning the miracles.

"But you cannot discard the miracles without at the same time destroying the moral authority of Christ as a teacher. The only Christ who existed was the Christ who worked miracles."

IV. Jesus, however, evidently did not want belief in him based on miracles, although he accepted that type of faith.

1. At the marriage feast, for instance, he did not want to do a miracle because he did not want recognition yet as being anybody special. But to please his mother and his host, he performed the water-into-wine miracle.

2. In the case of the Capernaum nobleman, in a disapproving sort of way, as he agreed to heal the officer's son, he said, "except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe."

3. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus is presented as always demanding belief and faith before a miracle or act of kindness, and not as a result of the act of helpfulness. John, only, gives the acts as the basis of belief.

4. As final evidence that Jesus did not want or expect workers of miracles to be considered divine, he said to Phillip and the dis-

IV. Jesus, however, evidently
did not want belief in him based
on miracles, although he accepted
that type of faith.

1. At the marriage feast, for instance, he did not want to do a miracle because he did not want recognition yet as being anybody special. But to please his mother and his host, he performed the water-into-wine miracle.

2. In the case of the Capernaum nobleman, in a disapproving sort of way, as he agreed to heal the officer's son, he said, "except you see signs and wonders, you will not believe."

3. In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus is presented as ~~always~~ demanding belief and faith before a miracle or act of kindness, and not as a result of the act of helpfulness. John, only, gives the acts as the basis of belief.

4. As final evidence that Jesus did not want or expect workers of miracles to be considered divine, he said to Phillip and the dis-

principles, "I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."
(John 14:12).

5. At his appearance to the disciples in the Upper Room, following the resurrection, Jesus rebuked Thomas for demanding physical, or miraculous, proof that he was the Lord, saying, "because thou hast seen me, thou has believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." This is in John (20:29), by the same writer who in our present Scripture of today seems to plead for the necessity of miracles to convince one that Christ was divine

6. Miracles were performed by Old Testament prophets too, but they were not and are not considered the Messiah. When Jesus began his miracles, some thought of him not as the Messiah but as one of the old prophets having come to life again. Elijah even raised a man from the dead, according to an Old Testament story, but he was not considered God's unique son, as

works than these shall he do." (John 14:12)
do shall he do also, and greater
believe in me, the works that I
ciples, "I say unto you, He that

5. At his appearance to the
disciples in the Upper Room, fol-
lowing the resurrection, Jesus
rebuffed Thomas for demanding phy-
sical, or miraculous, proof that
he was the Lord, saying, "because
thou hast seen me, thou hast be-
lieved, blessed are they that have
not seen, and yet have believed."
This is in John (20:29), by the
same writer who in our present
scripture of today seems to plead
for the necessity of miracles to
convince one that Christ was divine

6. Miracles were performed by
Old Testament prophets too, but
they were not and are not consid-
ered the Messiah when Jesus began
his miracles, some though of him
not as the Messiah but as one of
the old prophets having come to
life again. Elijah even raised a
man from the dead, according to an
Old Testament story, but he was not
considered God's unique son, as

was Jesus.

7. We must conclude, then, that Jesus' divinity, his being the Son of God, rests on far more than his mircalous birth and his helping miracles. He was no mere wonder man.

V. The message and example of Jesus are the best reasons for faith in him.

1. He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This was Christ's message for practically every situation, a message which he taught by constant example

2. Phillip once said unto Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father." Part of Jesus' reply was, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and he added, "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe

was Jesus.

7. We must conclude, then, that Jesus' divinity, his being the Son of God, rests on far more than his miraculous birth and his healing miracles. He was no mere wonder man.

V. The message and example of Jesus are the best reasons for faith in him.

1. He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This was Christ's message for practically every situation, a message which he taught by constant example.

2. Phillip once said unto Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father." Part of Jesus' reply was, "he that has seen me hath seen the Father," and he added, "the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works, believe

me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake."

(John 14:8-11). Plainly, he considered his example proof enough, but realized that weak people in the art of faith might depend on miracles as proof of his divine nature.

Conclusion:

1. We have seen, now, that the miracle of water into wine, at Cana of Galilee, as told by John, and other miracles, as given in John, Matthew, Mark and Luke, took place in history, for people of these days were convinced they happened.

2. It is perhaps possible to explain these miracles in various naturalistic terms, as one psychologist tried to do in a thesis entitled, "A Psychological Analysis of the Miracles of Jesus."

3. On the other hand, one may accept the miracles literally from our English Bible, accept them as supernatural, and expect miracles to continue even in these days.

me that I am in the Father and the
 Father in me or else believe
 me for the very works sake."
 (John 14:8-11). Plainly, he con-
 sidered his example proof enough,
 but realized that weak people in
 the art of faith might depend on
 miracles as proof of his divine
 nature.

Conclusion:

We have seen, now, that the
 miracle of water into wine, at
 Cana of Galilee, as told by John,
 and other miracles, as given in
 John, Matthew, Mark and Luke, took
 place in history, for people of
 those days were convinced they
 happened.

2. It is perhaps possible to
 explain these miracles in various
 naturalistic terms, as one psy-
 chologist tried to do in a
 thesis entitled, "A Psychological
 Analysis of the Miracles of Jesus."

3. On the other hand, one may
 accept the miracles literally from
 our English Bible, accept them as
 supernatural, and expect miracles
 to continue even in these days.

4. Both of these views, and views inbetween them, are possible within Christianity; for a claim that Christ is divine does not have to rest on his miraculous birth and performances, but can rest equally well (perhaps better) on his teachings ~~and his example~~ *AND HIS RESURRECTION*

5. Belief in Jesus can be strengthened by belief in the miracles and signs which he performed, but such things should not be the chief reasons for believing on him.

6. The best reason to believe on Jesus is because he showed us God's love; because he provides workable principles for everyday life; and because his resurrection assures us of a meaningful, desirable and certain life eternal.

Both of these views, and views inbetween them, are possible within Christianity, for a claim that Christ is divine does not have to rest on his miraculous birth and performance, but can rest equally well (perhaps better) on his teachings and his example.

2. Belief in Jesus can be strengthened by belief in the miracles and signs which he performed, but such things should not be the chief reasons for believing in him.

3. The best reason to believe in Jesus is because he showed us God's love, because he provides workable principles for everyday life, and because his resurrection assures us of a meaningful, desirable and certain life eternal.