

A marriage like no other

William Hepper *reflects on* John 2:1-11 and Revelation 19:6-10

Jesus and his disciples attend a wedding in Cana with his mother, Mary. With festivities in full flow, the wine runs out – a considerable embarrassment for the host. But thanks to Mary’s intervention, Jesus gets involved and six stone jars of water are turned into wine.

The text wants us to understand two things about this wine – its quantity and its quality. For quantity, the wine is enough to fill about a thousand bottles. For quality, the chief steward declares it to be the best. John does not inform us how the party proceeds, but we can only guess that the guests had a very good time.

Looking a little beneath the surface of this story, we might note that in the following chapter John the Baptist describes Jesus as a bridegroom come to find his bride, and similar imagery appears in the other three Gospels. In Revelation, too, the Church, God’s people in Christ, are termed “his bride”, who will ultimately be wedded to the groom, that is, to Jesus.

So the wedding at Cana offers a rich mix of imagery, as the heavenly bridegroom attends a very earthly wedding, transforming a disaster into a glorious moment of the finest quality in plentiful abundance. And for John, the writer, it is about much more than saving the blushes of those throwing the party. This miracle constituted a sign, revealing Jesus’ glory and strengthening the disciples’ faith in him. 🍷



Lord God, we pray that you act in power today to reveal the glory of Jesus Christ and bring all people to faith in him. Amen.

New Year resolutions

by Heather Cooke

It’s not too late to make resolutions to replace those we’ve already broken. In Christian discipleship, as in any other aspect of life, resolutions should be positive but also specific. Rather than resolving to pray more, read the Bible more, or give more to charity, be specific. Just as it’s better to resolve to go to the gym every Wednesday, rather

than just “more often”, we might decide to attend each meeting of a particular Bible study group, devote a specific time each day to silent prayer, or set up a direct debit to a charity we want to support.

If we turn New Year resolutions into a promise to God, as the Babylonians and Romans did to their gods, we give them far more importance and increase our chances of keeping them. After all, as in digital photography – the higher the resolution, the better the result. 🍷

“One resolution I have made, and try always to keep, is this: ‘To rise above little things.’”

John Burroughs (1837-1921), American naturalist and nature essayist

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

While we wait for our own lambs to be born we’ve taken on three orphaned lambs to help out our lovely local farmer. We haven’t done this before and the thought of it seemed so cuddly and sweet, and indeed some of it is. But at 5a.m. making up milk bottles and stumbling

out to the shed to feed them is a bit different. I kneel in the straw, they push their faces hard against the bottles and suck for all their worth. There are three lambs, three bottles and only two hands, so there is panic from the lambs and clumsiness from me as we try to make it work.

The God who loves the people of Abraham through so much difficulty, and who in Jesus adopts us all over again, even us grubby, clumsy folk, is the Good Shepherd in a way I can only struggle to be today. 🍷