

More Than The Wine (John 2:1-11)

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- [0 : 0 0] On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.
- When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, They have no more wine. Woman, why do you involve me? Jesus replied. My hour has not yet come.
- His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you. Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.
- Jesus said to the servants, Fill the jars with water. So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.
- They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.
- [1 : 0 2] Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, Everyone brings out the choice wine first, and then the cheaper wine, after the guests have had too much to drink.
- But you have saved the best till now. What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.
- Good evening again, and Happy New Year.
- I know it's been a few days already, but I think I'm still justified in saying, Happy New Year this week. And I was driving home from the Equip Conference this past Tuesday, around 10 o'clock at night.
- And already, even at 10 o'clock at night, I ran into a long line of cars waiting to get in the city. I was driving home on my way back to North Shore. So this long line of cars at 10 o'clock, I was thinking, I was probably going to the New Year's fireworks or parties in town.
- [2 : 1 1] For a split second, I looked up at the Sky Tower and thought about the fireworks. But very quickly, I thought, No, I'm too old for this.
- I've got to go home. There's no way I'm going to wait in line and all the traffic afterwards. I wonder what comes to your mind when you think of New Year parties. Celebration, fun, perhaps traffic jams, stress, drunkenness, disorder.
- What if you hear that Pastor Albert or Pastor William stayed up all night at a New Year's party? And not only did they take part in the partying and drinking, but they actually brought the wine.
- They provided the alcohol. I imagine some of us would have a few questions for them. They, you know, who might have some concerns.
- Many of us have similar questions about Jesus' first miracle at the wedding of Cana as well. We kind of get his healing miracles and calming of storms to demonstrate his power and his authority.
- [3 : 2 9] But why provide alcohol at a party? And to a people who have already drank so much that they've run out of wine already. Apparently, the disciples got the miracle, though.

They weren't concerned about the wine. Instead, they saw the glory of Jesus and believed in him. What was it that they saw and understood from Jesus' miracle?

Let us dig into this text and this first sign of Jesus from two points. More than a sun and more than just wine.

The wedding feasts in Jesus' time were different from ours. It wasn't just a half day or a day's event. It would often go on for days. It was a big deal.

And even up to a week or two, and friends and family would travel from afar and stay many days to take part in these feasts.

[4 : 30] And there would have been a lot of preparations needed, you can imagine, for these feasts and accommodations as such. It would have been a great celebration of the union between two families with most of their friends and relatives and neighbors around the area participating.

So the anticipation would have been high. And you can also imagine the stress, the pressure would have also been high on the host, which typically would be the groom's family.

So it was with this kind of stress and panic that the wedding at Cana happened.

Again, if something doesn't go well, it would have been a very public embarrassment. And actually, the groom's family may be liable for legal action. They would be sued. And so, Mary, under this kind of stress and panic, went to Jesus for help.

It seemed that embarrassment and perhaps legal trouble was inevitable. But Mary thought, oh, maybe Jesus could help. Interestingly, Mary's name is not mentioned here.

[5 : 56] She was only referred to as the mother of Jesus. She's, in verse 1 to 2, as the mother of Jesus, went to Jesus for help. And interestingly also, the entire Gospel of John, the name of Mary is not mentioned.

She's always referred to as the mother of Jesus. Not only that, and I think related to why the name of Mary is not mentioned, when Mary went to Jesus for help, Jesus' reply was very surprising.

And I think, I wonder if you heard this question being asked before, especially in Asian circles. This was very surprising, if not offensive.

Jesus responded to a panicking mother by saying, woman, what does this have to do with me? I don't know how you speak to your mother, but my mother would have been horrified and would not end well for me if when she came to me for help in a panic, I answered, woman, what does this have to do with me?

And John's first readers would have found this to be unusual as well, even though the language is not quite as offensive as it sounds in Chinese or in English. The woman in Greek does not have the tone of disrespect, but it is still distant and wouldn't be appropriate for a son to address his mother.

[7 : 29] It's difficult to find an English equivalent to this term. That's why you see different attempts in different English translations. We just saw in the NIV it is translated dear woman.

In the ESV it's just woman and some have suggested lady or madam or things like that. The attempt is to translate the distant term of woman and yet without disrespect.

However we translate this, it was unusual for a son to address his mother woman if dear woman even if dear woman.

woman. So why did Jesus do that? We should be clear first that Jesus loved Mary and honored her as his mother.

Not only because this is the fifth commandment of the ten commandments which Jesus obeyed perfectly as one who's sinless, but we also know this in John's account of Jesus' last words on the cross.

[8 : 40] So even though John in the gospel the author of the gospel of John never mentioned the name of Mary but he faithfully described the last words of Jesus and Jesus asked John to take care of his mother in his dying moments.

So in Jesus' last moments under extreme pain and anguish his thoughts were on the well-being of his mother. So for those reasons we can understand and believe that Jesus loved and honored Mary as his mother.

And yet he still addressed Mary as woman here. I think verse 4 gives us an important clue as to why he did that.

Jesus explained to Mary that the reason why he refused her request as well as addressing her as woman was because his hour has not yet come.

In other words, Jesus wanted to make sure Mary and other disciples and we understand that he was not acting purely at the request of Mary.

[10 : 08] He will act but he will act only when it was the right time according to his hour. What is his hour? The word hour in the Gospel of John typically refers to the death of Jesus on the cross.

In John 12 23 where Jesus said the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified referring to his death on the cross that he was headed.

And in verse 27 of the same chapter in chapter 12 Jesus said again what shall I say father save me from this hour but for this purpose I have come to this hour.

So a few times the word hours used and refer to the cross that Jesus was headed. So here in the beginning of Jesus public ministry Jesus said to Mary what does this have to do with me my hour has not come yet.

Jesus refused to act immediately on the request of Mary because it was not his time yet and he will only know when the right time is according to the will of his father in heaven.

[11 : 24] In other words whatever Jesus did on earth while it appeared to be solving some problems at the time ultimately they were done because of the purpose of the father and according to the timing of the heavenly father and so we can also see that while Jesus was the son of Mary who obeyed and loved his mother he was more than that he was also the son of God and as the son of God the will of his heavenly father is what ultimately he must obey even over the request of his earthly mother Jesus wanted to make it clear that the miracle he was about to perform that his turning the water into wine was not just a response to his mother's request was not just a solution to a problem at the wedding of Cana but it was obedience to the timing and purpose of his father it was to be a sign that points to his glory as the son of

God and not just to provide alcohol to a party and Mary seemed to have understood this because even though Jesus words were distant however respectful it was Mary did not protest but she simply told the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them to do Mary seemed to have understood that while Jesus was her son and he has behaved as a respectful and loving son he was more than that he was more than just her son he was also the son of God with a mission from God for the glory of God he was her son but not only her son but also her Lord and Savior what can we learn from Mary's obedience do you sometimes pray to

God in desperation in panic and anxiety and feel that you have the right to demand a response and feel like you have the right to demand God's attention immediately and if he doesn't answer you right away you begin to doubt his power or his love for you but we can learn from Mary's obedience that even though Jesus was her son even though her situation was desperate but Jesus was also the son of God Jesus was also her Lord and Savior and for us even though Jesus has become our brother and friend by the grace of God but he's also always more than that he's not just our brother and friend like our human brothers and friends he is also and always our Lord and our God while we know that he's always loving and gracious to hear and answer our prayers he does not always answer them in the way and in the timing that we wish but he answers our prayers according to the time and the will of

God for his glory he is loving and gracious and he does understand our needs but he will act according to the will of God and for his glory Mary understood this and trusted that Jesus knew how anxious she was and how serious the situation was at the wedding and so he told the servants just trust and obey Jesus just as she does but we're still unclear at this point how providing wine at the wedding can demonstrate the glory of God and so this is our second point from verses 6 to 12 more than the wine if the miracle of the wedding of Cana was not just about supplying alcohol for the people so what was it about I think verse 6 can help us to understand this sign of turning water into wine and it says here now there were six stone water jars there for the

Jewish rites of purification the six stone jars for the Jewish purification rites can take up to 500 to 750 liters of water lots and lots of bottles of wine and they were all filled to the brim it was not by chance I don't believe that Jesus told the servants to use these jars with the water that he was about to turn into wine Jesus did not just want to turn any water into wine but he wanted to turn the water for purification to a new wine I think this can show us at least two things firstly by demonstrating his power in changing the water for purification into wine the disciples could make the connection that Jesus was the power of purification this was water used for purification and this was now being filled by the power of

[17 : 04] Jesus Jesus demonstrated that we cannot be made spiritually clean by washing in water or by Jewish rituals alone but by his power but there's a difference he turned the water into wine so Jesus power of purification is not just washing our hands with water but it is washing our hearts by drinking his wine which is the blood that he shed for us on the cross so first level I think we can make the connection of Jesus turning water into wine is washing of our sins through his blood which is the new wine but second connection we can make by providing aged new wine not just any wine but fine aged new wine the disciples could easily make the connection to the messianic banquet promised by

God in the Old Testament feasts and wine are often used in the Old Testament to symbolize the celebration of the Lord's deliverance it's a party when God saves us when God delivers us from our troubles we can see this in Isaiah 25 6 to 8 this is how the Old Testament in the Old Testament God describes his deliverance of his people Isaiah 25 6 says on this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food a feast of well aged wine of rich food full of marrow of aged wine well refined repeated well aged wine is there and he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples the veil that is spread over all nations he will swallow up death forever the

Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth the deliverance of God comes with steak I'm interpreting a little bit maybe kimchi maybe not but whatever it is will be better than the best wagyu steak and fine aged wine it's a party when God saves us also in Revelation as well when we look forward to the messianic banquet Revelation 19 6 again it's a party then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder crying out hallelujah for the Lord our God the almighty reigns let us rejoice and exalt and give him the glory for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen bright and pure for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints and the angel said to me write this blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb and he said to me these are the true words of

God what we look forward to in heaven is not just a trouble free existence but a party but a party with food and drinks provided by God so I imagine the Jewish disciples at least would have been familiar with the words of Isaiah and they would make the connection to see that Jesus provision of the fine aged wine to the wedding feast was really the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecies about God's final deliverance so with this first sign first public sign of Jesus at the wedding in Cana Jesus demonstrated that he was first of all more than just the son of Mary he was the son of God with a mission from God for the glory of God he also showed from the six stone jars of the water of purification that he is the true way of washing away of our sins he also showed with a fine aged wine in these stone jars that the preparation of the

Messiah's final deliverance has begun with Jesus ministry sadly not all believed in this miracle as a sign from God the servants knew about the miracle but there was no indication that they believed in Jesus as the Messiah they perhaps were impressed by this miracle they had to draw the water and the wine out from the stone jars the master of the feast did not even know there was a miracle he was just puzzled that the groom will hide these fine aged wine to the last he was probably quite annoyed as well when he was all panicking running around looking for wine here it is 700 liters worth of fine aged wine kept in the last minute the servants saw a miracle perhaps were impressed the master of the feast tasted a mystery puzzled yet only the disciples recognized the sign and saw the glory of

[22 : 49] Jesus who do you think Jesus is how do you see Jesus a miracle worker who does impressive things say impressive things or a mystery man who does random things or the Messiah who has come to wash away your sins who died for you on the cross the Messiah who will soon return to deliver the world from sin once and for all when we hear the words of God when we hear and see the sign of God from his word if you also see the glory of Jesus just as the disciples did then rejoice because you are on the guest list of the Messiah's banquet you have been invited to the final celebration in heaven and perhaps even now you can imagine you are already in the waiting room of this grand banquet tasting pre-banquet drinks and mingling with other wedding guests before we enter the great hall of the

Messiah's banquet and at that feast in heaven there will be no need to worry about drunkenness or lack of supply which perhaps some of us are still worrying about when we think about heaven with filled wine and steak but we wouldn't have to worry about it then because we would be without the corruption of sin and the feast will be well supplied by God himself jars filled to the brim with aged fine wine each better than the ones before this shows us the best is yet to come the best is yet to come for God's people the creation of God was already good and glorious but we're not going back to the garden of Eden we are going forward because the redemption of God the new creation of the heavens and earth will be even more spectacular the celebration then will be perfect will go on forever without interruption let's pray