

Jesus at the Wedding in Cana

Theme: Jesus manifests His Glory by changing the water into wine.

INTRODUCTION:

Do you remember your wedding...the dress...the food...the wine...the friends...the music? Most weddings around the world are marked with a great celebration. A wedding brings joy. No one attends a wedding with a mournful heart. Even guests put on their best suit and women put on their beautiful dresses. People are gathered because they are celebrating the joining in union of the bride and groom, the whole party rejoices because of them.

But in this wedding the focus was not on the bride or the groom. As important as the bride and the groom were, they were not the focus! It is because Jesus was the true central character of the wedding here at Cana! Jesus was the one John wanted us to fix our eyes upon. The apostle (使徒) John tells us that it was also at this wedding at which the Lord Jesus performed his first sign, it was that He changed the water into wine. John also tells us that Jesus was the fulfillment to some of the Old Testament prophecies (预言), but more importantly, he also tells us that this miracle manifests the glory of Jesus, the glory of the Only Begotten Son. And the purpose of the sign was just like the rest of the Gospel of John, as recorded in 20:31, "in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God". So, this is what the text is about: Jesus changed the water into wine to reveal to us His glory, His glory as the Son of God!

Today, we will be looking at the text in three sections: the need at the wedding, Jesus meets the need at the wedding and the results of Jesus meeting the need at the wedding.

Let me begin with the first point.

I. The Need at the wedding (vv. 1-5)

a. When the wine fails

This wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Its location was often disputed, but it was generally agreed that Cana was in the hills of Galilee, and that it was not a big city, but a remote place. Although the apostle John had not provided for us too many details concerning the wedding, we may too assume (假定) that this was a joyful moment for the bride and groom. We can imagine the wedding was like any other: filled with all the good food and wine, joy and laughter. But just when everything seemed to be going well, an unpleasant news arrived. The text tells us that Mary went to Jesus told him, "they have no wine." The wedding had run out of wine.

i. The Embarrassment

You may ask why was the running out of wine a big deal? It is because in the context of Jewish weddings, celebrations usually last for a week. The bride and groom were responsible to provide all the necessities for the wedding, and wine was very important for weddings. In those days, the failure to provide for the celebrations might bring them troubles and lawsuits (法律诉讼). Not only that, we must remember that it was a small community in which they live, so if they had failed to provide for the wine was a social disgrace (丢脸, 耻辱), news would spread and never be forgotten. The couple might have to live the rest of their lives with the embarrassment. **So, here we see a huge problem, the wine was running out!** The initial joy at this wedding might turn into disgrace, and greater yet, it might bring embarrassment (尴尬) to the couple before all the guests and friends. The couple's only hope was a miraculous provision of wine, only that might rescue them from this embarrassment.

b. "My hour has not yet come"

We do not know the relationship between the wedding couple and Mary, she went to Jesus and told Him that the wine was running out. In the midst of an immediate trouble, the bridegroom might have sent people to buy wine, but Mary went to the Fountainhead (源泉). She went to the Fountainhead for help.

Considering the immediate context, Mary was probably asking Jesus for a miracle; for she knew who Jesus was, especially the words the angel had told her in Luke 1:26-38 and the fact that she had raised Him. She knew that Jesus was now appearing as the great prophet (先知), like unto Moses, who would supply for the need of Israel. But she only received a dry response, "*woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.*"

The question is: why would Jesus respond like that? Doesn't it sound harsh and to call your mother, "woman" and irresponsible to say to her, "what does this have to do with me?" Imagine if you say this to your mother, see how would she react? Probably not a very good reaction. To many people, these words may appear to be a violation (违反) of the fifth commandment. But here Jesus' response was not at all inconsistent with the fifth commandment, because in the Jewish culture, it was not disrespectful to call your mother "woman". At the same time, let us also look at how John referred to "Mary", he did not use her name, but instead referred Mary as "the mother of Jesus". He did this to highlight for us that Jesus would not perform a miracle based on any earth relations, even His mother had no authority to order Him to perform the miracle. Jesus therefore, was not answering Mary as her son, but **He was answering as the Son, the Messiah, as the Second Person of the Trinity (三位一体)**. Even though Jesus was David's son and her son, but He is not only her son, but also *the* Son! Therein where Jesus' authority hides, He had responded as the Son, but not as an earthly son. The response

therefore, was a mild rebuke (指责) and yet, a reminder that although He was her child, He was more than just her son, and that He was the Son! It is because Christ came only do the will of His Father, but not at anyone's command.

At the same time, Jesus knew exactly what he had to do, but he stated that it was not the time for him to act. He was telling Mary, "Yes, I know the problem here, I am not asleep or careless, but I am not ready to do what you are asking me to do, at least not at this time. He would do according to His own pleasure, and not according to hers.

So what lessons can we learn from this first point?

1. Marriage is sacred (神圣的)! Jesus' presence indicates the sacredness and His approval for marriage. In Mark 10:6-9, Jesus told us about marriage, "but from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.', 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Jesus is telling us that marriage is God wonderful design for two people, a male and female joining together to become one flesh. There is therefore, nothing wrong to put on your nice suits and dresses to go to a wedding! It is because marriage was ordained long ago back to Creation! Marriage also reflects the mystical (神秘的) union between Christ and His Church! We should therefore, also honor marriage, and never forget its sacredness and holiness.

2. There are times when you desire something but it seems like the Lord is asleep, but he is not! Brothers and sister, the Lord knows and controls every situation in your life. It was not a surprise that the wine had run out. This situation was divinely ordained (命定) in order to teach us that man's extremity (尽头, 极限) is God's opportunity to appear for the help and relief of his people. It was not a mistake because God arranged it in such a way that the wine would fail so that there Christ might show forth His grace to the couple and reveal His glory, and so accomplish His purposes! This is a reminder for us that though we may not know why the Lord delayed to respond, but we may always take heart that the Lord is in control. We must trust him and know that he will grant us all that we need, in His appointed time. Don't be discouraged therefore, wrestle (摔跤) with God by faith and fervency (热烈) in prayer, even when he seems in his providence (护理) to walk contrary to us.

II. Jesus meets the need at the wedding (vv. 6-10)

a. Jesus the Provider

We then see that Jesus responded to the need of the couple with action! Jesus ordered the servants to fill the water jars with water up to the brim. After the servants had filled 6 large jars up to the brim with water, holding 20-30 gallons each, Jesus told them, "draw some out now, and bring it to the head of the feast." And behold, when the people drew the water, the water had been changed into wine! The not yet that Jesus first initiated had become an order to "draw the water out now!" The hour had finally come! For at that moment the water in these six large water pots had been turned into wine! How miraculous! Jesus had turned them into wine!

Further, the number and size of the pots told us that this is a true miracle. But more importantly, the number and size of the pots also indicated the fullness and abundance of what Christ brought! What was lacking, Christ had brought and provided to the fullness!

b. He gave the Better wine

More importantly, John also told us that the master of the feast also testified that the water **had been turned into wine!** But more than that, the headmaster of the feast testified that the **wine was unqualifiedly superior** than what the couple originally had!

c. A fulfillment of the pictures of the Old Testament

Further, the Old Testament prophet Isaiah also gave a breathtaking picture of this: in Isaiah 25:6-9, it says, "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 (酒渣), Of fat things full of marrow (骨髓), 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."

This was a vivid picture of the Messianic (弥赛亚的) banquet! Isaiah tells us that God will give "a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine (陈酒), of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined". What Isaiah gave us was pointing forward to the coming of the Messianic Bridegroom. A picture of salvation (拯救)! When Messiah comes, it will be a time of feasting and wine will then flow liberally. This food and fine wine that we have from Jesus does not only give temporary satisfaction, but everlasting satisfaction. Here we see that the pictures of the Old Testament were becoming a reality.

What lessons can we learn from the second point?

1. **Jesus provides what we need to do the work he had called us to do.** Just as the Lord Jesus had provided for the wedding couple, Jesus will also provide what we need that we are able to enjoy. For our Lord Jesus does not call you to a work and leave you alone, He always provides for the need of His people.
2. **We also see here a richer lesson, which is that Jesus gives us joy through salvation** (which was pictured by wine in the OT). Since the Fall, men have all been lacking joy because of sin, which separated us from God. Our hearts have since yearned (渴望) for joy, and many attempted (被试探) to find it through earthly pleasures, but the true need and greatest joy of a person is to have communion with God! We needed someone to take away the curse of sin, and to restore our communion with God. So, we too are in need of a miracle! **And this is what Jesus restores. He restores this joy through the cross. Our sins are forgiven and our** fellowship with God was restored. What a joy it is to know that the fullness of the Gospel has come, and it is only revealed in and through the Lord Jesus Christ! Just as grace had turned water into wine, grace had turned sinners into saint.
3. **Having tasted the sweetness of grace, we must also learn to deal with those who have a Christ-less life.** Brothers and sister, when we look around at our unbelieving friends and family, we will see that they are living a life apart from Christ. And we know that a life which is Christ-less is dull and empty, but the life of a Christian is rich and full as we walk closely with Christ, our hearts get more and more joyful. It is because Christianity is a joyful religion, the source of the joy is the true grace and truth through Jesus! In response therefore, we must also share this joy, this good news with those around us. We must pray for them and take our opportunity to share with them, so that they may also rejoice in the joy that can only be found in Christ!

III. The results of the Jesus meeting the need at the wedding (vv. 11)

a. Jesus demonstrated God's glory

John tells us that this was the beginning of signs (记号, 神迹) Jesus had done in his public ministry (事工) and this sign “manifested His glory”. This miracle had demonstrated the glory of Jesus as not just merely the performer of the miracle, so that men would give praises to Him, but it demonstrated the glory “as of the only begotten of the Father”, as it has been recorded in 1:14. Just as no one had ever seen the glory of God, Jesus had manifested the fullness of God's glory, the glory full of grace and truth!

b. Jesus had proved that He is the Son of God

Further, Jesus had also proved that He is the Son of God! He is the One who is equal in glory and honor with the Father. The miracle displayed the divine majesty (尊荣) and His Office, as the Messiah and also as the Second Person of the Trinity, in and through whom all things were created. He did not need to perform any ritual (仪式) or ceremony, but He simply ordered the servants to do as he said. This is echoing what was said in the previous chapter, John 1:3, “all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made”. Jesus had proved that He was the One who was there in the beginning with the Father, the great “I AM”, the Second Person of the Trinity, in and through whom the heavens and the earth were created, who revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush, and led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt and now sitting at the right hand of the Father.

c. “the disciples believed in him”

More importantly, the text does not say that the disciples were amazed, but they believed! The disciples looked beyond the miracle itself and believed. This is also what John wanted to emphasize here, the connection between seeing and believing. If you recall in the previous chapter when Nathaniel followed Jesus without seeing a miracle. This is an indication that those whom Christ had called would have their faith strengthened. Here John does not indicate that the disciples possess a brand-new faith, because the disciples had already possessed some faith, but their faith that they initially possessed was just an infant faith. Though they acknowledged that Jesus was the messiah, yet their faith was still young and immature, they needed strengthening.

On this occasion, when John indicated that “they believed in Him”, it is an indication that their faith had been strengthened because they had not only seen the miracle, but they saw beyond the sign and through which they have seen the glory of the Jesus, as the Son of God, the one whom the Old Testament Scripture testified, the one Mediator (中保) between God and men! This led the disciples to believe even more firmly in Jesus, as the Son of the Living God. And later, we also see that their infant faith had become stronger, these disciples continued to believe until even when they had to choose between life or death. They kept their faith because they saw the glory of Jesus, as the Son of God. One commentator (解经家) wrote, “the strongest men were once babes, so were the strongest Christians.”

Lessons:

1. **Believe that Jesus is the Son of God.** John wrote in chapter 20 that the purpose of his Gospel was in order that you might believe and keep believing!
2. **Let this miracle strengthen your faith.**

Brothers and sisters, our faith too may be weak and may be at infancy (婴儿期) in the very beginning, but just as Jesus here strengthens the faith of his disciples, so will he strengthen our faith in Him. We must not slumber (打瞌睡) nor sleep in our spiritual walk, we must press on (努力向前). Let us remember that it was where the disciples began as well, at infancy, but later, some of the disciples even died because of testifying the Lord Jesus. We must also remember that faith is a gift of God (Ephesians

2:8). It is his gift to undeserving people like us so that we may not boast in ourselves. We must understand that we have faith only because of the work of the Holy Spirit, who works in our hearts. It is only then may we truly give God all the glory for our salvation. Let us therefore, look to the Cross of Christ, and cling onto him. Let us constantly dwell ourselves in the reading and meditating (默想) on the Scripture. Let us also pray and ask Him to strengthen us. At the same time, let us also trust that the Lord will work in our hearts through His Holy Spirit, who give us all things sufficient to persevere (坚韧) until the day when we see Him face to face.

CONCLUSION

In closing to our sermon today, the Scripture tells us that this is the first of the signs Jesus performed, not at a grand wedding at which the whole earth sees and marvels, but at a small, ordinary wedding at which there are among the poor and the needy. Jesus came not to the rich and the proud, but he, the Son of God, demonstrated his glory when he came to the people who were needy, like you and I.

Jesus provides for all your needs, the greatest of which was the wine for your soul, the wine that restored the joy you lacked... He did this by drinking of that bitter cup (苦杯) on your behalf. He died and rose again and gives you his communion cup so that we may not be embarrassed in front of the Father...and he gives you the assurance of the complete remission of all our sins!

Further, every time you eat of the Lord's Table you look forward to the eternal banquet of abundant food and wine in heaven, at which only those who put their faith in Him may be there to feast with Him.

So, are you looking forward to the eternal banquet at which we may feast with the Lord? Yes, we should be looking forward to the everlasting banquet, and we need to have confident that the Lord Jesus will return to bring His bride with Him into glory. However, the application begins now, the question we must ask is "do we believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" We must put our faith in Him and cling to Him, and live joyfully, for His glory. And are you inviting others to this feast?

Finally, if you are not a Christian, what you are looking forward to is not the eternal banquet. But the day when you will stand in front of the judgement seat of God, embarrass, naked, hopeless. But if you put your faith in Christ and turn from your sins today, Christ shall be your defender (辩护者), and the Eternal banquet shall be at your sight.

Let us pray.