



John 2:1-11
The Wedding at Cana

NKJ John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.

7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it.

9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.

10 And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

At the end of chapter one, we learned that Jesus was leaving the region of Judea where John had been baptizing and was returning north to Galilee, the area in which he grew up. He had already begun to choose disciples and they were now following Him. We now take up the story three days after the calling of Nathanael. Jesus and his disciples have returned to Galilee, and have been invited to a wedding in Nathanael's hometown of Cana.

The groom was quite probably a relative of Mary, we know for instance that Mary also had a sister named Mary the wife of Clopas, and tradition has it that they were from Cana. In any event, Mary's inside knowledge of the wine running out, and the fact that she can speak so familiarly with the servants would indicate that she was intimately acquainted with the household.

No we all know how important it is to brides that weddings go off flawlessly, this is the one day where every princess fantasy has to become real, and where every flaw in the day will inevitably be magnified by a factor of at least 10. That is why Mary is more than a little concerned when she hears the report that the wine has run out. Wine throughout the bible and Jewish culture is a symbol for joy. In Psalm 104:15 it is called "*wine that makes glad the heart of man*" and it was expected that the Bridegroom would share the joy of his day, by making wine liberally available to his wedding guests. In fact Christ has specifically said in Luke 22:18 that He will drink with His children on the great day of Lamb's wedding feast when He returns and the age to come begins.

So it is quite a disaster to hear that they have run out of wine and Mary immediately turns to Jesus to help them. Now it is unlikely that she is asking for a miracle, it is just that at this point it is highly likely that her husband Joseph has passed away and that up until the beginning of His public ministry, Mary had probably depended upon the labor of her oldest son Jesus to support her, but now with the inauguration of that ministry, their relationship is changing dramatically. That is indicated in the way Jesus addresses her.

Jesus does not call her *Woman* (γύναι) or Ma'am to be brusque or rude, but to emphasize that their relationship has changed. This like Matthew 12 when as Jesus was teaching his mother and brothers presumed to call him away is a rebuke. His agenda is not that of His mother or any mortal, his concerns are not hers. Christ has come to do the will of the Father, not his mother Mary. Everyone who approaches Jesus does so on the same level, and on the same basis of faith alone, there is no "inside track" and Jesus at times has to point that out to his relatives and even his disciples.

“This saying of Christ openly and manifestly warns men to beware lest, by too superstitiously elevating the honor of the name of mother in the Virgin Mary, they transfer to her what belongs exclusively to God. Christ, therefore, addresses his mother in this manner, in order to lay down a perpetual and general instruction to all ages, that his divine glory must not be obscured by excessive honor paid to his mother.” - Calvin

Now I know that Rome insists that this is evidence that we should pray to Mary because Christ fulfilled her request, and is therefore the Mediatrix of grace. But this is hardly the case. As D.A. Carson puts it ***“On this reasoning, one wonders why everyone who ever asked Jesus for help and found in him the solution to some pressing need, should not be elevated to the status of mediator or mediatrix.”***

In Christ's reply to his mother, we also have this incredibly important statement from Christ: "My hour has not yet come." What does Christ mean by that? Well we don't have to remain in the dark about that, throughout John's gospel while He is still ministering, Jesus himself makes it clear that His hour, has not come. But after the Lord's Supper, just before the passion, the time of His crucifixion, he begins His high priestly prayer in this manner:

NKJ John 17:1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

Even from the beginning of His public ministry, He knew that it was in order that He might die the cursed death of the Cross that he came. Do not get sidetracked – this is why Christ came to earth. It was not to teach us morals or even to do miracles. It was in order that He might lay down his life to atone for the sins of His sheep that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, became man and dwelt amongst us.

Mary bears Christ's gentle rebuke graciously, and trusts Him saying to the servants, ***“Do whatever He tells you”*** and like the Syro-Phoenecian woman of ***Matthew 15 her persevering faith is rewarded.***

Pots for ritual cleansing, together they held between 100 and 150 gallons, servants poured water on the hands of every guest to ritually purify them. It was the contents of these pots that Jesus miraculously turns into *Oinos* wine.

Some commentators have attempted their own miracle of turning wine into grape juice roughly 18 centuries before Thomas Welch figured out how to stop the natural fermentation process. I am grateful for the comment of New Testament scholar D.A. Carson, who it should be noted is a Baptist, that the

idea that this was Grape Juice “*is intrinsically silly as applied to countries whose agricultural tradition is so committed to viticulture*”.

Now many of you may have read good men who have tried to prove their wine is different from our wine today, but I have to tell you that it always has been and always will be a matter of grapes, yeast, and sugar, and natural process of fermentation. The only major change between ancient and modern viticulture is in the discovery of better preservatives and ways of bottling that help to prevent wine from becoming sour. In the end ancient Jews and Christians both consumed an alcoholic beverage that when sinfully overindulged in makes you drunk. I have even heard a preacher who maintained that if Jesus made it, it must be special wine that can't make you drunk, but that makes no sense considering that the bible calls plain old wine God's good gift. I couldn't help but wonder at that point if he felt that the bread and the loaves that Jesus multiplied wouldn't make people fat if they ate too much. I don't want to labor the point, let me simply say, Wine is not sinful. God's gifts are all good, it is what we sometimes do with them that is sinful and that goes for all of his gifts.

Regarding the Wine, please note that Jesus did not touch it, pray over it, he simply willed it to be changed and it was a new creation. It is also worth noting that we do not read that the wine *co-operated with Christ* in its transformation. The transforming power is Christ's, we can no more change ourselves than the water had the power to become wine.

Jesus doesn't just make wine, he makes the best wine, which startles the Master of the feast who knows nothing of the origins of this new batch of wine. One *starts* with Moet Chandon, and then moves to Korbel, and then eventually late in the evening, no one notices that its now Asti Spumante and Cold Duck that the waiters are distributing. While the Master of the feast may not know the origin the disciples do, and their earlier decision that He was the Messiah is confirmed.

In making that miraculous transformation, Jesus not only provided for their needs at the banquet, he provided the couple with quite a wedding present. One cannot tell, but the excess wine if sold would have provided for the physical needs of the newlyweds. Isn't it wonderful how Jesus to quote Paul is always doing “*exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*” for his people?

Well on to the Applications – I want to start with the least important and move on to the more important.

Marriage – You know its funny but this passage gets used a lot at wedding to show the importance of marriage and weddings, but marriage is not the point of these verses. Even so we do learn some important things. First Christ honors marriage and secondly that it is appropriate and even important to celebrate a wedding or other important events. I hope you will read the Ryle quote in your folders, in that regard.

Also Ryle draws out an even more important analogy, “Christ's blessing and presence are essential to a happy wedding. The marriage at which there is no place for Christ and His disciples, is not one that can justly be expected to prosper.” – J.C. Ryle. I would go further, in this day and age the Christless marriage cannot be expected to *LAST*.

The purpose of this miracle: Purpose of course, of the miracle was not merely to provide for the needs of this couple, like all of Christ's miracles it was intended to prove that He is the Messiah and the Son of God. That the beginning of Christ's miracles should be creating wine is by no means

RANDOM either. The Old Testament had long prophesied that the time of the Messiah's coming would be a time of feasting and an abundance of wine:

Isaiah 25:6 And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees.

7 And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

9 And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

God has saved the best wine for last – The water in those jars was a type or shadow of something better to come. All that water could do was symbolize the cleansing from sin that God alone could provide. That cleansing from sin “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7) and it is no accident that on the night he was betrayed Jesus took a cup of wine and said to his disciples “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” Wine was the symbol Christ chose to portray His cleansing blood which was shed to wash away our sins.

Mary's Advice, "Do whatever he tells you," is still excellent counsel, but some people wrongly start with trying to obey the moral commands of Christ, before they have the power to do so. If you would be a Christian you must start where Christ tells you to begin: *Mark 1:14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,*

15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."