

Coach House Church **BEACONS**

THE BEST ALCOHOL

3RD JUNE 2020

Every 1st January we begin a new year. As many of us will probably do, we sit down and decide financially what we can afford to do. Christmas bills have to be paid; mortgages have to be paid and most people, according to the holiday industry, this is the month that we book our annual trips away. It seems that lots of bills have to be paid in January.

Just as families have to look at how to pay for the bills, in the book of John we are introduced to a couple who have to pay for something else – a wedding.

More specifically, the groom has run out of wine. First, let me say something about this. The groom was expected to make the wedding a big event. They held a party, and lots of food and wine would be served. This was the custom of the culture. The problem here is that he had ran out. Either he did not plan for so many people, or the people who came drank too much. In both cases, the groom was really in trouble. It looks bad when the guests walk away and start to talk about the groom not providing enough food and drink for the wedding

Weddings are supposed to be about celebrations and feasting. But in this case, the party had just started and then he ran out of the good stuff. So in comes Jesus the Bartender. Jesus actually takes the water and turns it into wine.

So let's first address the alcohol issue up front here:

The issue in this passage is not about drinking alcohol. The Bible only prohibits the misuse of alcohol. As a matter of fact, Jesus turns over 180 gallons of water into wine in this miracle. This is enough alcohol to get them plastered. But they had already drunk wine up until now. So, if this really was about alcohol, then Jesus is approving of people getting wasted. He is clearly not doing this.

Because of this little dilemma, some theologians, want to either change the meanings, or avoid this passage altogether. Some say that only the spoon was wine, but the jars were not made of wine. Some say that the wine was just grape juice, or "celestial juice." But that's not what the bible says.

The problem with alcohol is not the alcohol itself but what the misuse of it can cause: drunkenness. Drinking alcohol is not a problem. Getting drunk and causing problems is a problem. The reason why many Christians try to abstain is because it may cause someone else to have problems with alcohol.

Let's also notice that the wine was filled into purification jars. Now these jars were very big. Jesus didn't fill the wine into the water jugs. He used the bathtubs for purification. These were the same jars used to fill the baths when they would purify themselves in the Old Testament. These baths were the "baptisms" they used in the Old Testament

Jesus is saying, not that you will be baptised with wine. He is saying that I am replacing the need for the purification jars. There is no need for the Old Testament rituals. You just need Me. The point I want to make in this passage is, its not the alcohol that's the key. The key in this entire story is that when Jesus provides for our emergency, it is not just enough – it is the best.

Jesus does not just give us enough, He gives us the best. Does this justify drinking alcohol? Maybe. But it more than proves what Jesus can do in our lives. Jesus did this miracle when the groom was at his end. There was no way out. It would be embarrassing to not have the ability to serve the guests.

Perhaps you and I have been at an embarrassing moment – when we could not provide. I'm sure some of us have an embarrassing moment we can recall when we couldn't provide for others?

Jesus is teaching us here that He can be the source of provision. When He provides, He provides the best. You and I need this when we are at our wits end. We need to know that when we run out of whatever it is that we have run out of – fuel, money, time, energy, food, etc. Jesus provides. When He provides, it is better than you planned.

You see often when tragedies strike or hard times engulf us, we ask, "Where's God?" In asking this question, we make the assumption that God must not have known what was about to befall us or else, if He were powerful enough, He would have prevented it. Or we assume that God must not love us, because surely if He loved us, He would keep us from all hurtful times and hard experiences. We might think that, but none of that is the truth.

This is the truth: God knows. God is powerful. And God loves. When we experience difficult times or feel great inner pain and turmoil, we usually try to assign blame. We say either, "The devil caused this" or "God caused this." The greater likelihood is this: the devil caused it, and God allowed it. Consider the Old Testament story of Job, who was described as being "blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1). Yet God gave Satan permission to "strike everything [Job] has" (Job 1:11), but not Job himself.

Throughout Job's pain and losses, however, God never abandoned Job for even a moment. He knew at each step of the way how greatly Job was being afflicted. And God was overseeing this refining of Job.

The good news for us anytime we find ourselves being broken is this: our God is overseeing the refining process in our lives. He sees the beginning and the end. He has a good future designed for us, and ultimately heaven awaits.

We can be sure that our period of brokenness is not the end, but rather, a passage and a process to a rich, new beginning.

The motivation behind everything God does in our lives and everything He allows to enter our lives is love.

God is never acting in anger or wrath when He breaks us. Rather, God moves in our lives because He loves us too much to see us continue in our sin, remain in a lukewarm spiritual state, or go unfulfilled in His purposes for our lives. God moves in our lives so that we might change, grow, and become both spiritually mature and whole in spirit, mind, and body.

God's purpose is not to break our spirits, but rather — and for our good — to break the stubbornness of our wills. He does this so He might effect His will in our lives.

A good parent knows that a child's streak of stubbornness and pride must be broken. The breaking of a child's stubbornness is not done to break the child's spirit, but rather, to help the child grow up to be a productive, law-abiding, generous, and loving spouse, friend, parent, citizen, and member of the body of Christ.

Just as a parent breaks a child's stubborn pride and willful disobedience, so God seeks to break within us the pride and disobedience that keep us from being loving, generous, Christlike people.

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

Whatever it is that we may experience and however we may be broken, God has a good end for us.

We must never limit God's ability to redeem even the worst, most pain-filled experience in our lives and turn it into something worthwhile, something that is good for us and that glorifies Him.

Regardless of the source of our pain, we must accept that God knows, God is powerful, God loves, and God is at work. We may not be responsible for what has happened to us, but we are responsible for our response to it.

So ask God to reveal to you what He is doing in your life — and what He desires to do for you, in you, and through you as the result of your brokenness. Ask Him to help you see your brokenness in light of His great design for your life.

The brokenness in your life is not the end of your story. God is doing good things. Worthwhile things. Things that are good for you. Things that glorify Him.

Jesus does not just give us enough, He gives us the best.



JAMIE BAKER



Coach House Church

leadership@coachhousechurch.org // 0161 432 5604
the coach house church, 222 wellington road north, stockport sk4 2qn