

Session 3: John 2:1–25

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea

The works of Jesus reveal his character so that we might know him better and trust in his transformative work in our own lives.

Head Change

To know more about Jesus through his signs and actions.

Heart Change

To feel closer to Jesus and more encouraged to follow him.

Life Change

To trust Jesus more fully so that he can transform us.

OPEN

Who was your hero growing up? What did you do to be like them?

Jesus is a hero worth emulating. When we obey him and trust his guidance, we will find a life far greater and more purposeful than we ever imagined. In this chapter of John, Jesus shows us a glimpse of his glory and reveals his heart for worshipping the Father. As you learn about him, ask yourself, “How can I live more like Jesus?”

READ

John 2:1–25

DISCUSS

Read John 2:1–11.

In ancient Palestine, hospitality was a sacred duty. Failure to provide for a guest would have been disgraceful. Failure to provide for your wedding guests would have been disastrous. No doubt, the bride and groom at this wedding would have been feeling ashamed for running out of wine and fear for what this would mean for their reputation. **Think of a time when you were ashamed. What was your reaction? How did it make you feel?**

Look at the way Mary responded to Jesus. Even when it seemed that Jesus was not going to act, Mary still put her faith in him. She even told the servants around her to trust Jesus and follow all of his commands. **What do you do when it seems like God is not listening to you or when it seems like he is not going to act?**

What could it look like for you trust Jesus, like Mary did, even when your future seems unsure?

When Jesus transforms the water into wine, he gives the wedding an overabundance of excellent, quality wine. Dr. Evans noted it would have been between 120 and 150 gallons of water turned to the finest wine. **What does this incredible gift tell you about Jesus?**

Note: To learn more about the miracle of transformation go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.

Jesus offers us far more than wine. Just as he covered the shame of the newlywed couple by creating wine, Jesus covers all of our sin and shame through his death on the cross. Now, we are not defined by our failures but by his work. **In what ways have you seen Jesus work to cover your shame?**

Note: To learn more about the connection between wine and joy go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.

Read John 2:12–22.

The temple in Jerusalem was a holy place. Every inch of the building was built for the worship and glorification of God. **Where was the marketplace of moneychangers and livestock salesman set up? In what ways does their location divert attention from God?**

Note: To learn more about the marketplace in the temple go to **Go Deeper Section 3** at the end of this study.

There are many ways we can divert our attention from God and use both church and worship for our own benefit. **In what ways can we be tempted to focus on ourselves in the church today?**

Focusing on personal gain is not merely a danger for those on stage in church. We can all be tempted to use our good works to bolster our public image. **What can you do to keep the focus and attention on Jesus in both your worship and actions?**

When the disciples saw Jesus removing the animals, turning over tables, and scattering the coins of the moneychangers, they didn't rush to calm him down. **What was the disciples' reaction to Jesus's actions?**

When Jesus told the Jewish leaders that he would destroy and rebuild the temple, they responded with laughter and mockery. We, like the disciples, have the benefit of understanding his words in hindsight. **What "temple" was Jesus talking about? What later miracle was Jesus referring to?**

The disciples did not understand Jesus's words until after he was raised from the dead. They had to wait years to understand what Jesus was talking about. We may also have to wait to understand what God is doing in our lives today. **What current circumstances in your life are difficult to understand? What can you do today to entrust these circumstances to Jesus?**

Read John 2:23–25.

Many people came to believe in Jesus, but Jesus did not put his faith in them. **According to Dr. Evans's teaching, why did Jesus refuse to give more of himself to these people?**

Note: To learn more about the how people respond to Jesus go to **Go Deeper Section 4** at the end of this study.

Jesus knew what was in the hearts of his followers. He also knows what is in our hearts—even the parts we'd rather not have him see. **What about Jesus is the most difficult for you to trust? What would it look like for you to pray through that aspect of his character this week?**

LAST WORD

Jesus knows what is in your heart. As you turn your life over to him, he will show more of himself to you, giving you more joy and purpose than you could ever imagine.

There will be times when you are uncertain of where he is leading you. You will have seasons of celebration, as Jesus had at the wedding in Cana. You will see injustice and, like Jesus in the temple, be called to fight sin in the world. Dr. Evans said it best: God wants to use you to make an impact on history.

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting.

1. The Miracle of Transformation

Jesus's miracle at the wedding in Cana foreshadowed his greatest work: transforming sinners into saints.

Look back at John 2:6. **What were the jars of water used for?**

Every guest at this wedding would have washed their hands and feet in this water before entering the celebration. As a result, it was full of dirt, sweat, and every filth on the road that could have been stepped in. It's the last thing you would want to drink!

But Jesus turned this used bath water into something new, excellent, clean to drink, and valuable.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11.

How does this passage describe people before they met Jesus?

What has Jesus done in your life to make you new?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–21.

According to this passage, what are you if you are in Christ?

What new lifestyle does this passage call you to as a "new creation"?

Take some time to reflect on what it means to be transformed by Jesus. **How has he changed your life? What is he transforming in your life right now?**

2. Wine and Joy

Dr. Evans mentioned multiple times that wine is joy. This may be a new idea to us, but in ancient Israel, wine was a common symbol of joy and gladness. Drunkenness was as disgraceful then as it is now, but wine itself was not seen as an evil. Rather, God gave good wine to his people for their celebration and joy. Let's explore that idea more deeply and see how the Bible uses wine as a sign of God's provision and blessing.

The Old Testament repeatedly uses wine as a sign of God's favor with his people (ex: Deuteronomy 7:13, 11:14, 33:28; Jeremiah 31:5; Ezekiel 28:26) and the lack of wine as a curse when God's people abandon him (Deuteronomy 28:39; Hosea 9:2; Amos 5:11; Micah 6:15; Zephaniah 1:13).

Read Proverbs 3:5–10.

What does this passage command us to do? What are the blessings of keeping these commands?

Read Psalm 104:14–15.

Why does God cause crops to grow? What is his intended result from wine?

Read Deuteronomy 14:23–26.

This passage commands God's people to celebrate when they offer tithes to God. **According to this passage (specifically verse 23), what does celebration in God's presence teach us?**

Let's put this all together: wine was a sign of God's blessing on his people, it was given so that they might celebrate, enjoy life, and learn to honor God who is the source of their provision.

Jesus is the source of great and lasting joy, which he displays at the wedding at Cana. In the Last Supper, he used wine to represent his blood spilled for us. His blood brings us life and forgiveness.

In what ways do Jesus's death and resurrection gladden your heart?

What does it look like to honor God with your joy? What can you do to honor and thank him in the celebrations of your life?

Jesus's response to the marketplace in the temple is one of his most impassioned moments in the Gospels. But was he overreacting? Let's take a deeper look at what was happening in the temple.

Look back at John 2:14–16.

Where was this market set up?

We get some insight to the men running the market from the ancient historian Josephus. He wrote that the high priest of that time, Ananias, was “a great hoarder of money . . . he also had servants who were very wicked, who joined themselves to the boldest sort of the people . . . and took away the tithes that belonged to the priests by violence. [Some of the] priests, that of old were wont to be supported with those tithes, died for want of food.” (*Antiquities*, 20.9.2). Ananias and the Sadducees in Jesus's day were known and feared for their greed.

These men took advantage of the Passover to turn a profit off atoning sacrifices, without which there could be no forgiveness of sin. In essence, they were charging God's people for forgiveness. In addition, they were hindering worship with their presence in the temple (animals take up a lot of space and tend to be both loud and smelly).

Which merchants does Jesus specifically address in John 2:16?

Read Leviticus 5:7.

Who are the people that offered doves as an atonement for sin?

Jesus specifically goes after the dove sellers who were targeting the poorest worshippers in God's temple. There was nothing normal or redeeming about this marketplace. **In what way does this insight help you understand Jesus's actions?**

Today, we still see injustice and favoritism that neglects people in our communities. That prejudice can spill over into our worship services. Jesus is calling us to make a way for all people to freely worship him. **What can you and your church do welcome all people into worship with you?**

4. How People Respond to Jesus

rightnow MEDIA
Jesus was not willing to entrust himself to his early followers because he knew what was in their hearts. Later, we will see

many of these followers turned their backs on Jesus (John 6:66). Jesus knew that not all of his followers would endure with him. He expands on this idea in the Parable of the Sower.

Read Matthew 13:18–23.

In this passage we see four ways people respond to the gospel.

What happens to the seed sowed on the hard-packed path?

What should we do in response to those who do not understand the gospel?

What is the initial response of the seed in rocky soil? What causes them to dry up?

What chokes out the seed growing amongst thorns?

The seed grown in good soil is the only one to endure and bear fruit. They alone trust that God is better than the things of this world and know he is near in times of trouble and persecution.

In times of trouble, where do you turn for security? What can you do to trust God in your trials?