

Water to Wine and So Much More - John 2:1-11

March 1, 2009 - Skip MacMillan

Introduction

¹On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding (John 2: 1-2).

The People at the Wedding and the Temple

The people at the wedding are contrasted with the people at the temple, who are part of the religious establishment.

Those at the wedding are common, everyday people and they receive Jesus.

Those at the temple, in the religious system, do not welcome Jesus.

"Outsiders to the establishment again receive deeper insight than those closest to the heart of the social order" -Keener.

Only the average person gets to see this miracle.

Jesus loves people, all kinds of people, humanity, the kept and unkept.

Wine in the New Testament Period

The first miracle of Jesus!

Real wine, but the alcoholic content of wine was not artificially increased as it is today; it was served as is or mixed with water for meals.

"Standard part of daily life in the ancient Mediterranean world" -Keener.

Wine was an important and expected part of festive occasions.

"Wine, a symbol of joy and celebration" -Kostenberger.

What kind of wine must this have been?

Seven or more Galilean cities and villages were heavily engaged in wine production, which constituted one of Galilee's primary industries" -Keener.

What Jesus does and does not do:

Jesus is in with the people, regularly attended banquets, Matt. 11:19; Mk. 2:15, 14:18.

Obscure, not in the spotlight, in and among the masses; doesn't show up and take center stage. This time is for the bride and groom.

Jesus does not: condemn the celebration or drinking, or stop the party as he does the temple "worship", where He shut it down; not worried about offending someone by being there, by making wine; is not concerned that some believers are drinking and possibly offending other non-believers. Jesus is not uptight like we are.

Jesus does: add to the wedding party, heightens the quality, blesses it with an abundance of wine.

Christianity today in America:

- Uptight about the wrong things: outward appearances, ministries, buildings, programs, money, wine.
- Not uptight about the lack of generosity, Christ-like attitude, being judgmental, putting money and politics over people, etc.

Jesus would disturb all of us if he were living with us today.

Too loose for some and too conservative for others.

He is living among us, in His Word, in your hearts.

Scene: A Wedding

Whose wedding? Family or friends' wedding.

Invited: Mary, Jesus and all His disciples.

Details: weddings in Jesus' day could last 7 days, invited everyone possible, lots of money would be spent by the groom, big wedding: servants and six jars to wash; Mary had some role.

Problem: running out of wine (*oinos*) - on a "cultural level, running out of wine was considered to be a major social faux pas" -Kostenberger. "The groom was facing a potential social stigma that could make him the talk of his guests for years to come" -Keener.

Jesus and Mary's Verbal Exchange

³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied, "My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:3-5).

1. Mary

The existence of Mary reminds us of the humanity of Jesus, the eternal One has a mom.

She is never named.

She is here, at the Cross (Jn. 19:25-27) and more briefly in 2:12 and 6:42.

She appears to be a widow by this time, no mention of Joseph after the temple, Lk 2:41-52.

2. More than a Conversation

Mary knows something: "They are out of wine."

Questions:

Why does she come to Jesus to help when she has servants?

What is Mary expecting? What does she know about Him?

Had Jesus ever done anything in the past that would lead her to believe He could help now?

Is this the "first of His miraculous signs" (Jn. 2:11)? Even at home?

Mary knows something; she comes to Jesus expecting Him to fix the problem.

But by natural or supernatural means?

Jesus' Response

"Why do you involve Me?"

Pushing back, creating some distance between Jesus and Mary and between Jesus beginning His mission and being on mission.

Jesus is driven by the Father's will and nothing else (Jn. 5:30, 8:29).

No family member, not even His own mother, gets an inside track; all must come to Him as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Even mom.

"My time has not come"

"Time"

To begin His mission, to be revealed as the Son of God, "it's on!"

The time of His purpose: His death on the cross (Jn. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; Mk. 14:35).

"The moment (time) at which God is fully glorified in Him" -Kostenberger.

"The primary reason for the rebuff must be that His mother does not understand what this sign will cost Jesus: it starts him on the road to his hour, the cross" -DA Carson.

Does Mary provoke Him to do a sign?

With all this said, He does the miracle anyway. He does step into His mission. Subtly, at a wedding with few who would know of the miracle, but nonetheless He moves into it, begins, takes His first step towards the cross.

Mary "Do whatever He tells you."

Model of Prayer:

1. Faith, faith in Jesus' authority, power, and ability to fix the problem.

"her uncompromising faith provokes the miracle (2:3, 5)" -Keener.

2. Request, she comes with a request.

"Holy chutzpah," mixture of respect, love and boldness; she does not demand him to do anything but does present the problem.

When "Mary approaches Jesus as his mother, (she) is reproached, in 2:5; (when) she responds as a believer, her faith is honored" -DA Carson.

3. Content, leaving the results in Jesus' hands.

Jesus will answer on His own terms.

Mary is willing for the answer to come in an unexpected way.

God works through Mary to begin Jesus' mission to the Cross; His glory is revealed in this quiet moment and there is no going back.

Wisdom of Mary: "Do whatever He says."

To the servants, to you and me.

Servants: they obeyed Him, they do what He says and Jesus does the miracle.

You and me: we need to heed Mary's words, "Do whatever He says."

Follower of Jesus, defined by "do whatever He tells you".

Jesus alleviates the problem.

The Jars

⁶Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. ⁸Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet" (John 2:6-8).

"Jewish ritual purification" -Keener.

Ceremonial washing to clean your hands and utensils.

". . . the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the market place they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles" (Mk. 7:3-4).

Stone Jars to keep things as pure as possible.

Lots of water for lots of people, lots of utensils, lots of washing.

Washing Hands

Is effective in preventing the spread of germs, but not completely and must be repeated daily.

"Lady Macbeth, long after she had washed her hands dripping with Duncan's blood, continued to be preoccupied by hand-washing. So great was her sense of guilt that no amount of water and the ritual incantation of "Out, damned spot! out, I say" could restore her peace of mind or ability to sleep".

Compulsive handwashing the result of being guilt-ridden or suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder . . . " -Washington Times article.

Pilate used hand washing to represent his innocence: "he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. 'I am innocent of this man's blood,' he said" (Matt. 27:24).

Jesus and the Jars

The Jars represented:

Traditions, the old order of Jewish laws (ceremonial cleansing).

The Law: what man must do, the sacrifices, the process repeated again and again.

Reminders of our uncleanness, and never removed the stain of sin.

"those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin" (Heb. 10:4).

You can't wash away your sin, but we keep trying.

Our Jars = our efforts to clean up our lives, our guilt, shame, we are trying to get clean. Promises unkept, good activities, give, attend, serve, in an attempt to redeem ourselves, to atone. We are Lady McBeth.

Jesus

Fulfilled the Law completely and perfectly, Matt. 5:17-19.

Jesus has come to purify you once and for all.

"He (Jesus) appeared once and for all to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

No more JARS, repeated washings, no reminders, but we are guiltless, shameless, at peace, can sleep, rest, and enter into the celebration of God.

". . . the old has gone, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

The wine of the kingdom of God has been ushered in by Jesus Christ.

Jesus brings an abundance of Wine, 120 – 150 gallons

The **Messianic age** would be a time of wine overflowing (Jeremiah 31:12; Hosea 14:7; Isaiah 25:6-9; Amos 9:14; Psalm 104:14-15; Revelation 19:7-9), day of the LORD.

". . . supernatural abundance of wine would mark the future era" -Keener.
With God comes joy and celebration.

Abundance in the atonement, forever complete.

Abundance of His grace, mercy, forgiveness, as far as the east is from the west.

Abundance of His love; grasp the height, width, depth of the love of Christ, Eph. 3.
God gives the Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34).

"On the Third Day" Jesus would be resurrected; there would be a celebration.

Quality and Superiority

The miraculous wine by Jesus is superior to the previous wine just as the new covenant is superior to the old covenant.

The shadows of the old covenant have been replaced by the "reality of Jesus".

Jesus values people over traditions

"Preventing a social affront to his host or the dissatisfaction of the guests (ch. 6) was more critical to the Johannine Jesus than the affront offered to the tradition of purification by water" -Keener.

Jesus valued the honor of his friend more highly than the traditions of ritual purity.

Jesus touches the unclean, the woman at the well, the outcast, the untouchables.

Jesus values people over ritual, traditions and religion (Matt. 9:13; 12:7).

The Faith of the Servants

"They did so, ⁹and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰and 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."

Servants

"Do whatever He tells you".

Jesus tells them to fill the jars.

The servants of Jesus fill the jars.

The servants fill the jars to the brim.

In faith they take the jars to the master of ceremonies. No Details! Just go and obey!

Jesus turns the water into wine.

You

"Do whatever He tells you".

Fill the jars to the brim.

Love her, forgive her, be generous, stretch your faith, fill it to the brim.

He will turn your water (efforts) into the richest of wine.

God gets us involved in what He is doing.

Servants, the invisibles, peripheral people.

He allows them to have a role and see what He is doing.

God-Oriented

They would never say "look what I did". All they did was to be faithful and fill the jars.

You obey, Jesus will do the miracle.

Glory and Belief

¹¹This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him."

Jesus is revealed, His glory is revealed.

The Disciples, Mary and the servants are the only ones who know what happened.

"The disciples get an initial glimpse of Jesus' Messianic identity" -Kostenberger.

Purpose: "that You may believe" (John 20:21).

"You will see greater things still to come" (John 1:51).