

## The Best Wine

Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled to the brim He said, "Dip some out and take it to the master of ceremonies." - - When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine - - he said "you have kept the best until now!" John 2:1-10 (NLT, partial)

I can't say for sure when the water became wine, but neither can you. We know the servants poured water into the big jars. And we know it was wine when the master of ceremonies drank it. But at what point did it become wine? The Bible doesn't say.

If it was wine when they dipped it, it wouldn't have been much of an act of obedience to serve it. I highly suspect that the servants dipped water and poured wine.

God delights in using the ordinary to make Himself known, and our obedience is an important part of the process. He wants to use common folk like us to speak words of life to others. He wants to take our words and make them into wine to the hearer.

I've heard a lot of preaching over the years. Some wine, some water.

Some preachers and others in ministry take themselves so seriously - like NFL sportscasters do. Their opinions are presented as statements of truth and their experiences are given as the standard for all. They are the experts, expecting listeners to hang on their every word – which they represent to be wine. Christians are more likely to be fooled than others.

You've probably heard some preachers who shift to a different voice in public speaking. Or they end certain words with an inflection that is intended to give an air of spirituality.

Many tools are available to the speaker who would parade his or her spirituality and gifts to tickle ears and draw large crowds. But our human efforts to be profound in message or manner will take the true color *out* of our words. Superfluity stupefies spirituality. (See, I *told* you!)

Some put great emphasis on "the anointing," which makes them feel powerful and effective. There is an assumption that they will speak wine, but don't believe that. The "anointing" which men create is one thing – the anointing of God is quite another. One might dupe crowds but we never fool God. As with good wine, there is both the genuine and the imitation.

We err if we think that we can make our words to be wine to the heart of the hearer. Only God can do that and it comes by words that He has given, being spoken by one who knows true intimacy with Him.

The Apostle Paul said that he was sent "to preach the Good News – and not with clever speeches and high-sounding ideas." He presented "the message of the cross." He preached Christ, "the mighty power of God and the wonderful wisdom of God." I Corinthians 1:18-31.

God says "Amen" to such preaching, and especially so when our own spiritual walk backs up the message. And *that* is where wine is made!

Many of us have prayed a simple prayer with someone and it touched them deeply. We didn't shift into a deep, authoritative voice or pray loudly. All we did was to identify with their need and humbly lift them before God. The presence of Jesus in us enabled us to feel their heart, and then He reached out to them through us as we prayed. That is how water becomes wine.

Or we gave a few words of encouragement to someone and learned years later that God used it to impact their life. We weren't trying to be super-spiritual or anything – we just spoke from our heart and the Great Winemaker took it from there!

God honors those who honor Him. Those who preach the cross; present Jesus; and walk in humility before Him. Those who would be happy for the hearer to remember the Message and forget the messenger.

Simply put, it is the presence of Jesus which turns water into wine! Stage presence, fancy words, proclaimed anointing or displays of phenomena may draw crowds and raise big offerings, but they are not the source of wine. There is an incredible amount of high-flying verbiage in the church that isn't even good grape juice. There *is* such a thing as food coloring, you know!

The Spirit of God is in *you*, to make Jesus known through you! You don't have to be a pastor or teacher. You may not know fancy words and maybe you can't engage in theological arguments. But if you are a servant of God, and if you listen to Him and do what He says as you speak with others, He will make your words into wine. Just do it. Be the pitcher through whom God pours wine. Not only wine – it can be the best in the house!

If you are one who likes to use high sounding words; lay out brilliant ideas that prove how spiritual you are; or speak in a way that shows that you have "the anointing;" please come down off your high-horse and get real. Just be one of us. The harder you try to make your words wine the more likely they are to be water. The church and our world desperately need wine!

And in case you're wondering – no, it doesn't matter if my sense of when the water became wine is historical fact. Either way, even today Jesus will make the water of His humble, obedient servants, into wine!

Born in 1940, Ken Stoltzfus has worked as a pilot, ordained Christian minister, businessman, missionary to Africa and writer. This is #9 in his series "Snippets from the Good Book", and is one of many short articles that can be found at [www.John2031.com](http://www.John2031.com)

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