

The Power of Living Water
John Ch 1-5, 14 and John Ch 2 v 1-11

“And the word became flesh and dwelt among us”. With those deep and powerful words we move into the New Testament. This living water that flowed relentlessly through the generations and was recorded in the Old Testament suddenly becomes real. It becomes embodied in flesh, in a human being, in Jesus Christ. This word that has always existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, according to John, has come to earth to live a human life.

John was just a teenage boy when Jesus was on earth so he can actually say “We beheld his glory”. He lived with Jesus. He saw him at work. He saw Christ's glory first hand, experienced it for himself.

Again in John's first letter to the early Christians he emphasises that the word that existed from the beginning has become visible (1John Ch 1 v 1-4). He has heard it and seen it and touched it. He is overjoyed to pass this on and encourages others to do the same.

Although Christians live with this knowledge day by day it is at Christmas that the celebrations overflow. It is in December, the darkest time of year for us in the west that the light of God's word burst into the world in the shape of that tiny baby.

We know that as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas there are many who miss out on the real significance of Christ's birth. We find it hard to image a life without Christ and it is our task to pass on our happiness in believing in Jesus. Perhaps Christmas is the best time to do this.

I'm sure many of us will be enjoying family gatherings, parties and celebrations over the Christmas/New Year period and Jesus was no stranger to parties. He enjoyed a good time as much as the rest of us. In fact his first recorded miracle was performed at a wedding. Jesus was at the wedding with his mother Mary and five of his disciples. This fact may have caused the problem with the shortage of wine. Mary and Jesus had been invited to the wedding but Jesus brought along five of his disciples. Extra guests arriving put a strain on the catering arrangements so much so that Mary was worried. Hospitality in the East was a sacred duty and to run out of wine would have been a huge humiliation for this young couple at their small village wedding feast. Mary went to Jesus with the problem. He replied in what appears quite an abrupt way but in fact he was only saying “you don't understand what is going on, leave it to me”. Mary does just that. She instinctively turned to Jesus when something went wrong and left it in his hands. It shows her complete faith and trust in Jesus even when she didn't know what was happening. As we know, the six great jars standing by the door holding water used for washing of feet and hands became the vessels to contain the best wine served at the wedding.

John's stories always seem simple on the surface yet have a deeper meaning and this wedding story is no different. John is writing to the Jews and the Greeks teaching them (and us) not that Jesus once turned water into wine but that for all who accept Jesus into their lives their life takes on a new quality. What was once dull and possibly stale becomes fresh and exciting. Life becomes like a sparkling new wine.

For discussion

1. Do we find it easier to pass on our faith at Christmas time?
2. Do we take our problems to Jesus and trust him to sort them out as Mary did?
3. How do we keep the sparkle of “new wine” going into the New Year? Diane Thornton