

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

John 2:1-11

John 2:1-11 record a miracle in which Jesus turns water into wine. Verse 11 explains the significance of this miracle: “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” This is the first miracle Jesus performed, which refutes the apocryphal books and so-called “lost Gospels” that records various, trivial miracles Jesus allegedly performed. Likewise, John calls this miracle a sign that pointed to the deity of Jesus. This is the stated purpose of the Fourth Gospel. John 20:30-31 says: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Verse 11 also states two results of this miracle of Jesus. First, it revealed the glory of Jesus. John 1:14 says: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Likewise, this sign moved the disciples to believe in Jesus. The disciples already believed in Jesus. But this demonstration of power over nature confirmed and strengthened their faith in Jesus. But many people miss the Christ-glorifying and faith-inducing message of this miracle. John’s Gospel records other signs in which Jesus miraculously fed the hungry, healed the sick, and raised the dead. In contrast, this first sign seems profane.

- **What was Jesus doing at this party?**
- **Why did Jesus turn water into wine at this wedding feast?**
- **What purpose did it accomplish?**
- **How did this sign reveal his glory and cause his disciples to believe in him?**
- **What is the message of this miracle?**

This miracle teaches that Jesus is God who came to turn your disappointments into joy. Wine is a symbol of joy in scripture. Psalm 104:15 says the Lord provides “wine to gladden the heart of man.” The wine running out at this wedding feast symbolizes a loss of joy. This story warns us that the good times of his life are fragile, limited, and temporary. Inevitably, the wine runs out. The wine can run out, even with Jesus at the party. But Jesus is the life of the party who is able to turn your disappointments into joy by his gracious presence, sovereign authority, and transforming power.

I. THE GRACIOUS PRESENCE OF JESUS

John 2:1-2 establishes the occasion of this miracle: “On the third day there was a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.” Mary, the mother of Jesus, attended a wedding feast. Jesus was also invited to the wedding. His disciples accompanied him.

This couple is to be commended for inviting Jesus to their wedding. The Lord should be invited to every wedding. Marriage is God’s idea. There would be fewer broken marriages if couples recognized the divine significance of a wedding and actively sought the Lord’s presence and endorsement on their marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become

one flesh.” What can two sinners do to faithfully live out this covenant of companionship? Invite Jesus to the wedding! ADRIAN ROGERS said it well: “Jesus Christ wants to be with you on Monday morning at the office just as much as he wants to be with you on Sunday morning at church.” Jesus wants to be a part of every aspect of your life. Proverbs 3:5-6 says: “Trust in the Lord with all your hearts, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

This family invited Jesus to their wedding. More important, Jesus accepted their invitation. In John 11, Jesus showed up for Mary and Martha at one of the saddest moments of life – the funeral of their brother Lazarus. Here Jesus shows up at one of the happiest moments in life – a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. I love the hymn called, “I need Thee Every Hour.” I assumed the writer suffered greatly to write such a song. But that was not the case. One day, ANNIE HAWKS began thinking about the goodness of the Lord, as she cleaned her kitchen. And it dawned on her; she needed the Lord every hour if things were to stay that way. So do you! If you invite the Lord, he will show up!

II. THE SOVEREIGN OF AUTHORITY OF JESUS

As the story unfolds, Jesus’ role shifts from invited guest to ruling host. Verses 3-5 read: “When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does this have to do with me?’ My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’” In these verses, we see the authority of Jesus in Mary’s report to Jesus, Jesus’ response to Mary, and Mary’s command to the servants.

A. MARY’S REPORT TO JESUS

Verse 3 says, “When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’” Jewish wedding ceremonies typically culminated with a feast that could last as long as a week. The wedding feast, customarily paid for by the groom and his family, required wise planning, careful execution, and abundant supplies. To run out of wine was a failure of hospitality resulting in severe and longstanding shame of this family. It could even open the groom to lawsuits from the offended members of the bride’s family. MAX LUCADO calls this “a calamity on the common scale.” No need to call 911, but no way to sweep the embarrassment under the rug.” The problems of life are often like that. Most often, the things you struggle with do not require the national terror alert be elevated. Your problems do not register on the Richter scale. Yet Jesus cares about the things that embarrass you.

What do you do when the wine runs out? Mary shows us in verse 3: “When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’” Mary did not take this issue to Jesus because she had seen him work miracles before. But Mary knew that Jesus’ life was marked by the supernatural from his conception. And when the wine ran out, Mary did not go to the bride or groom. She did not go to the master of the feast or the servants. She did not go to the disciples. She went to Jesus. And she did not tell Jesus what to do or how to do it. She took the problem to Jesus and placed it at his feet. This is what you ought to do when the wine runs out. Tell Jesus.

**I MUST TELL JESUS ALL OF MY TRIALS,
I CANNOT BEAR THESE BURDENS ALONE
IN MY DISTRESS HE KINDLY WILL HELP ME,
HE EVER LOVES AND CARES FOR HIS OWN**

B. JESUS' RESPONSE TO MARY

Jesus responded to Mary with a question and a statement in verse 4: And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." This question was a mild rebuke. Jesus formally separates his human role as the son of Mary from his messianic role as the Son of God. "Woman" was a respectful and affectionate way Jesus addressed his mother throughout John's Gospel. Jesus loved his mother. But Jesus took his ministry directives from his heavenly Father, not his earthly mother. This contradicts Roman Catholics who venerate Mary. You do not have to go through Mary to get to Jesus. Moreover, this mild rebuke of Mary teaches that we must not presume upon the Lord's work. The Lord knows what he is doing!

Jesus said to Mary, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." John's Gospel records several instances in which Jesus spoke of his hour. During the Feasts of Booths, Jesus' brothers tried to get him to go to Judea. In John 7:6, Jesus responded, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here." John 13:1 says Jesus knew that his hour had come during THE LAST SUPPER. In John 17:1, Jesus prayed, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you." Jesus' hour refers to his death, burial, and resurrection. It was on the cross that Christ was glorified, not at a wedding feast. Jesus refused to do anything that would hinder his appointment with the cross. This is the tension between the theology of glory and the theology of the cross. The theology of glory seeks to accomplish divine purpose without the cross. It separates the suffering of Christ from the reign of Christ. But the Lord did not compromise the ultimate for the expedient. And he will not do it now. You must wait for his hour!

C. MARY'S COMMAND TO THE SERVANTS

Mary was undeterred by the Jesus' firm response. Her presumptions were rebuked. But her faith was unaffected. Verse 5 says, "His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'" This is the open secret for experiencing the power of Jesus in your life. "Do whatever he tells you." Personal obedience is the human platform for a divine miracle. Obey the Lord actively: "Do." Obey the Lord completely: "Do whatever." Obey the Lord exclusively: "Do whatever he tells you." This is the inseparable marriage of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Without God, you cannot do it. Without you, God will not do it. When you have done all that you can do, Jesus will do what you cannot do. But you must do whatever he tells you to do.

- **In *John 2*, Jesus turned water into wine when the servants obeyed his command to pour in water and pour some out for the master of the feast.**

- In *John 5*, Jesus healed a crippled man who lay by the pool of Bethesda for 38 years after he obeyed Jesus' command to rise, take up his bed, and walk.
- In *John 6*, Jesus fed a hungry crowd with a lad's lunch when the disciples obeyed his command to make the crowd sit down and pass out the food to them.
- In *John 9*, Jesus healed a man born blind after he obeyed when Jesus rubbed mud in his eyes and commanded him to go wash his face in the Pool of Siloam.
- In *John 11*, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after Mary and Martha obeyed his command to roll the stone away from the mouth of the tomb.

III. THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF JESUS

A Sunday school teacher asked the class, "What is a miracle?" One child answered, "Something we cannot do, but Jesus can." In this first sign Jesus performed, John establishes that miracles are supernatural wonders only Jesus can do. This sign makes that point by demonstrating the transforming power of Jesus.

A. JESUS DOES WHAT RELIGION CANNOT DO.

Verse 6 says: "Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons." The wedding guests would make sure they were ceremonially clean before entering the feast by stopping at these water jars and going through a ritualistic washing of hands. Jesus will do something incredible with these common water jars. Do not doubt Jesus' ability to intervene because of what you do not have. Jesus is able to do extraordinary things with ordinary stuff. Just make what you have available to him. The boy with five loaves and two fish in John 6 can tell you that little becomes much when you place it in the Master's hands.

Verse 6 says: "Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons." These water jars had religious significance. They were used for the Jewish rites of purification. But Jesus takes these sacred water jars and uses them to make new wine. Jesus was making a point here about the emptiness of the religious system. In John 2:13-22, Jesus cleansed the temple of those who had perverted the worship of God with worldly commerce. When pressed to explain himself, John 2:19 says: "Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'" In Christ, the true temple of God relocated from a building to a person. The promises of God to Israel are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus gives a holy wink to this new reality by using sacred water pots to turn water into wine. In using these water pots, Jesus is saying, "Religion is empty. I am the only way to God."

- You ask, "How can I be saved?" Jesus answers, "I am the way."
- You ask, "How can I be sure?" Jesus answers, "I am the truth."
- You ask, "How can I be satisfied?" Jesus answers, "I am the life."

John 1:17 says, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." If you want rules and rituals and regulations, go to Moses. If you want the grace and truth, run to the cross and trust in Jesus. Think about this irony. Moses' first miracle was to turn water into blood as a statement of God's severe judgment. Jesus turned water into wine to illustrate God's amazing grace. Isaiah 55:1-2 says: "Come, everyone who

thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.”

B. JESUS TURNS WATER INTO WINE.

Verses 7-8 record the miracle: “Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, ‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.’ So they took it.” The servants knew they poured water into the jars. And they knew the master of the feast would be expecting wine, not water. Yet they did what Jesus commanded. Somewhere between pouring in and pouring out, the water turned into wine. The water saw its creator and blushed itself into new wine, skipping the natural process of wine making. This miracle demonstrates the transforming power of Jesus: There is no reality in your life that Jesus cannot change.

- **Jesus can heal your broken heart.**
- **Jesus can comfort your troubled mind.**
- **Jesus can lift your heavy burdens.**
- **Jesus can fix your family problems.**
- **Jesus can meet your financial needs.**
- **Jesus can heal your physical sickness.**
- **Jesus can save your lost soul.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” The same Jesus who turned water into wine is able to turn sinners into brand new creations.

A notorious drunk was saved and became a passionate witness for Jesus. One day, he gathered a crowd on a street corner and preached this miracle of Jesus turning water into wine. A heckler yelled out, “Leave us alone, buddy! No one believes Jesus can turn water into wine.” The preacher’s daughter grabbed the heckler’s coat and said, “Mister, I believe Jesus turned water into wine. He stopped my daddy from drinking and turned wine into good meals, a nice house, and the new dress I’m wearing today.”

C. JESUS SAVES THE BEST UNTIL LAST.

Verses 9-10 says, “When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.’” The best wine first was typically put out first at wedding feasts. Then cheap wine was served when the guests couldn’t tell the difference. But the master of the feast declared they saved the best wine until last. The world offers the best it has first. The life of sin can be pleasurable. But the pleasures of sin will not last.

- **Immortality may gratify you for a while, but it will not last.**

- **The nightlife may excite you for a while, but it will not last.**
- **Strong drink may stimulate you for a while, but it will not last.**
- **Ungodly companions may please you for a while, but it will not last.**
- **Greediness may thrill you for a while, but it will not last.**
- **Foolishness may interest you for a while, but it will not last.**

That is the way the world is. It offers pleasures that do not last. But the Christian life is the opposite. The Lord saves the best until last. It gets better all the time. And the best is always yet to come! Ultimately, this wedding feast is just dress rehearsal for glory. Revelation 19:9 says, "And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'"

**BLESSED ASSURANCE, JESUS IS MINE!
OH, WHAT A FORETASTE OF GLORY DIVINE!
HEIR OF SALVATION, PURCHASE OF GOD,
BORN OF HIS SPIRIT, WASHED IN HIS BLOOD.**

**PERFECT SUBMISSION, PERFECT DELIGHT,
VISIONS OF RAPTURE NOW BURST ON MY SIGHT;
ANGELS, DESCENDING, BRING FROM ABOVE
ECHOES OF MERCY, WHISPERS OF LOVE.**

**PERFECT SUBMISSION, ALL IS AT REST,
I IN MY SAVIOR AM HAPPY AND BLEST,
WATCHING AND WAITING, LOOKING ABOVE,
FILLED WITH HIS GOODNESS, LOST IN HIS LOVE.**

**THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG,
PRAISING MY SAVIOR ALL THE DAY LONG;
THIS IS MY STORY, THIS IS MY SONG,
PRAISING MY SAVIOR ALL THE DAY LONG.**