

The WORD Became Flesh
(Week 4)
John 2:1-11
“The Wedding, The Workers, and The Wine”

Introduction

His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.”

John 2:5

As John takes us all the way through the first full week of Jesus’s earthly ministry, we come to the last day, when Jesus and His disciples were invited to attend a wedding feast. The chapter begins with the phrase, “On the third day...”. This simply means that it occurred three days after the calling of the first disciples. But it is actually the seventh day of that first week of Christ’s earthly ministry. I believe that it is no coincidence that this week ended as such, for when Christ’s work on earth is finished and He returns for His bride (The Church), the culmination of it all will be the marriage supper of The Lamb (**Revelation 19:6-9**). We, who are believers, are ever looking forward to the wedding feast that comes at the end. This is the hope that we have in Christ Jesus. We must always remember that The Word of God is filled with wonderful reminders of the spiritual realities that we have in Christ!

I also believe that the reason John breaks up the days by saying “after the third day”, rather than simply saying “on day seven”, is also a foreshadowing of Christ’s finished work upon the cross when He rose in victory on the third day. I cannot prove that this is true, but I am convinced nonetheless. It would seem fitting to compare a celebration such as this with the wonder and joy that that we have been promised as a result of the resurrection of Christ, would it not?

As we read the story of the wedding at Cana, there are so many wonderful discoveries to be made. The turning of water into wine was, in fact, the first miracle that Jesus ever performed. How do we know this? Because John himself tells us.

Jesus did this, the FIRST of His signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. **John 2:11** (emphasis added)

So we can accept this as scriptural fact. And because of this, we know not to indulge in fantastical fables that tell of Jesus performing miracles as a child. These stories that have been circulated by many have no basis in actual reality. The first miracle that Jesus performed was exactly what *The Bible* says that it was; the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana.

So why did Christ choose this particular miracle to be His first of the many signs that He would offer as proof that He was indeed The Son of God? Well today, I would like to examine some of the possibilities and see if we can figure this out for ourselves. God does nothing by accident, so from before the beginning of time, He chose this particular event to establish the validity of Christ’s true identity.

Some have suggested that the seven sign miracles that John chooses to describe for us actually correspond with various gods of Greek mythology; thus demonstrating that Jesus Christ is the One True God. If this is the case, then this particular sign miracle would be to prove that The Christ was superior in every way to the Greek goddess Dionysus, who was considered by the Greeks to be the “goddess of winemaking” and fertility. I cannot be certain that this was John’s intent in his selection of the miracles of Christ listed in his gospel, but the theory is quite interesting. One thing is for certain. The gods of mythology are exactly that; myths. But Jesus, on the other hand, is as real as it gets. He is The Way, The Truth and The Life (**John 14:6**).

Today, we will look at this first miracle of Jesus’ public ministry and see if we can discern for ourselves exactly why God chose this particular sign as the initial proof to begin the process of validation for His one and only Son. Let us look together at this wonderful story as we see *The Wedding, The Workers, and The Wine*.

The Wedding (vs. 1-5)

On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding as well. When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother told Him, "They don't have any wine." "What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?" Jesus asked. "My hour has not yet come." "Do whatever He tells you." His mother told the servants. John 2:1-5

Weddings in those days were far different from what we see in our culture today. First, there was a very long engagement called the "betrothal period" that lasted for several months. The betrothal was considered binding and could only be broken by a legal divorce. At the end of the betrothal period was a celebration feast. The day of the wedding feast was usually on a Wednesday (Virgins were married on Wednesdays and widows on Thursdays). After the celebration came to a close in the evening, the actual marriage ceremony would take place, and then the happy couple would retire to their home and begin their new life together.

This is a beautiful picture of Christ and His Bride, the Church. For you see, when we accept Him as our LORD, we enter into the unbreakable "betrothal period" with Him. And when He returns for us, then we shall attend the marriage supper of The Lamb and enter into eternal life with Him forever. Even so, come LORD Jesus! All of us who believe in Him are looking forward to that day.

There is so more in this story of the wedding at Cana than at first "meets the eye", as it were. First of all, it is important to describe the day's events in relationship to the characters of the story. It was incumbent upon the host of the feast to provide enough food and wine for all the guest. Wine symbolizes joy in *The Bible*, and to run out of wine at a wedding feast would bring incredible shame upon the hosts. In fact, it was a societal disaster, the likes of which could haunt the family for the rest of their days.

The fact that Mary was aware of the situation suggests that she was somehow involved in the hosting of the feast. Perhaps the wedding was that of some of her relatives. For if she had not been directly involved with the wedding itself, then she would not have been privy to the wine predicament. The hosts would not have been willing to share this information with just anyone. They would have been much too embarrassed to make the situation widely known. So Mary must have been on the inside, as it were. Perhaps she had even been hired to help with the festivities. Regardless of the situation, she knew the right place to turn in a time of crisis. She took her burden to Jesus.

We see in the story that Jesus had been invited to the wedding (along with His newfound disciples). I would be remiss here if I did not pause for a moment and say that if you want to have a truly blessed marriage, you should ALWAYS invite Christ to be a part of it! It is God Who gave us the institution of marriage, and quite frankly, it can never be all that it was meant to be apart from Him. So allow Christ to reign over every aspect of your life, and your joy shall never run out. Can I get a witness?

When Mary tells Jesus of the problem, we can almost feel the urgency in her words. More likely than not, the hosts of this feasts were a very poor family, and while to us this running out of wine might seem trivial, to them it was a catastrophe. They had probably spent all that they had in order to provide enough wine for their guests. Perhaps, by inviting Jesus' disciples to join the festivities, it had put them over the limit. Whatever caused the shortage, Mary desperately needed nothing short of a miracle to enable the hosts to save face. Jesus' response to His mother is very telling:

"What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?" Jesus asked. "My hour has not yet come." John 2:4

The "hour" to which He was referring was the cross and resurrection, when He would offer everlasting joy to all who would believe in Him. Remember, wine symbolizes joy in the Scriptures. And the wine that Christ offers us (his very blood) was given to cleanse us of our sins and fill us with The Holy Spirit of God. This is the reason that He came.

Now, as to His discourse with Mary, it is important to see that He does not address her as "The Blessed Virgin" or "Sacred Mother", but instead He refers to her simply as "woman" (*gyne* in the Greek), and in those days, it was much like saying "ma'am" in our culture. He does not disrespect His mother, but He does want us all to understand that she is most certainly NOT to be deified. Jesus loved His mother, but He did not come to do what she wanted. He came to do the will of His Father! Mary was a wonderful godly human being, but she was simply that and nothing more. She was human, and therefore, not

divine. When Jesus responded to her, He did not say, “Thy will be done.” He said, “What does your request have to do with My mission.” I believe that He responded this way for our benefit, as much as for hers. She was never intended for worship. That privilege belongs to God and Him alone.

I absolutely LOVE Mary’s response. She turns to the servants and says:

“Do whatever He tells you.”

John 2:5

This, my friends, is the very secret to an abundant and joyous life! If everyone would simply heed this advice, there would be no more need of any more preachers or sermons in this world. DO WHATEVER JESUS TELL YOU, and you will find everlasting joy. He has the words of everlasting life (**John 6:68**).

The Workers (vs. 6-9a)

Now six stone jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained twenty or thirty gallons. “Fill the jars with water,” Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim. Then He said to them, “Now draw some out and take to the headwaiter.” And they did. The headwaiter tasted the water (after it had become wine), he did not know where it came from — though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

John 2:6-9a

Those servants followed Mary’s advice to the letter. They did whatever Jesus told them to do. And the result was glorious! There were six stone jars there that contained the water that the Jewish wedding guests would have used to ceremonially cleanse themselves, before the wedding ceremony. It was according to the Law that people would wash themselves before meals and religious ceremonies. The reason for this was purely symbolic. One cannot be unclean and enter into the presence of a Holy God. However, the mere washing of water is not sufficient to wash away sins. But this symbolic washing was a foreshadowing of what was to come. We will talk more about this later.

Jesus instructed the wedding servers to fill the jars to the brim. Two things are demonstrated by His command. First, there was to be no doubt as to what was in those jars. It was water, pure and simple, and nothing else. No one could say that Jesus added “grape juice” to those water jars. They were completely filled leaving room for nothing else to be added. And second, when Christ does a work in those who believe, He fills them to the brim. Those who trust in Him are filled with the joy of The Spirit of God!

One of my favorite parts of this story is that no one knew what had taken place that day, except the disciples and the servants. Why is this so important? Because only those who serve Christ are able to see for themselves the wonders that He does! Do you want to be in on what God is doing? Then SERVE. It is the servants who see the miracles occur before their very eyes. It is the servants that get to be in on the work of The Father.

“You are My friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn’t know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask The Father in My Name, He will give you.”

John 15:14-16

Are you longing to see the wonder working power of God before your very eyes? Then become a servant of Christ and do whatever he tells you to do! Trust and obey.

The Wine (vs. 9b-11)

...He called the groom and told him, “Everyone sets out the fine wine first, then, after people are drunk, the inferior. But you have kept the fine wine until now.” Jesus did this, the first of His signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

John 2:9b-11

Moses' first miracle was turning water into blood, but The Christ's first sign miracle was turning water into wine. Jesus brought real blessing to the ceremonial! Where there once was the shame of inadequacy (running out of wine), He replaced that shame with joy in an infinite supply. Moses gave us the Law, and The Law brought condemnation. In Jesus, we find mercy and grace so:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, because the law of The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:1-2

Now do you see why He used those ceremonial cleansing jars? He demonstrated His superiority over The Law of Moses! His blood (symbolized by the wine we drink during Communion) has cleansed all who believe in Him from the inside out. It is so much more than a ceremony. It is the washing away of our sin. In Christ, we are truly made CLEAN. We are clothed in His righteousness and filled with His Spirit, which gives us the new wine (Joy) everlasting! Just as those jars were filled to the brim with the new wine (**vs.7**), we are completely filled up with the Spirit of The Living God, thanks to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

I love what the headwaiter said about the wine that Jesus gave. He was confused as to why the groom had saved the very best for last. The customs of men would let the people become intoxicated on the "good stuff" and then bring out the inferior. This was done in hopes that in their stupor they would not realize that the quality of their situation had deteriorated. This is exactly what happens to those who are intoxicated by sin. They are blissfully unaware that their fleeting pleasures will soon turn to sorrow. But in Christ, the best is yet to come! God sent His one and only Son, so that the best was saved for last. The "new wine" we have in Jesus just gets sweeter and sweeter with each passing day. This is the hope we have in Him.

We have also obtained access through Him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:2

The headwaiter didn't have a clue as to what Jesus had done that day. He was confused as to why the best was saved for last. But the servants knew, and those of us who still serve Him today also understand it... perfectly! Jesus has given us everlasting joy where there was once nothing but inadequacy and condemnation. No matter the circumstances around us, we have hope in Him. For we know that our joyous future is assured, and the best is yet to come. Which brings me to these very important questions this morning: Have you placed your faith in Him? Are you His servant, as well as, His friend today? Has the Blood of Jesus washed away your sin and made you clean? Jesus' blood was shed so that you may have joy everlasting. In Him, we have this hope. This world may get drunk with inferior wine to ease their troubled souls, but we have been given so much more. We have the "new wine" found in Christ. And we shall never be the same again. What we have in Him is so much better.

And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by The Spirit: speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to The LORD, giving thanks always for everything to God The Father in the Name of our LORD Jesus Christ...

Ephesians 5:18-20

Sure sounds like a party to me! Have you tasted the new wine of Christ Jesus?

And let the servants say... TRUTH!!!