



Jesus Turning Water into Wine by Brian Turner, used with permission of the artist

Epiphany 2 2019C

St Cuthbert's Tweed Heads 20/01/19

John 2:1-11

If one evening Jesus dropped in for a drink and a chat, and I had run out of wine or had none to offer, I think he would just go up to the kitchen tap, turn it on, and start filling up yesterday's empties!

So comments artist Brian Turner on his interpretation of Jesus Turning Water into Wine.

The kitchen scene, depicted here on the screen, is set in his own kitchen, as he imagines Jesus performing this miracle for his own family. There is a generosity here: more wine can be supplied than is needed for an evening's relaxation.

As we hear it in John's Gospel, the action of the miracle of the turning of water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana is practical and simple:

There is no fuss and bother

There is a need

Jesus responds to it

The wedding feast continues, uninterrupted

In fact, the miracle is not immediately obvious to the party goers: apart from the wait staff, no one knew what happened so the person in charge compliments the bridegroom.

In the painting, Jesus is seen in the family kitchen of the artist's home, at the sink, where much family life and activity happens.

You may or may not like the painting from an aesthetic point of view:

Jesus wears white – an impractical colour when you're standing at the kitchen sink, especially if you're dealing with bottles of red wine

The green bottles, like our green season in church, signify hope and new possibilities.

The 3 green leaves of the San sevier ia plant (aka Mother in Law's tongue; which according to an old tradition wards off evil spirits) represents the Holy Trinity

Whether the painting appeals to you or not, you have to admit it engages family life at its most mundane.

Hopefully, it provides some insight into the Wedding Feast at Cana and helps us explore it.

The use of a tap as a source of water, in our society anyway, symbolises a generous flow of water.

The other night my son Lauchie and I were walking the dog in Grafton at about 9pm. His phone rang, it was my daughter Chelsea ringing from our house in Brisbane where she was home alone.

A water pipe under the sink in an upstairs bathroom had sprung a leak, and was spraying water everywhere! Dad, what should I do?

"Take a photo of it and send it to me" – it wasn't obvious to me how much water was involved

She did this: it showed that there was a pipe under the sink that was spraying water everywhere!

"You'll need to find the stop cock for the water"

She didn't know what such a thing might look like

Turn your video camera on and walk around and we can look for it together

After about 5 minutes she found it, outside in the driveway, but it hadn't been used for so long, she couldn't turn it

So for help, she went to the neighbours who we know a little bit, but they weren't home

So she went to the neighbours on the other side who we don't really know at all, and she was home and could help. So disaster was avoided.

We complain about the council and utility suppliers but really we have a pretty consistent and reliable supply of essential services - if we hadn't been able to stop turn off the stop cock, the flow of water would have continued pretty much for ever, causing all sorts of damage.

Such is the miracle of which John writes in his gospel: Jesus ministers God's superabundance – *more wine than the guests will ever need.*

For the Jews, wine was symbolic of the days of fulfilment, when God's overflowing generosity and abundance will be known by all, and the "mountains will run with new wine". In Jesus, this fulfilment has come.

This miracle at Cana is the first of many signs in John that point to the divine nature of Jesus.

A sign is something that points beyond itself.

The water, the wine, the jars or the taps: these help us access the meaning of the story. But the point is not so much *what was done*, but *who did it*.

For the disciples, this evidence of Jesus' divinity moves them on, from their call in Chapter 1, to putting their faith in Jesus.

Life can be tough. You know that from your own life experience: you have to take the good with the bad. We need to be ready and willing to remain faithful when there's plenty of wine in the jar, **and** when its run dry!

Life is what it is, and we must live it as it comes, with dignity, courage and understanding.

The Wedding Feast at Cana is about how God's glory is revealed.

How is his glory revealed in our lives? Can we only reveal his glory when we're doing well? The miracle at Cana shows that his glory can be revealed even when things have run dry.

How do we reveal God's glory here at St Cuthberts, Tweed Heads?

Things are a bit tough at the moment. There are issues with this building: significant ones, and it seems likely that the building itself will not serve your purposes into the future. There is a small core of dedicated leaders, but you need more people who need to take on leadership responsibilities. These are serious issues for your church community here to face. I thank And Greg Ezzy for taking on locum responsibilities here with the particular commission of finding a way forward on *at least* these two issues.

The miracle we celebrate today revealed Jesus' divine nature and was possible because of the abundance / superabundance of God's grace.

By it, God was glorified, yet it also moved the disciples on in their faith journey to further glorify God in their lives.

How can we glorify God in our individual lives, and through the life of St Cuthbert's, right now?

Maybe you can help this community discern ways forward for the future, by using your leadership gifts here at St Cuthbert's, to help out Desley and other leaders as part of the leadership team?

What are the signs around YOU where God is changing the ordinary things of life into the new wine of his Kingdom?

