

January 18, 2004

Epiphany 2

*"Wine for the Wedding in Cana"*

---

### JOHN 2:1-11

---

**W**hen the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, <sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." <sup>4</sup> "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." <sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." <sup>6</sup> Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup> Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, <sup>9</sup> and 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 <sup>10</sup> 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." <sup>11</sup> This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

A wine store opened in Santa Barbara a few years ago that specializes in high cost bottles of wine. Some of the bottles of wine sell for as much as \$6000 dollars per bottle. Imagine paying \$6000 for one bottle of wine! The most expensive wine in the world would not begin to compare in taste and quality to the wine that Jesus miraculously produced for the wedding in Cana. And there was a lot of wine, six containers that measured between 25 and 30 gallons each, as much as 150 gallons of wine. That was more than enough for the people that were at the wedding, and probably even covered the cost of the wedding when sold on the market place.

When Johnny Carson was the host of The Tonight Show he interviewed an eight year old boy who had rescued two friends in a coal mine outside his hometown in West Virginia. As Johnny questioned the boy, it became apparent that the young man was a Christian. So Johnny asked him if he attended Sunday school. When the boy said he did Johnny inquired, "What are you learning in Sunday school?" "Last week," came his reply, "our lesson was about Jesus going to a wedding and turning water into wine." The audience roared, but Johnny tried to keep a straight face. Then he said, "And what did you learn from that story?" The boy squirmed in his chair. It was apparent he hadn't thought about this. But then he lifted up his face and said, "If you're going to have a wedding, make sure you invite Jesus!"

If you are going to have a wedding, make sure you invite Jesus. In fact if you are going to have a successful marriage, be sure to bring Jesus you're your commitment to each other as man and wife. Let's use this "**Wine at the Wedding of Cana**" to help us see how Jesus is concerned about our marriages and families. We also want to see how he is able to provide the help and support we can find no other place.

## **1) With compassion Jesus saw the need**

Jesus saw the need that existed for the family that was celebrating the wedding. We are told in our text, "On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding." Notice that Jesus was welcomed at the wedding. He enjoyed sitting down with people, sharing in their meals and their laughter. I read once that during the Pietistic movement in the Lutheran church, the little orphans in the orphanage at Halle were not allowed to laugh and smile. When we hear how Jesus was a welcome guest we see him enjoying the people, enjoying the food, laughing with them, having a good time. The sour-faced Pharisees did not like the way Jesus spent time with people and enjoyed their company. They accused him of being a "glutton and drunkard" because he enjoyed the company of people.

How much laughter is in your marriage? How high does the smile meter go in your family? How much joy do you bring to people at your work or the kids at school, because of who you are in Jesus? One pastor wrote that he wanted his kids to remember him, not by the sermons he preached, or the churches he started, or the people he counseled or the books he wrote but that warm summer day he grabbed their mom and threw her into the swimming pool with her clothes on and lived to tell about it. The Bible tells us Jesus even had joy while facing the cross to pay for sin of the world. "For the joy set before him he endured the cross and the shame."

Jesus knows the ups and downs we experience in our personal lives and in our marriages. Take notice of how he shows concern for the family that is in danger of running out of wine at the wedding. We are told, "When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'" Do you not sense some urgency in the words that Mary is speaking to Jesus, perhaps even a note of panic? In those days wine was a symbol of gladness and joy. To run out of wine at a wedding was a major embarrassment. Forever they would be known as the family where they ran out of wine at the wedding. Remember that wedding where the bride fainted? Remember the wedding where the groom had too much to drink? Remember the wedding where the wedding candle stopped burning? Remember that wedding in Cana of Galilee where they ran out of wine?

How does Jesus handle this problem? He says to his mother, "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" "My time has not yet come." This is not a put down to his dear mother, but a gentle reminder that he has things in his hands and under his control. How does Mary respond to this? She tells the servants to get ready to do whatever Jesus tells them. The problem was in Jesus' hands and he would do what was best at the right time.

Every marriage and every family has problems. Jesus knows every problem you have in your marriage and in your family. Jesus knows the struggle you have inside of you to live your life for him in your home and in your heart. He sees you when you are burdened down by the guilt and shame of sin, or when you have hurt someone you love. If Jesus cared about the family running out of wine, isn't he more concerned about you running out of joy, running out of faith and trust, and running out of strength to live a godly.

A mother with two kids at her side stood in line to check out a book in the library. The librarian said, "You cannot check this book out, because it is a reference book." The

mother replied somewhat sadly, "Then I'll have to have my husband come down to use this book. You see he lost his job that he had for 15 years, and he needs this book to help him write a resume."

Jesus knows the pain that mother felt at the moment. He knows the nights you cannot sleep because you have been unkind and inconsiderate to your marriage partner, or when you were disrespectful to your parents. As the song says, "Jesus knows our every weakness. Take it to the Lord in prayer." The president of our country has asked for 1 billion dollars to teach people the importance of marriage and family. It is the basic fabric of society. When families and marriages are strong, the nation is strong. Our Lord and Savior Jesus who attended the marriage in Cana is the same Lord and God who created marriage in the Garden of Eden. With our limited, finite minds, we cannot even begin to fathom how much Jesus cares about what goes on your home and your family this coming.

## **2) With abundance Jesus filled the need**

You can see how much Jesus cares by the way he fills the need. He tells the servants to fill the stone water pots that were used for washing. "Fill the jars with water." It says they filled them to the brim. These 30 gallon jars were not made of plastic or metal or even clay. They are stone jars, permanently put in place for Jewish people to do their ceremonial washing and cleansing. Some of this was required by OT law, but then the rabbis added countless other rules for ritual washings and cleansings. There was no joy in the religion of the Jews that used these stone water pots. Wash for this, wash for that, forever washing to be ceremonially clean. Jesus said, "When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) Watch now! The water used for a false religion is going to be replaced by Jesus with the wine of gladness.

Jesus said, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." Wine makers use a thin glass tube to draw wine out of the barrel and taste it. I don't know what they used to take some of the wine from the stone jars, mostly likely a clay or metal cup used for drinking wine. Even though their hearts must have been pounding with excitement to see this transformation, they do not tell the master of the banquet where the wine came from. This is a blind tasting. One sip, two sips, three sips, swirl it in the mouth, breathe in the bouquet. He is sampling the best wine he has ever tasted, perhaps the best wine that has ever touched human lips. When Jesus performs a miracle he never does anything half way. The lame leap, the blind see, the deaf hear and speak, and the stormy sea is immediately quiet and still. The master of the banquet wants to know why the best wine was saved for the last. Usually the best is served first, at the beginning of the celebration. Imagine his excitement when he was led to the stone water jars, filled to the brim, with 150 gallons of the best wine in the world. The guests would be happy. Remember the wedding in Cana of Galilee? That's where they had that good wine. Never tasted anything like it. With the sale of the extra wine the bride and groom would get a nice start in life.

A wedding. Changing water into wine. Bible critics say this probably never happened, because this was no way for Jesus to begin his ministry. I am sure they would have Jesus healing a lame man, or feeding 5000 hungry people as the best venue for Jesus first miracle. Jesus chose a wedding, a wedding where they ran out of wine. Does that tell us how much Jesus cares about what happens this week in your family? Are you short

each month to pay your bills? Do you have problems with the kids? Does the joy in your marriage look like this balloon? A marriage counselor once sent a survey to 200 couples asking how many would return to being single if they could do so with the mere push of a button and there were no consequences. 40 percent responded they would opt for being single instead of being married.

The Jesus who changed water into wine also issued these invitations, "He who comes to me shall never hunger and he who believes in me shall never be thirsty." We are told, "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him." The Jesus that provided a super abundance of wine also invites you, "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Someday I will have to stand before God in the final judgment and so will you. We will have to answer to how kind and loving we have been to our marriage partners and to our kids and parents. Nothing will save me from the judgment to come except Jesus, the Jesus who changed water into wine and whose blood cleanses me from all sin. This Jesus gives you and me a robe of righteousness to cover us of all sin. When your Father samples your life, it will be the best he has ever tasted because of Jesus. Amen.