

Gospel and letters of John: lesson 2

John 2:1-3:21, October 6, 2011

Laurel Ann Porro

"You Must Be Born Again"

John 2:1-3:21

Laurel Porro

From what we have learned about John's Gospel through Carol's last two lectures, we know that John was very selective about which events and words of Jesus that he included in his Gospel account. His intended purpose was not to repeat what had already been written, but to add new information under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to provide a different perspective of Jesus' public and private ministries. So it is likely that the events which we studied this week did not take place in this chronological order. However, the theme which we observe from the events at Cana, followed by the cleansing of the Temple, and concluding in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus follow a progression of spiritual transformation to reach the ultimate goal of John's, that is a confident belief that Jesus is indeed the Son of God whose offer of eternal life is open not just to the Jews, but to all.

We left Jesus last week on his way from Bethany to Galilee after John the Baptist had introduced Jesus to John and Andrew who then found Peter. On the way, Jesus had called out Philip who found Nathaniel and the five new disciples accompanied their new Rabbi to a family wedding in Cana, near Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. What better way to get to know the Messiah than to spend time walking 80 or so miles with Him and watching Him interact with His family!

The wedding at Cana

In Bible-time weddings, the groom was the more prominent of the wedding party, and he also paid for the whole affair which went on for days -- some for as long as a week -- with all the relatives of both sides of the family joining together for a big celebration. To attend a wedding was then, as is today, a matter of respect for the family so Jesus was expected to be there. Since Mary was in charge of the servants, it can be assumed that the groom was a family member; perhaps one of Jesus' younger brothers.

Wine was a commonplace drink, one that everyone in that culture and climate drank regularly. To run out of wine was a major social disgrace and in the closely knit communities of Jesus' day it would have been long remembered. When Jesus showed up with five extra guests, it should have been no surprise that the wine ran out early. Mary was quick to notice the problem and her words to Jesus, "They have no wine", make clear that she expected Him to do something about it. He had been until recently, the man of her household, since tradition holds that her husband Joseph had died sometime