**New Kilpatrick**

**Podcast**

**22nd January 2023**

**John 2:1-11**

**Gathering**

It is not right to ask:
What is the miracle of Cana?
The only question is:
WHO is the miracle of Cana?

Turning water into wine

Saving the best till last

Watching a mother persuade her son

All miss the point

WHO is the one who turns water to wine

WHO is the one who offer the best, last

WHO is the one whose mother directs him

Let us make space for the one who is the miracle

**Welcome**

Hello… I’m Roddy Hamilton the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish… and thank you that we have made space for each other to worship today… So, wherever you are, welcome to the manse garden, which you have watched over the last few years grow and die back and grow again… It is cold again… frost everywhere… but snowdrops are appearing… If you focus in tight enough… you can always see a space for possibility… for turning of the seasons… of moments of promise… which is where we find ourselves today… the first of John’s big stories… where we gather at the wedding of Cana… and that tale of water being repurposed… and finding itself renewed as wine… It’s the way the kingdom works… but what does all this mean? … That’s the question John’s story wants us to ask… What does all this mean? … and who is the one who is doing all this?…

**Prayer**

Loving God

May our being together

Be a sign

Of that great feast

That great community

Of hope and truth and love

May our desire for you

Be the sign

Of the kingdom yet to be

Shaped by justice and peace and grace

May we turn towards each other

And be the sign

Of a more caring way

May we find the compassion we need

In sharing that with our neighbour

May the promise of God

Be lived here in word and act and faith

And may we be here

A sign

That points

Proclaims

Is a prediction

Of what your kingdom means

And will become

Loving God

Hear us

And forgive us

And renew us

And reaffirm us

As your community

Your signposts

To love

Lord’s Prayer

**Scripture Introduction**

This is John’s gospel… It’s a different kind of gospel than all the others… It’s written a lot later… more theology about Jesus has grown up… things are a little more institutionalised… but John is wanting to explore the idea of Jesus… who this person is… what he means… so everything has meaning…

The stair starts with ‘on the third day’… That’s not random… The early church will have immediately clocked something about resurrection and new life… It’s also a wedding… that great image of heaven… the great kingdom feast… again…. Not just a wedding… but a picture… a hint… a kingdom story…

So read this with ears open… to all the signs woven into the narrative…

**Reading John 2:1-11**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. **2**Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. **3**When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” **4**And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” **5**His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” **6**Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. **7**Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. **8**He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So, they took it. **9**When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom **10**and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” **11**Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

**Reflection**

I picked up a big book to read while I was on holiday a week or so ago… I didn’t finish it and I have less time now to sit down with it and continue reading it… and when I do pick it up… I’ve forgotten who most of the characters are…

If I was asked about one thing that would change the world… I would suggest that every book should have a front page… where a list of all the characters appears… and how they relate to each other… Or anything that reminds me who they are… because I so often forget who they are… especially the minor ones… who eventually play some significant role in the plot…

A list of who’s who… would be nice… Which is what the wedding in Cana is really about…

Think over it again… and what’s the question we ask most? … It is possibly… how did he do that? … or a variation on that question… How did Jesus turn that water into wine? … that first of his miracles…

Except ‘miracle’ is not a word John… the gospel writer… ever uses… There is a lot of focus on the servants… a lot on the relationship with his mother… but one simple line about the wine…

Because the miracle isn’t important… This isn’t a story about ‘how’… It’s a story about ‘who’… Who is this person who does this… Who does this is sign point to… what revelation is happening with this character… That’s what John is more interested in illustrating…

The miracle… if there is one… is just a method to get to the bigger question… WHO is he…

Which is the faith question in all of this… Our faith can often get bogged down in the how… How did the world get created in six days… How did the Hebrews cross through the red sea… How did Elijah set fire to the alter in front of the prophets of Baal… How did Jesus feed the five thousand… or cure the leper… or roll the stone away…

These aren’t faith questions… In some way they are the opposite of faith… trying to explain what happens… There is really only one basic faith question… WHO is that doing these things… WHO is the one this sign points to?…

That’s the question John is setting up for us… in this story… an introduction to the main character in his story… The miracle is almost irrelevant… don’t get caught up in it… or try to explain… or rationalise… That’s the wrong question…

The real question is… who does this sign point to… What is John trying to tell us… What is Jesus trying to say about himself…

Who does this sign point to… Too often we get stuck at the sign… and the sign itself becomes the object of adoration… like the cross… The cross is a sign… it points to something beyond itself… Cana teaches us that on almost the first page of John… about the main character…

May our faith ask the deeper… more fulfilling questions… WHO is this about… WHO does this sign point to… WHO is this that does this… WHO are we invited to trust and dare follow… The answer is a lifetime of faith…

**News**

**Prayer**

Hospitable God

God of the table

God of the feast

God of the beloved community

As we pray

We look for new life

For renewal and replenishment

For our community and parish

And for our world

So may we live out your stories

Retell them

And enflesh them

Right where we are

Live in the hope of abundance

Live in the belief of generosity

Live as a sign of these promises

For all

So, in such hope

And within such promises

We pray for our world

In your abundant promise

And your renewal of life

We bring all the worlds refugees

Escaping violence and conflict

Environmental damage and natural disaster

We bring those who cannot escape

Caught up in authoritarian policies

Or extreme poverty

That locks them into a place they do not want to be

We bring all those in conflict

From Tigray to Yemen

Mali to Ukraine

Haiti to inner cities and gang lines

We bring those unable to find vaccines

Or health services or care

For those forgotten by benefits

And services and welfare

Loving God

We pray for a wedding feast

For new wine

For all those whose side you are on

May we bring and be the sign of that

May we point towards the promise you have given

May we be the picture here

Of your kingdom to come

As we bring those we love deepest

Our families and friends

Those we know who are physically and mentally ill

and needing peace

Those who are grieving and hurting

These are our prayers

Our hopes

Those who need your signs

Your promises

Your love, now

May we be signposts to that

So be it

Amen

**Benediction**