

S.N. - May 2, 82 A.M

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"JESUS AT THE MARRIAGE"

John 2:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus performed his first miracle at a feast. Where a wedding was in progress. It was no trick. And the word sign, which is even a strong word than miracle, is the word used here to describe this deed. It gives credit to his Messiahship.

Cana was (not far) from where Jesus had grown up. Mary was very prominent and probably had some kinfolks in this area. I am glad that John told this story the way it happened. About them (running out) of refreshments at the party. A miracle - someone has said - is a transgression of a law of nature. A miracle may be an event. That transcends the ordinary law. We may even test our religion by the fact that it is a miracle of God. And we are what we are. It always results in good, and establishes the right. The miracles of Moses, and the time also of Elijah, have great interest for people. But this miracle on this occasion was extra ordinary.

And Jesus was there to (celebrate). And they had invited some of the other Disciples to come. And for various reasons, the wine had (failed). The entertainment of the guests had been endangered. And quite often, we know that Jesus appeared in hard times.

Jesus showed his good manners at this wedding. By the way, we have undergone a revolution in the last forty years. In which it is difficult to be polite in America. In the 1970's, we had an era called the (me" decade). Every man asserted his own rights. And if he wanted to have bad manners - well all right.

Even we find a growing interest today -- people are tired of the rudeness. Newspaper writers respond to letters from people who ask advice on manners and behavior.

It is reported that 800 (department) stores around the country now give classes to young children on table manners.

In the (business) world, we find that women must accept responsibility that goes with their new status. They are accustomed to men paying the bills, the taxes, and the meals. That is all changing.

In (social) life, we find that there are ceremonies that mark important events in life. As birth, marriage, and death. Weddings are today the most ritual of all of life. When there is a wedding, informal or public, or whether it is private and formal. There is a solemn change in the lives of two people. The Bible uses the figure of speech about the relationship of God and his people. The Hebrew word for marriage is beulah. The name God promised to give the people. Isaiah 62:4-5.

Now as we read the account today of Jesus attending the wedding, we need to see that here is the beginning of (signs) - did Jesus in Cana of Galilee. And this was a real event, a real happening that took place. And the people were (without) refreshments.

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I read once where Bill West, who was pastor of River Oaks Baptist Church, down

in Houston, one night prepared to baptize some people. He got his candidates all dressed. He had instructed them how to come into the baptistry. And as they walked into the baptistry - there was not a drop of water in the baptistry.

And Mary came to Jesus with this refreshment problem. And she turned to him in this hour of emergency. And told him what the problem was.

Did you know Jesus came into the world to help people have good marriages. And Jesus will bless your party, your wedding, and your home if you will invite him to come in. As John records this story, we want to look at two or three things.

I. THE MARRIAGE SETTING

This marriage party did not seek a great blessing without the presence of the Lord. So Jesus was called and his Disciples. And they went. And he was ready to give them a blessing. Every occasion is holy when Jesus Christ is present. And every holy season is a happy one. Jesus, being there, there soon arose that need in which they needed some new wine.

On this day, there was a marriage. And Jesus had been called to it. On the 3rd day, as we notice in V. 1-2, that is the reference point goes back to the previous chapter - V. 43.

Jesus and his Disciples were in Cana of Galilee the day following. Philip and Nathaniel had talked to Jesus.

We do (not know who) was getting married - the Bible does not tell us. We do understand that the person that was getting married, was someone close to the Saviour. The reason that we know that, is because Mary, the mother of Jesus was a central figure in the story. She seems to have had a place of authority. The Scripture is faithful in recording that when she gave instructions, the beloved servants obeyed her.

The marriage in which (Jesus was invited with his (Disciples) that day, was not anything at all like the marriages that we understand today. It began with (a long engagement period, which was as much or more serious, than our engagements today. It was a solemn thing, and could not be broken. Without some proceedings. The marriage would (begin) when the bridegroom and his friends would come, to the house of the bride - and they would meet. The bride, and some ceremonies would take place. I think there would be some speeches. They probably had some well wishing. And the bridegroom, his friends, and the bride would (move) from the house of the bride to the home and house of the bridegroom. Sometimes at night a torch light parade would take place. From the bride's house to the bridegroom's house. And then at the bridegroom's house - there would be a long celebration.

As I thought about that, as (pastor), I have thought about some of the (receptions (wedding receptions) which we have had here at this church. Some of them seem to (last forever.) Now I want to tell you that the (Jewish) receptions did last forever. As long as a week. Friends would gather in the bridegroom's house, and they would celebrate and have festivities.

As we look at this miracle, and try to interpret it - here is something that happened for the first time. It is interesting to take note, that the first miracle of Jesus was performed at a marriage feast. And it was not done in the house of mourning

or a funeral. Not at a fast - but at a feast. This is encouraging to me. Because we find Christians today who find it hard to recognize that Jesus ever sanctifies joy. Or was involved in excitement. They picture him as solemn. But his first public appearance here at a feast, a marriage, and one of his last appearances before he went back to Heaven. Was with his Disciples at the Last Supper. It was at a feast.

Now I have felt a lot better about things since reading this. Because here in the South Norfolk Baptist Church, we might well take that Scripture where two or three are gathered together, someone will serve dessert. Somehow I believe that a joyous occasion is something that happens.

I want you to also notice this first miracle of our Lord was not performed in a temple - but in a home. The Temple was where Jesus worshipped. The home was where they lived.

He came at the invitation to the beginning of a (new home). When the foundation was being layed at the very beginning.

(Young people) need to remember that they ought to invite Jesus Christ to their weddings. And sometimes, our churches today, are having a struggle to maintain the sacred nature of weddings. Even among Christian young people, they are trying to bring all of the world and the customs of the world, and the music of the world into the wedding setting.

They do not understand that a wedding is something that we can solemnize and make

sacred unto God. And that Jesus needs to be present at the home and the place where it is taking place.

He needs to be in your home as much as he needs to be in your church. This is a day when somehow we are working to re-incarnate Jesus Christ back into the home. In this day in which we live.

The shocking things that happen out yonder in the world, ten or twenty years ago - are now happening in the church. The things that we shun because they belong to the culture, we have gradually moved them into the culture of the church. Until pastors like to keep up with the world. And we have a column in the newspaper that we read - and many times a great host of church members in the divorce section.

What has happened. Gradually the Lord Jesus has been pushed out of home. He has been set outside. And, he has become a Sunday institution. The first miracle was at the home. And the home is important.

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II. THE MIRACLE SIGN - V. 11

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It says this was the (beginning) of miracles. The first miracle. And that is important for us to understand - for it destroys once and for all, all the foolishness about the childhood of Jesus. When folks comes to you, with all those beautiful sentimental stories, Jesus and his Disciples walked into the wedding feast. And immediately they were confronted with a problem.

V.3 The Scripture says when they walked into the feast, the mother of Jesus said to him - "They have no wine." It is interesting to note that in all the miracles of John's Gospel, and in all the miracles that we read about him, you never have a miracle that is not built on the platform of a problem.

If there are (no) problems - there are (no) miracles.

And sometimes when I have difficulties, maybe I ought to delight in the fact that I am now getting into the place where God can do something with me. Because I have something that he can work with.

They have no wine, said Jesus' mother. And that was a crisis. It was all used up. And so the thing was, that some people might have said, let the friends go home. Why do we need a miracle. But as we study Jewish culture, this was not just a lack - this was a crisis. For under Jewish regulations, a law suit could be brought against the bridegroom's parents, if they failed to provide enough food and drink for the feast, and at the marriage. If they did not give the guests enough to eat and drink, they could be taken to court.

I wonder how our weddings would fair in this day and time. Sometimes a little piece of cake and a glass of punch - and you sit there for five hours. And then you spend five more hours opening up presents. But the Lord Jesus took compassion upon the bridegroom and upon the parents. As a result, he got involved with Mary. And one of the most interesting things.

V. 4
Jesus said, unto her, woman. Now that sounds disrespectful and of course, that is not just a common expression. But many times our Lord used that expression. He talked to the woman at the well. He addressed her the same way. When he talked to Mary at the tomb that day, and when he hung on the cross and saw his mother standing there. He said, woman, behold Thy son. So it was not a bad term - it was just a term used in the New Testament.

The interesting part is after he called her woman, he said. Woman, what have I to do with thee. Which is actually saying, woman, what to me and Thee. Now that is the way it is written. And it indicates something between the speaker and the hearer. Jesus was saying to this woman, his mother, what you are thinking about - is not what is important to me at this time.

One of the translators put it this way -- and I suppose every husband has said this at least once to his wife. Lady, let me handle this my own way.

What Jesus was saying to Mary was, that she did not understand what she was really asking. She was not aware of the situation. And he was looking beyond that.

V. 5
We find that finally she said immediately to the servants, whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. That is the key to all servant hood. We try to make it complicated. Because the servants did it - they were the only ones at the feast that knew what was going on. And when they brought the water to the governor of the feast, he did not know where it came from. But I want you to notice, the servants knew - they understand. The servant, next to the heart of the Master, always understands

what is going on.

V. 6
Jesus took the instructions of his mother. And he began to instruct the servants - and he said to them, I want you to take these water pots, fill them up with clear water to the brim.

Now, the Scripture says here there were six water pots at the feast, And I already know what you are thinking about. Mentally you are thinking that those water pots might have been some beautiful jars or urns that were colorful. You know the kind that you put a plant in. You have it right inside the door.

It was not that at all - you can just erase that out of your mind. Those six water pots, were huge lavers used for the purification purposes, that the Jews involved themselves in regularly. They were mostly for ceremonial purposes. At their feast, they used these great water pots to go through their ceremony of cleansing. They were used for the washing of their feet, as they came in the door. Then when they sat down to eat, the Jews had a very interesting custom, to take that ceremonial water and pour it down over their hands, on their wrists, until it ran down over their fingers. And then down over their fingers, until after they would eat the first course, then they would do the same thing all over again. They washed themselves and cleansed themselves. And all of this water is there for the purpose of purification.

The Scripture tells us how much water was there. Those water pots were two or three (ferkins) apiece. Now that does not tell me a whole lot today. It is (like) a man who should walk into a pizza store, and ask them for a coke. And the girl behind

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the counter would say, do you want a liter. And I say, what? You know we are going through some changes in our present culture. Oh, I didn't know what you were talking about. Do you want a liter or three liters? And I say, well, I'll take a liter. And bring it out here and you can see it - and then I'll tell you whether or not I want it. And so you walk into a pizza store and ask for a ferkin of Coke and you see what that girl does. If she can do that to me or you, then we have the right to turn.

Now a ferkin they tell us was about 8 or 9 gallons, in those huge water pots, if they were all full. There was somewhat around 130-150 gallons of water sitting in those six pots. Now, you might use your wildest imagination here - now Jesus said, take out of the pot. In another vessel and bury it away to the governor of the feast.

This was just like the lepers who were healed as they were walking away from Jesus. Suddenly, they discovered they were made whole. Somewhere between where the water pots were - and the governor of the feast was - the water miraculously changed into wine. And the governor saw it and he tasted it. And most people, he said, used the good wine at the beginning. And when men have well drunk - then they bring out the worst. But you have kept the best until last. That was a miracle of our Lord. An abundant, absolutely perfect, excellent miracle. He never does it half way.

III. MEANINGFUL SIGNIFICANCE

Now from this marriage and this miracle, we find some meaningful things happening.

V. 11
First, I think there is some doctrine here. The Scripture says when the Disciples saw the miracle performed, in front of them, they realized the power of God had been on display at that moment and time - Jesus manifested forth his glory.

It was like John 1:14 - the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his Glory. The Glory as of the only begotten of the Father. Full of grace and truth.

When we read John 1:14 - our minds always go to the mount of transfiguration. And when we read those verses, we see how his Glory was set forth.

Here in front of the Disciples, the Glory of Jesus was manifested. And this has a Doctrine about the miracle. The results of the miracle was that the Disciples believed in Jesus. Those six Disciples who were just a few days before, had been called, and believed him with their heads. But when they saw his power, they knew that God had come down upon him. That he was to be the lamb of God. And they believed the Gospel - that here was the Glory set forth.

V. 9
A second thing, I think that we see in this story, is something of a (dispensational) nature. We see here the law that was turned into the concept of grace. Here was a beautiful picture - as Jesus comes and uses the purification pots of Judiasm and he takes out of those purification. The old legal Judiasm and he brings out of it a transforming miracle. New wine of Christianity.

I hope that you have not forgotten today that our roots go back into Judiasm. And what we have by way of our faith, goes back to the Old Testament culture. That we have in our Scripture today, in our Saviour, and in our worship -- all of it goes way, way back.

But Jesus came and he took out of that - and he brought the new wine of Christianity. And he made into one that which was or had been two. The law and grace put together.

This is something of the (direct meaning to you.) And I think when the force of this passage comes down upon your own life, what the governor of the feast said, and he responded to the wine that was presented to him - in that beautiful picture of the difference between the way of men and the way of the Saviour.

There is a third truth you see, every man at the beginning doth set forth the good. And then at the last, the worst. But thou has kept the good wine until now.

In this passage of Scripture, we see that when Jesus Christ walks into a situation, he always brings it a new quality. He has the upward touch. The upward look. And when he comes into our lives, it is always to lift, to elevate, to make us better than what we were. This is the glory of his transforming power.

The first miracle of Moses, by whom the law was given, was to turn water to blood. The first miracle of Jesus by whom grace and truth came, was to turn water

into wine.

The blood speaks of judgement.

The wine of fullness of joy.

Even the commonest mercy in life is a rich blessing to the common man. Every soul converted to God has been a definite and successfully operated upon by the Lord Jesus - as when he turned the water into wine.

✓ There is something else we ought to note here - that when people come in with a bad character, or with trouble and bitterness, and with awful sin in their lives, that here is one that you can hold on to. In our church, I hope that young people, men and women will gravitate toward this. And know that as you trust the Lord - things (get better, and better, and better.)

Sometimes the Christian experience begins out of bitterness. Maybe it comes forth out of somebody who has been locked in with drink. And life gets better. As the writer of Proverbs says, the path of the just is as the shining sun that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

In V. 10 - He affirms that this Glory will change your character. The last state is better than the first. The converted life is better than the purest of

unconverted lives. Christ can make that wine, which brings gladness without joy. And Christ gives the best - the best joy, the best peace, the best hope, the best friendship. And with the Psalmist, oh taste and see that the Lord is good.

little girl & Grand mother walking by the church - I spoke & ask where they lived etc - lady told of her husband, stroke - Girl, Big bright eyes, you will pray for him won't you? lady told more of condition - kind repeated request, all he in bed (had) - able walk some - little girl - - pray for my Grandmother - (she thanks etc) -

I do not know what your needs are. I do not know what your problems are today.

But I want to promise you one thing. That Jesus who worked the miracle at Cana of Galilee is very anxious at this moment to walk into your life and to change the old water into new wine. He is anxious to take that which is bitter and sinful and change it into that which is better. He wants to make a new you.

Made with God's help - you make yourself available for the miracle that the Son of God wants to work.