

Verses 1-11 Water into Wine

What is unique about the miracle at Cana? It was the first miracle of Jesus. It is not recorded in other Gospels. If you look at the list of wedding attendees, it appears that the wedding couple was most likely a relative of Jesus and Mary—or perhaps a friend of the family. Since the atmosphere at a normal wedding is festive and joyful, Jesus is probably enjoying Himself. He was invited and is welcome here. He did not condemn those who were enjoying themselves, and He was not jealous of them.

What's the big deal about running out of wine? The wedding feast might last as long as a week. To fail in providing adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace. It was a major cultural issue to run out of wine regardless of financial standing. This would haunt the newly married couple all of their lives.

How did Mary react when she discovered the wine problem? Mary seemed to understand the urgency of the situation and asked Jesus to intervene in the situation.

Verse 4 What does “my time has not yet come” mean? It is not yet time for Jesus to make a public display of His power, by which He publicly presents Himself as the promised Messiah. It's not time to let the world know that He is the Messiah.

At what point was Jesus able to say my time has finally come? John 12:23 and 17:1 both address this during the days leading up to the crucifixion. This was the purpose for which He came.

What do you think about Jesus' response to Mary? Jesus does not call her “mother” here. He refers to her with a term of respect, but not necessarily a term of endearment. Jesus wanted to emphasize that there was a different relationship with her now. He is no longer functioning as her “little boy,” obliged to do whatever she asks. He is now revealing himself as Messiah who must obey His true Father. He is now taking orders from God. At this point we see the start of a new phase of Jesus' life (public ministry) and the start of a new relationship between Jesus and His mother.

How does Mary respond to Jesus? Mary is not offended, nor is she put off by Jesus' words. She doesn't rebuke Him as a mother might. She simply turns to the servants and instructs them, “Do whatever He tells you.” She does not argue with Him. She does not plead with Him. He has made His point. It seems that she leaves her request in His hands to deal with as He sees fit.

Application: What can we learn from Mary's example here?

Who knew that Jesus performed this miracle? His mother, the disciples, and the servants. It's interesting that for His first miracle, Jesus didn't announce what He was doing, call for everyone's attention, be dramatic, or even make sure that people saw it. He doesn't even touch the water! What is notable about this sign is that it was intended primarily for the benefit of the disciples. This could be called a private miracle.

According to verse 11, what purpose(s) did this miracle serve? It revealed the glory of God—the defining purpose of any miracle. It authenticated exactly who Jesus was. His disciples put their faith in Him.

How would you describe the disciples' faith at this point? Incomplete, immature, embryonic. They know nothing of the crucifixion and resurrection to come. Theirs was a faith that would be tested and developed—much like any young Christian's faith.

John calls Jesus' miracles “signs.” What is the implication? A sign is something that points beyond itself. When you see the sign that says “Cleveland 26 miles” you haven't arrived. The sign points you in the direction of Cleveland and lets you know you are not there yet. Jesus' miracles are signs pointing to God. Jesus' signs are meant to produce faith.

So, what does this first miracle tell us about Jesus?

- He is not a cosmic kill-joy. He gave His blessing to the joys of the wedding feast.
- Jesus had the power to create.
- He was submissive to His Father's will and timing.
- He is concerned with the small things in our lives.
- He is not annoyed when we come to Him with our small problems.

Signs and wonders produce a spectacular effect at the beginning, but as time goes on, there is a demand for more and more. We will see that effect in the chapters to follow as the people ask Jesus to do more miracles.

Verses 12-25 Cleansing the Temple

The Passover scene in the temple which so angered Jesus resulted from some very practical problems. These temple businesses were essential to the sacrificial system. Why? Every Jewish male, from the age of twelve and up, was expected to attend the Passover at Jerusalem. People who came from hundreds of miles away could hardly bring animals with them, so they needed to buy them in Jerusalem. They could only trade in the currency of Jerusalem so there had to be money changers.

Why was Jesus so upset?

- The practice of selling had become a highly profitable business, and eventually a corrupt racket. It was owned by none other than Annas, the ex-High Priest and operated by some corrupt priests. When Jesus struck out against the evils present at the temple, He opposed no less than the hierarchy of the Jewish religion.
- It was inappropriate for all this activity to be going on in the temple. Imagine that we are about to begin a time of worship. There is no music quietly playing in the background, but the bleating of sheep, the flapping of pigeon's wings, the clinking of coins, and the characteristic haggling over prices. And the smell is like that of the stockyard. What a way to worship!
- This took place in the Court of the Gentiles—the only place that Gentiles were allowed to enter for worship. While the Jews could get away from it to worship elsewhere, this market place in the temple virtually excluded the Gentiles from worshipping.

Is there application for today? We need to be very careful that our churches do not turn into shopping malls. The atmosphere must never detract from worship.

The words of the Jews are interesting. They do not argue with Jesus about the evil of making the temple courts into a strip mall. What is the issue in their mind? The issue is not *what* has been done, but *who* has done it. They raise the issues of Jesus' identity and authority.

How did Jesus say He was going to prove His authority to throw vendors out of the temple? By the resurrection.

How did the resurrection prove that? It revealed that He had authority over death—and much more so over the affairs of the temple. He was God. When they realized that, they would realize why He had authority to throw the vendors out of the temple.

Why wouldn't Jesus entrust Himself to people who believed in His name? Jesus fully knows the hearts of all men, He does not entrust Himself to those whose faith is less than their top priority. The issue here is not God's choice of men for salvation, but His choice of men for service, and for intimate fellowship and ministry with Him. It's a transparency issue.

What do you think Jesus saw in their hearts? Their faith was based upon our Lord's signs. When things got tough, their faith, if it did not grow beyond this dependency on signs, would seek for some new sign. While there were many who demanded to see a sign in order to believe, these folks never seemed to have enough sign-proofs to believe.

Application:

- Jesus saw the heart of man. It is how God sees you and me today. And yet—this is the wonderful thing—God loves you in spite of your sin and has proved it by letting Christ die for you.
- We must recognize that it is only God who knows the hearts of men, and thus we should be careful in the judgments we make, especially when it comes to motives.
- Faith should be based on who Jesus is and not what signs or miracles He has done. We must walk by faith not sight.
- The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is the “faith hall of fame” for Old Testament saints. These saints believed God's Word, and acted accordingly, choosing not to trust in what they saw, but in what God said. That is the kind of faith Jesus commends. It is to these saints, whose faith rests on His Word, to whom our Lord entrusts Himself, for intimate fellowship and service.

MEMORIZE: John 2:5