

Ken Wratten at St Luke's, Hollister  
 2 Epiphany  
 20 Jan 2019  
 Isaiah 62:1-5  
 1 Cor 12:1-11  
 John 2:1-11

Jesus' first miracle was at a wedding party in Cana. They ran out of wine at the reception. Jesus told the servants at the house to fill six water jars with water. When they poured from the jars, they found that Jesus had turned the water into the very finest wine.

John wrote that this was "the first of his signs". This was a miracle, but the important part of what happened is that it was a sign that Jesus had the power of God; he could change things on the inside. It wasn't just 'red', it was a very good wine. (Cite my using red cool-aide with kids...only looks.)

Consider if you walked into church dressed up like a fire fighter, or a police officer, or a nurse. Well, you would look different on the outside. Would you still be you? Would you be changed on the inside? No! We can wear a costume, cut our hair differently, put makeup on our faces, grow a mustache or beard, but none of that changes us on the inside."

We can pretty easily change ourselves on the outside;  
 how we look, or even how we act toward other people.

Examples: people who are sick / a friend of mine when he was going through a divorce – some will look fine on the outside; they hide their pain.

It's very difficult for us to change ourselves on the inside,  
 Like how we feel about ourselves, or how we feel about other people.

But Jesus showed with the example of the wine that he can change what is "inside"; not just inside water jars, but inside us too.

I have seen faith in Jesus change people who had spent time in jail:  
 who fight addictions; who changed the places they hung out, and the people they hung out with.

There is another message in Jesus' miracle in Cana.

Did you catch the details of how much wine he made? 6 stone waterpots x 30 gallons each = 180 gallons of wine!!

I have been to many wedding receptions, but I have never seen a need for that much wine... Jesus was being extravagant with God's power, just like he is extravagant with God's power when we are changed inside.

And then, HOW are we changed inside? The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter in Paul's letter to the church in Corinth is all about change on the inside, what it involves, and how we should properly handle those changes. Paul describes nine gifts that the Corinthian church was experiencing:

Wisdom – learning how to use knowledge

knowledge – a gift for learning, retaining

faith – this is a spiritual gift

healing – gift of being good doctors, nurses, pastoral caregivers, intercessors

miracles – ability to do unexplainable things – discover cure for cancer

prophecy – boldly speak God's will

discernment – not always easy to decide good/bad; truth/falsehood

tongues/languages – earthly and heavenly

interpretation of tongues/languages – provide meaning to others

People in Corinth had those gifts. We today have these gifts given to us –

“as the Spirit chooses”.

There is one final point to this issue of being changed; that is to realize WHY we are changed inside. Paul explains it is NOT to make us feel important, or even to make us feel good. We are changed “For the good of all”.

For the community,  
for the Christian church as a whole,  
for humankind

Jesus changing water to wine showed his power to transform things from the inside – just as we are changed when the HS comes to live in us. The gifts we are given let us accomplish powerful ministry for others; and to accomplish them more powerfully TOGETHER.

Jesus' power to change water into wine, and his power to change us, is a gift of abundance, of extravagance, of transformation, and of new possibilities.

Let us bless the Lord. ***Thanks be to God.***