

Introduction: Pg. ____

Friday night . . . after I got the girls to bed, I opened up my Instagram and saw a picture of the Eifel Tower with a Scripture verse beside it. Read it, moved on and then I started seeing all of these images of Paris, with peace symbols and requests for prayer, so I quickly went to cnn.com to discover the horrific events that took place there Friday night.

The barbaric and cowardly acts of ISIS were a Heinous Atrocity. What were some of the adjectives that you have used to describe what happened in Paris? Sickening. Appalling. Bloodcurdling. Absolutely Horrific. Abominable Evil.

Why do we respond to these acts in these ways? Because it is right. AND because we were clearly made for something better, something right, true and beautiful. Something glorious.

I would submit to you that the way we respond to acts like these is because we are made to love that which is glorious and life-giving. Anything that reeks of the contrary, when we are in our right mind, should be repulsive to us. Anything that points us to the good, beautiful, and true – gives us life and animates us. It's in light of this reality, that I want to point us to . . .

“The Glory of Christ” John 2:1-12

Story: Read 2:1-12. This story tells us of the first sign performed by The Book

- *Weddings are a big deal in American culture, but Jewish weddings in the first century typically lasted for days. Wedding feasts could last for up to a week, with new guests arriving each successive day. Here we find Jesus, his disciples, and his mother, Mary, as guests of a wedding celebration in Cana of Galilee. It seems the wedding party, much like the ones you and I would attend, are friends of Jesus' family.*
- *Sadly, for these hosts, the wine was used up before the feast ended, and this was a huge deal.*
 - *Some have described it as “a social catastrophe.”*
 - *Hospitality was a supreme virtue in first century Israel, and that was heightened to the nth degree for a wedding!*
 - *It was “a massive embarrassment” for the groom to run out of refreshments for his guests. Additionally, there is evidence that the groom could have even faced a lawsuit of some kind for failing at this important juncture.*
 - *Not the way you want to get the honeymoon started . . . I love you, but I might be going to prison!*

T: It is at this moment that Jesus' mother Mary gets involved. :) Look back at vv. 3-4.

3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” **4** And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.”

This is a fascinating exchange.

- *Mary sees the dilemma, and like any good friend, wants to help. She obviously did not have the means to go and buy large quantities of wine, but she had a Son, who she knew had divine power to come through.*

- Jesus' response here sounds cold, even harsh, but that is a matter of translation. In Aramaic, "Woman" was a title of respect. It was like saying "Madam." or "Ma'am." It was a term of affection and respect.
- And why wouldn't he immediately fulfill Mary's request?
- Jesus, though he loved and honored his mother, was now operating on the timetable of his heavenly Father.
 - When Jesus speaks of his "hour" coming (which is recorded 9 times in John), he is referring to his imminent death by crucifixion and then his triumphant resurrection and exaltation over death.
 - So what does that have to do with a wedding in Cana? Great question! :)
 - Jesus knew he had to be very careful and selective this early in his ministry about revealing his glory to others.
 - He knew that when people began to see his divine power, which flowed from his divine nature, they would want to manipulate it for their own purposes.
 - For example, fast forward with me to John 6 - Jesus feeds 5,000 people starting out with five loaves of bread and two fish. Kind of a big deal. Then, the multiplication was so great they collected the leftovers that "filled twelve baskets" full! Verses 14-15 of chapter 6 say: **"When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!' Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself." (John 6:13-15)**
 - In spite of Jesus' concern, Mary, in faith, "said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' And he did. :)"
 - He told the servants to fill six stone water jars with water and miraculously, he changed that water into wine.

T: What does this story tell us about Jesus? Why would John include it? This story is all about the glory of Christ. I want to give you three encouragements around how we should respond to the glory of Jesus. #1 .

..

I. Revel in Jesus as the glory of God made known (2:11).

Verse 11 is the key verse for understanding this passage. In fact, there is no doubt that it is a key verse to understanding all of the signs Jesus performed as recorded in this gospel.

So what is a sign? Why doesn't John just say "miracle?" These are miracles after all. This is the beginning of Jesus' promise to Nathanael at the end of chapter 1 where he says, "you will see greater things than these." John uses a clever word that alludes to the miracle but actually points beyond the miracle itself to the greater purpose, a greater reality.

That's what SIGNS do, right? They point beyond themselves to a greater reality.

- College students: perhaps the first time you drove into Medford, you saw a sign that said Tufts University. Now, I suppose you got excited when you saw the sign, but did not stop at the sign because the sign pointed to something greater, namely the campus itself!
- These signs in John's gospel are a huge arrow, a huge finger pointing to who Christ is.
- Just as we had John the Baptist, and Andrew, and Philip, pointing to who Jesus is, now we have the works of Jesus himself, pointing to who he is.
- Specifically, signs "manifested his glory."

- This statement “manifested his glory” is programmatic for every other sign we will see in the gospel of John. You see a sign; you see the glory of Christ.

What does the word “manifested” mean?

- To manifest something is to make it known. To reveal it. To make it apparent. To show it off.
- And what was Jesus manifesting? His glory!

T: I do not believe we can understand who Jesus is, understand who we are, and really understand what life is all about if we do not understand glory.

Excursus on GLORY.

- The Gospel of John is a Glory parade. 21 chapters loaded with the glory of Christ. It is 21 chapters written to reveal the Glory of Christ. That is what we have here. . . .
- John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- When Jesus heals the official’s son and feeds 5,000 people from some crumbs and then raises Lazarus from the dead, Fireworks of glory are going OFF!
- What does Jesus cry out the week of his crucifixion? “Father, glorify your name.” (John 12:28) “Then a voice came from heaven: ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’” (John 12:28) Glory comes through suffering.

So what is glory?

- **The Glory of God is the going public of his intrinsic perfections.**
- Glory is the outshining of eternal excellence. Glory is the revelation of God’s infinite worth.
- Glory is the beauty of God and the majestic splendor made visible. It is (in the words of Sam Storms) “the external manifestation of his inherent excellence.”
- There is a scene in Isaiah 6, where the prophet Isaiah, receives a vision of the throne of God. There, in this awesome picture, you have angels declaring with their thunderous voices calling back and forth to one another:
 - **“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”**
- The glory of God is his holiness in on display. John Piper says, “The glory of God is the going public of his holiness.”
- The glory of God is the otherness of God. He is in a class by himself.
- This is one of the reasons I believe in the existence of God, by the way. Man cannot be (no offense to you & no offense to me) as good as it gets. God alone is in a class by himself. God alone is glorious.

When we experience something that excites our senses and excites our feelings, we should be reminded that we were made to experience that which is ultimate. Glory moves us because we were made to behold it. Idolatry is placing our greatest desires and finding our greatest satisfaction in created glories, but those created glories are meant to put us to the Creator who is ultimately glorious!

T: We see this further as we consider how we should . . .

II. Revel in the Glory of Christ’s power to effect change (2:11).

The sign Jesus performs here is turning water into wine. Let's talk about fermented beverages for just a moment . . .

- Jesus **miraculously changes about 180 gallons of water into wine. Big deal.**
- The Jews saw wine as a gift of God. Psalm 104 speaks of wine making the heart glad.
- Now, Jesus turned the water into wine as mechanism to honor the bride & bridegroom. He did it to enhance the celebration, but NOT to provide a means for the participants to get drunk.
 - So, perhaps, on a college campus somewhere or a amongst irresponsible adults: "Hey bro, Jesus turned water to wine. Let's get plastered. Let's get lit. Let's get wasted."
 - The Bible prohibits that. You may remember from our Ephesians series earlier this year, that **Ephesians 5:18 says: "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit"**
 - God prohibits drunkenness, so should Christians be wise when consuming any alcoholic beverage? Absolutely.
 - But should Christians abstain from consuming alcohol? Not out of any biblical command.
 - I know some Christians, out of a matter of conscience and concern for those around them, would prefer to abstain from alcoholic beverages.
 - I know many other Christians, including myself, who enjoy a sip to the glory of God.
 - Yes, I said that to make you smile, but also said that to make you think.
 - If you can't drink a glass of wine with friends to the glory of God, don't drink it.
 - If you can't have a beer with friends to the glory of God, don't drink it.
 - You say, how can you drink orange juice or fermented grape juice to the glory of God or coffee, or water or San Pellegrino (blood orange, is my favorite) to the glory of God, here's my answer:
 - Yes, gratitude. Yes, taste buds that are satisfied with God's created goodness, but primarily, I want you to begin to think of *every* created good as a window to see God's greater glory!
 - Listen to the words of Jonathan Edwards one more time: (I know I share this quote frequently, but we can never be reminded enough or understand it deeply enough)
 - **"The enjoyment of God is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the ocean."** - Edwards
 - Glory looks beyond the shadows to the substance. Glory looks beyond the scattered beams to the sun.
 - When we worship, when we glorify God, we through the world.
 - My friend Matt says worship is enjoying created things in such a way that you treat them as a window. You don't look at windows, you look through windows.
 - He says: **"Idolatry looks at the world. Worship looks through the world to its source."** - Matt Papa

- The world becomes your window for worship! Wine is a window. Coffee is a window. Pumpkin bread is a window. Regina's pizza is a window. The Pats victory over the Giants this afternoon is a window. The fall leaves are a window. Friendships - a window. Your wife - window. Husband - window. Your work is a window.
 - Don't look *to them!* Look *through them!*
 - To 'glorify God' is to declare, draw attention to, or publicly announce and advertise his glory.
 - I had to share that because there is nothing greater than enjoying the glory of Christ and living for the glory of Christ.
 - Jesus turned- water to wine to manifest his glory.
- But water to wine is not the main point. Remember, that is a picture of the greater glory of Christ's transforming power.

The master of the feast - the one in charge of the gathering . . . Was shocked! *Verses 9-10.*

- Good wine, at the end? No way!
- People serve the best wine at the beginning. Jesus serves this extraordinary wine at the end and he provides in abundance.
- John has a penchant for highlighting the spectacular works of Christ. They were clearly impossible apart from divine power. You need wine when you have *none*, how about the 180 gallons of the best wine to complete the feast? You have 5 loaves & 2 fish. I'll feed 5,000 *and* give you leftovers. The glory of Christ.
- He never gives a little. He pours out abundantly. You can never out give this God.
- So Jesus can change the physical properties of the universe, but there appears to be more going on here.
- With the picture of these jars of purification, that were used for ritual cleansing to uphold the law, we see to catch an allusion, that Jesus has come to replace the old covenant with a new and better covenant.
- Judaism is giving way to Christianity. The new wine of joy has arrived in Christ. The messianic age has inaugurated!
-
- T: Now what should this lead us to? Belief. Faith. Point 3.
-

III. Receive the Glory of Christ by believing in him (2:11).

When we see glory, it should press us to belief. Look at the end of verse 11, one more time. "And his disciples believed in him."

- The disciples saw his glory shine forth, and they put their faith in him.
- Have you seen the glory of Christ? Have you seen there is no one like him, that he is in a class by himself?
- Have you looked to him - in what he did for you on the cross and what he did for you in his resurrection - and said, there is nothing greater I can have than him?
- Have you put your faith in him? (Connect Card)
- He invites us all . . . Read Matthew 22:1-10.

- He invites us all, but not all come.
- Will you come and receive his invitation?

Here's the invitation today:

The Point: See the Glory of Christ, receive the glory of Christ, live for the glory of Christ.

Conclusion:

You are invited in the mysterious, unending celebration that is Christ and his glory!

- The kingdom of God is a celebration. There is nothing dull about Christ and his kingdom.
- We celebrate that which lifts us beyond the mundane. We would not stand here each week and invite you to monotony. Man, trash that! We are inviting you to an unending celebration.
- **G.K. Chesterton says:** "If a man says that extinction is better than existence or blank existence is better than variety and adventure, then (I have nothing to offer him) . . . If a man prefers nothing I can give him nothing. **But nearly all the people I have ever met [in this western society in which I live] would agree to the general proposition that we need this life of practical romance; the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to view the world as to combine the idea of wonder and an idea of welcome. We need to be happy in this wonderland without once being merely comfortable.**"
- And Chesterton says: this is the "achievement" of Christianity. The achievement of Christ.
- Jesus offers us something! He offers us something concrete, something stable and secure, as well as something unexpected, full of adventure and unanticipated joys. Just around the corner, there is life and celebration.
- Jesus, himself, is that celebration.
 - There are infinite depths of surprise, here, in him.
 - There are infinite depths of elation, here, in him.
 - There are unending duck boat parades, here, in him.
 - His is the victory tour. His is the reign of glory.

Prayer

And we will celebrate forever with him, sipping the new and better wine of the kingdom of God with Jesus.