

LESSON TWO

A WEDDING IN CANA

*His mother said to the servants,
"Whatever He says to you, do it."*

JOHN 2:5 NKJV



REFLECTION

The fact that Jesus showed up for a wedding in Cana, where he performed his first miracle, makes it a deeply significant event. Think of the most memorable wedding you have attended. What in particular made it stand out to you?

SITUATION

Weddings in Jesus' day were extended community events that often lasted a week or more. Hospitality ruled the day, and families were under significant social pressure to provide lavishly for their guests. So, when the wine ran out at the wedding feast Jesus was attending, it created a major crisis for the family of the bride and groom. Mary tried to help by enlisting her son's assistance in finding a solution. Even she probably didn't expect the results that followed.

OBSERVATION

Read John 2:1-11 from the New International Version or the New King James Version.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ 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 ¹⁰ 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."

¹¹ 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.

NEW KING JAMES VERSION

¹ On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

⁴ Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the

master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”

¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

EXPLORATION

1. Does it seem unusual to you that Jesus would attend a wedding? Why or why not?

2. Why do you think Jesus chose to attend this particular wedding?

3. What did Jesus mean when he said to his mother, “My hour has not yet come” (verse 4)?

4. How did Mary respond to Jesus’ reluctance? Why do you think Jesus chose to go ahead and perform this miracle for the guests?

5. Why do you think John adds the detail that the master of the banquet said to the bridegroom, “You have saved the best [wine] till now” (verse 10)?

6. According to verse 11, for whose benefit did Jesus do this miracle?

INSPIRATION

Life is a gift, albeit unassembled. It comes in pieces, and sometimes it falls to pieces. Part A doesn’t always fit with part B. The struggle is too great for the strength. Inevitably, something seems to be missing. The pieces of life don’t fit. When they don’t, take your problem to Jesus.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, did. “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’” (John 2:1–3). . . .

Mary wasn’t bossy. She didn’t say, “Jesus, they are out of wine, so here is what I need you to do. Go down to the grove at the corner, accelerate the growth of some Bordeaux grapes, and turn them into wine.” She didn’t try to fix the problem herself.

She wasn’t critical. “If only they had planned better, Jesus. People just don’t think ahead. What is society coming to? The world is going over the cliff! Help, Jesus, help!” She didn’t blame the host.

She didn’t blame Jesus. “What kind of Messiah are you? If you truly were in control, this never would have happened!”

Nor did she blame herself. “It’s all my fault, Jesus. Punish me. I failed as a friend. Now the wedding is ruined. The marriage will collapse. I am to blame.”

None of this. Mary didn't whine about the wine. She just stated the problem.

Then "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it'" (verses 4–5 NKJV). Originally, Jesus had no intention of saving the wedding banquet. This wasn't the manner or place he had planned to reveal his power. But then Mary entered the story—Mary, someone he loved—with a genuine need.

In my imagination I see Mary turn and walk away. Her face is serene. Her eyes reflect calm. She is untroubled. She has done everything she was supposed to do. She has identified the problem, brought it to Jesus, and left it with him. She trusted him completely. She told the servants, "Whatever he says is okay with me."

In my imagination I see Jesus smile. I hear him chuckle. He looks up into the heavens for a moment and then looks at a cluster of six waterpots over in the corner. . . . At Jesus' command H₂O became abundant merlot. Quick calculation reveals the amount: 908 bottles of wine! The couple could have begun a wine business in Napa Valley.

Problem presented. Prayer answered. Crisis avoided. All because Mary entrusted the problem to Jesus. (From *Before Amen* by Max Lucado.)

REACTION

7. How did Mary demonstrate her complete trust in Jesus?

8. What can you learn from Mary's example as it relates to bringing your problems to God?

9. What tends to prevent people from seeing God's abundant provision in their lives?

10. What are some ways that Jesus has abundantly met your needs in the past?

11. How does remembering God's provision in the past encourage you to trust him with your present needs?

12. How do you think your Christian witness is affected when you don't take time to enjoy life like Jesus did in this story?

LIFE LESSONS

What better way to start our examination of the Son of God than to witness his participation in the highs and lows of daily living! Before we give real attention to the ways Jesus wants to transform our lives, we must reach a better understanding of his complete familiarity with our lives. He's comfortable with us. He knows us intimately—even those things no one else knows. When we come to him with our needs, when we realize that we can bring our emptiness to him, we're finally in a place where we can see his power at work in us.

DEVOTION

Lord Jesus, teach us to appreciate the simple pleasures in life and to enjoy the company of other people. When we have needs, remind us to always bring them to you first—and then trust you to bring the answer. Walk with us today, sharing life's pure pleasures and letting your light fall on life's common way.

JOURNALING

What are some problems that you need to leave with Jesus—and trust him for the answer?

FOR FURTHER READING

To complete the book of John during this twelve-part study, read John 1:35–2:25. For more Bible passages on trusting in God, read Joshua 1:9; Proverbs 3:5; Psalm 37:4–6; Isaiah 41:13; Matthew 6:25; Romans 8:28; and Philippians 4:6.