

2010 1-17 KEEP THE PARTY ALIVE JOHN 2V1-11

P – A – R – T – Y You can tell when a party is really alive. People are having fun. Things might get a little wild. You also have memories of such great parties. Wasn't that spectacular?"
"Do you remember that one time?"

I'm sure that is what people said after the wedding at Cana. Remember when we ran out of wine, then Jesus showed up. Without Jesus that party would have died.

Jesus was the life of the party. Do you know anyone like that. There was a kid I remember in High school that was very popular. When he showed up at a party everybody got excited. Somehow these dynamic people have a way of waking up a dead party.

Mary recognized this special ability about Jesus and just told them look, do whatever he says. She had faith that Jesus was going to keep the party going. She knew he could make things come back to life.

Every where Jesus went, great things happened. People were healed, demons were thrown out, the dead were raised. Miracles happened. Things changed. That was what made people excited when Jesus showed up.

Jesus was certainly in favor of a good time. He was criticized for being a drunkard and a glutton. The Pharisees were the ultimate party poopers. They tried to stop him from healing on the Sabbath, forgiving sins, and teaching people the truth about God.

Partying wasn't really the focus of what Jesus was here for. He was here to change things from dead to alive. It was no coincidence that Jesus did this miracle on the third day.

Actually John calls these miracles signs. This was a clear sign of Jesus Resurrection that was to come. Jesus starts off with his first miracle that would be a sign of his last and most powerful miracle, coming back to life from the dead himself!

Needless to say, this water to wine miracle was pretty powerful. 180 gallons of water were changed into wine. This certainly would be enough wine to liven up the wedding celebration.

Wine does certainly loosen up the party so that people aren't so rigid. Too much wine or alcohol can certainly be destructive and we know the consequences that have caused loss of life. But within the right context, and with the proper amounts, wine is encouraged by Jesus. Even his very own supper, his precious blood is given in with and under wine.

The water in the story was normally used for ceremonial washing. This washing could not totally clean a person of his sin. Only Jesus and his blood would be the thing that cleansed the people of their sin. Jesus was not only changing water into wine, he was changing the kingdom of God into something different. The old dead ceremonies of the OT were now coming alive in the life of Jesus.

Jesus also keeps you alive. I don't care what other people say, I think Christians have more fun. Try starting off a party with a bible reading, and just see what happens. What you might find out is that you have a lot more to celebrate than just earthly successes or events. You have to celebrate eternal gifts and blessing that last beyond this life. That kind of party

lasts forever. Jesus intended to extend the party that was life here on earth. The party can now last after we die.

When the party that is your life seems dead, Call on Jesus to come into your life. See how he can liven things up. Having Jesus makes life exciting, worth living for, and much more memorable. Jesus will certainly keep your party alive.

We to, can remember that wherever we go, that's where the party is at. We can bring hope, joy, and forgiveness into the lives of others. That doesn't mean that we have to be party animals. We just need to be shining our light into other peoples lives.

Sure, Jesus had miracles to make people alive. But we have his word. Whatever Jesus says we have heard and we can carry out his directions like the servants did when Jesus told them to.

We have all the direction we need to keep the party alive. It is like knowing what music to play, what food to eat, and what entertainment will be necessary for the guests. We know to show God's love, forgive our enemies, and care for those in need.

The one thing about a party is that you can never control the guests. You can never command someone to have fun. That is just how God's kingdom is. People hear the message and receive it in different ways. Once God's word catches on there is nothing you can do to stop it.

There was once a small church, out in the country. It wasn't growing, much like the other churches around the area. The new pastor kept up the status quo for a few years, but

then he decided something had to be done. The church was stagnant, and if it didn't start growing, it was going to die.

So the pastor's idea was to invite a purely secular country western band to come and play at the church one evening a week. Most of the people around listened to country so he thought people would enjoy the concerts.

He was right. People did come and as the people came and went he and others from the church told them about Jesus. The amazing thing was that it seemed to be working. People were starting to come for the message, not the music.

The thing that really turned things around was when the country band itself became Christian. The church came to life and now worships over a thousand people a weekend. What happened? The party was kept alive at that church.

Who can be given the credit? The pastor? Those that helped with the mission? Still, you have to count it miraculous that country music grew a church. God did it. On the part of the people involved, faith was most important. They didn't know how it would work, they just believed that it could.

Jesus will keep your party alive too. Isn't that what you believe? Don't you believe like Mary that Jesus will do something? Isn't that why he is the one we seek to make something happen.

You may be satisfied with what you have now. But it will run out. It will die if Jesus doesn't do anything. Am I talking about this church? Am I talking about your spiritual life? Am I talking about the whole world?

You chose. But Jesus has something planned that is even better. He isn't going to just extend the party and make things as good as they are now. Even if we went back to the garden of Eden God wouldn't be satisfied.

He brings out the good wine at the end. Trust me, and trust him, he saves the best party for last. Amen.