

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 29th November 2009

Kingdom, Power and Glory – First Fruits

John 2:1-11



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Jesus went to a wedding with his mother and disciples in a small village in Galilee which nearly ended in disaster when at the equivalent of the reception they ran out of wine! What we have in John's gospel is probably Mary's account of what happened as Jesus saved the day and turned water into wine. Over the centuries many have asked what it was that Jesus was really up to! Was he just being kind? If so wasn't this a bit of a luxury! Wasn't he being a bit extravagant – I mean 180 gallons! Wouldn't he have given them all hangovers! Wasn't he being irresponsible! But these are the wrong questions to ask. Jesus wasn't just a kind man – he spoke out and confronted intolerable situations overturning the Temple money changers tables. He wasn't into saving peoples' embarrassment – remember Zacchaeus and Nicodemus! He wasn't into superficiality – he laid his life down! John tells us clearly what actually was happening read v11. It was a sign, a sign that God's Kingdom, God's Power and God's Glory had come!

A Sign of God's Kingdom – a Kingdom that embraced every aspect of life! – relationships, love, marriage, joy, anxiety, celebration – the whole spectrum of life is laid bare at weddings even more so in the time of Christ when the feast might last several days! Jesus inaugurated a kingdom that brought the love of God into the very heart of human life.

A Sign of God's Power - the power of Jesus to bring change and transformation is shown here. Nothing is hopeless for Christ. He has the power to utterly transform anyone, any situation, to bring healing, wholeness new life as well as new wine!

A Sign of God's Glory – Read verse 4 – here we see a reference by Jesus to the time when his glory would be revealed for all to see at the cross - the ultimate moment when heaven and earth would meet. With his death and resurrection the Glory of God is revealed for all the world to see.

In Matthew's account of Peter's Confession of who Jesus is (Matt 16:13 -19) Jesus states that the Church is given the keys to the kingdom of God and that no power of evil will overthrow it. Here at St Paul's we have just come to the end of our teaching series – Kingdom, Power and Glory - the concluding words of the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Over these past months has come an increasing awareness that today, we – you and I, our church, St Paul's - are signs of God's Kingdom, his Power and his Glory.

Earlier in the Lord's Prayer Jesus tells his disciples to pray "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Our mission is not just about 'saving souls' for future eternal life but the inauguration of God's Kingdom here 'on earth as it is in heaven.' In other words when people encounter the church they encounter a people committed to bringing about God's love, peace, justice, forgiveness, joy, hope, healing wholeness – an experience of God in the here and now, a taste of heaven! Here at St Paul's God has called us to Love Him, Love One another, and Love all in His World. With the renewal of our vision this past year we have sensed that we are being called to be a Spirit filled people, a distinctive people bringing change to our world, to our town, to our communities and allowing God to change us and new expressions of God's Kingdom have been growing such as our Children's and Youth Work, Café Church, Besom, preschool work with the Early Bird, Little Notes and Baby Café. New Leadership Teams are emerging and we pray that new buildings will begin.

The Beginning of Advent has been designated as First Fruits Sunday when each of us has the opportunity to prayerfully review our financial support for God's work through our church but this year as well as money let us give a fresh commitment to being a disciple of Jesus here at St Paul's of being Signs of Gods Kingdom, His Power and His Glory. Let us be **Passionate** about loving God **Committed** to loving one another and **Convinced** of the urgency of loving all in God's world. Let us take the words of the master of the banquet as he sipped the New Wine that Jesus made "you have saved the best till last" as a Word of the Spirit for our church and each one of us



Witness: questions to discuss

Before discussion, read the Bible passage and ask God to help you discern what the Spirit wants to say to your group. Consider one or two questions below – don't feel you have to use them all but do consider the key question! Make sure there's plenty of room for prayer and ministry.

- 1 What signs of God's Kingdom, Power and Glory have you recently experienced in your life, small group, our church? How can you, your small group be a sign yourself.
- 2 Do people from outside church experience a 'taste of heaven' when they encounter our life of worship and witness? – if not why not?
- 3 Pray through John 2:1-11 with your own failures and disappointments in mind – remembering that transformation only came when someone took Mary's words seriously "Do whatever he tells you."
- 4 Spend some time sharing and prayerfully considering "you have saved the best till last" as a Word of the Spirit for our church and each one of us
- 5 Spend some time in prayer making a fresh commitment to being a disciple of Jesus, of being Signs of Gods Kingdom, His Power and His Glory