The Untold Story
The 1st Sign
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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

John 20:30-31 (NLT)
30 The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

John 2:1-11 (NLT)
1 The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" 11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Romans 10:17 (NLT)
7 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

Isaiah 25:6 (NLT)
6 On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.

Matthew 15:21-28 (NLT)

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Do you have any superstitious beliefs? I.e. wearing a lucky shirt, crossing yourself before you get up to bat, using the same number to play the lottery? Have you ever confused faith in Jesus and superstition?

Start thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- **Read John 20:30-31.** What is John's purpose in writing this gospel? How does the story of Jesus turning water into wine serve that purpose?
- **Read John 2:1-11.** Jesus seemed initially to refuse Mary's request. Was it a refusal and Jesus changed his mind? Or was Jesus trying to set some clear parameters around his ministry?
- The master of ceremonies said the wine Jesus made was the best. Why did John include that detail in the story? Why is it important?

Start sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Troy said people confuse superstition, hope and trusting in their parent's faith with real, personal faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Have you ever made that mistake?
- **Read Romans 10:17**. If the disciples gained faith by sight, how do we gain it? In a practical sense, what does that look like in your life?
- John 2:11 says that because of the miracle or sign, the disciples believed in Jesus. Who did they believe he was? How is their faith different than what we often see practiced today in terms of what we call faith?
- We were give the example in Matthew 15:21-28 of Jesus' love of persistent faith. How persistent is your faith? Do you proceed faithfully in the face of apparent "no's" from God?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- This week, earnestly examine where you are placing your faith. And, resolve to cultivate a persisting faith in Jesus Christ.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- God, thank you for revealing to us the truth of your word. And thank you for the grace you have have extended to us through our savior Jesus Christ. Please guide us through our struggles, or when our faith is misplaced, as we desire to grow in our faith in you. In Jesus' holy name. -Amen

Start digging. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

Question: "Where does faith come from?"

Answer: Faith is the avenue or the instrument God uses to bring salvation to His people. God gives faith because of His grace and mercy, because He loves us (Ephesians 4—5). Faith comes from God in the form of a gift (Ephesians 2:8).

A gift is not earned by some good deed or kind word, and it is not given because the giver expects a gift in return—under any of those conditions, a gift would not be a gift. The Bible emphasizes that faith is a gift because God deserves all of the glory for our salvation. If the receiver of faith could do anything whatsoever to deserve or earn the gift, that person would have every right to boast (Ephesians 2:9). But all such boasting is excluded (Romans 3:27). God wants Christians to understand they have done nothing to *earn* faith, it's only because of what Christ did on the cross that God gives anyone faith (Ephesians 2:5, 16).

By knowing our saving faith comes from God alone, it should encourage Christians to "not think of yourself more highly than you ought," but remember God decides the measure of faith each one receives (Romans 12:3). The apostle Paul gives an example of the godly humility believers should have when they contemplate their own faith: "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 1:13–14). Paul understood faith in Christ was given to him because of God's grace *in spite of* his own sinful life (1 Corinthians 4:7).

The Bible specifies the way, or the means, that God gives faith to people. "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17). It is the Word of God that produces faith. Someone could receive faith while hearing a sermon teaching the gospel, someone else by reading about Jesus in the Bible—any time the true gospel of Jesus is communicated, there is potential for faith. This is why it's of paramount importance for believers everywhere to be obedient to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16–20) and tell people what Christ has done for humanity. Faith is not the product of a preacher's compelling presentation, his eloquence, or even his theological soundness—faith is given through the message about Jesus. This is the means God has chosen.

It is good for anyone who wants faith to ask for it. God freely gives what is good to all who ask (Luke 11:9–12), and it's good to ask for an increase of faith (Luke 17:5; Mark 9:24). Jesus prayed for Peter's faith to be strengthened (Luke 22:32). As with any gift from God, it is our responsibility to *exercise* the gift and not become complacent, lazy, or apathetic (Romans 12:1–2, 6–8). Christians can find comfort and peace of mind knowing their faith is from God, because He has said He will finish the good work He started (Philippians 1:6). God is the Author and the Perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2a; Romans 8:29–30).

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