



The Miracle at Cana

Message Notes, March 13, 2016

John 2:1-11

As we continue in The Gospel of John, today we examine Jesus' first recorded miracle, at a wedding in Cana.

Jewish weddings were quite an affair in that day. There was a full pageantry, with the wedding party walking with torches through the town at night, following the bridegroom to the bride's home to claim his bride. After a special ceremony within, the bridegroom and bride emerged from her home to lead the entire party back to the bridegroom's house where the celebration feast would commence, lasting as long as a week.

It was truly a festive affair, but there was much pressure on the groom's family – responsible for the whole feast, food and drink for the whole party until the end. If they fell short of expectations, it could even result in a formal suit from any of the guests attending. This is important background information to this story.

Key Points

- Mary (Jesus' mother) and his disciples are present at the wedding.
- It is likely that this was a family member or dear friend of Mary's. She seems to even have a hostess role in the affair
- The bridegroom's family runs out of wine, a major faux pax. Out of concern, Mary approaches Jesus to intervene in the situation. She is, perhaps, also nudging Jesus towards his destiny (as moms will do). She knows who he is (Gabriel told her face to face!), and considering recent events – John declaring him the Lamb of God, God declaring his Sonship from heaven at his baptism, a small band of disciples now following him – maybe this was a good opportunity to demonstrate his Messiah-ship.
- Jesus replies, "Woman, why do you involve me in this?" While this may seem a cold, hard response, it was a typical way for a man to address a woman. However, this would not be a typical response from a son to his mother. Jesus herein expresses to Mary that their own relationship is now shifting from mother and son to Lord and follower.
- Mary seems to respect and accept this shift, but surely she is feeling grief within, a loss of her "little boy" whom she has lovingly cared for since birth.
- Jesus also replies, "My time has not yet come." John quotes Jesus using this phrase many times in his gospel. Jesus' deepest purpose was not to teach and perform miracles, but to go to the cross. This time would not "come" until the night of his arrest in Gethsemane.
- Even so, Jesus decides to quietly address the situation. The servants fill up ceremonial water pots, then take some of this water to the banquet master, who tastes what has now become a very fine wine. The banquet master is astonished that the bridegroom has saved the finest wine till the end.



What does this story reveal to us?

1. The kindness and extravagance of God.

- Not only does Jesus remedy the situation, transforming embarrassment and shame into honor and praise for the bridegroom and his family. He does so extravagantly – not just normal wine (3 parts water and 1 part wine), but 100 percent fine wine – 120+ gallons of it!
- Many see God as serious and severe. But here we see Jesus (who reveals the nature of his Father) enjoying a wedding feast, meeting a tangible need, and doing so with extravagance.

2. The sign that Jesus is ushering in a whole new creation. He is bringing a new order to things:

- John notes seven miracles of Jesus, referring to them as “signs” – more than impressive demonstrations of power, they reveal a deeper meaning. They declare a message!
- The meaning of this sign is rooted in the opening line of John’s gospel: “In the beginning . . .” – which clearly hearkens to the opening line of the Genesis story when God creates the universe. In the events of the first chapter there are seven “and the next day” phrases (analogous to the seven days of creation). This Cana wedding story is the seventh. Again, this represents that Jesus is ushering in a *new creation*.
- This idea is deepened in the fact that Jesus uses water from the “ceremonial washing pots.” This “new creation” is a transformation of the *water* of Judaism to the *wine* of Christianity; the *water* of Law into the *wine* of Grace; the *water* of the sacrificial system into the *wine* of the Gospel.

3. A miracle of “heaven invading earth” (see John 1:51).

- Heaven begins at salvation when the Spirit of God comes to invade the spirit of a person, and God is ever reaching into our broken world to transform pain, darkness, and brokenness into healing, light and wholeness. Only the disciples recognized the miraculous power of Jesus, and they responded with faith.

Questions to Consider

Perhaps you are in a hard situation right now in which you need the kind, extravagant, transforming power of Jesus. Will you look to Him? Trust in Him? Are you willing to share this need with others and invite them to cry out to Jesus with you?