

Our Lord's First Miracle

John 2:1-11

John 2:1-11 - *"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 water pots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the water pots 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."*

Background Notes

The disciple Nathanael came from Cana of Galilee (John 21:2). This connection may be one of the reasons why Jesus and the disciples were invited to the wedding in Cana. In Cana today, there are at least four churches that commemorate the first miracle of the Lord Jesus. Each church claims to be situated on the place where it happened! We don't know the exact spot of the miracle, but we know that this miracle took place in Cana, a village near Nazareth in Galilee.

A major social embarrassment took place at this wedding – they ran out of wine! That's like inviting people over for a dinner party today, and running out of food before everyone is served. The Lord's mother was concerned about this embarrassing situation, and asked Him to do something about it.

The Lord's response to his mother sounds harsh: *"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come"*(v4). Although it sounds abrupt, this was not a harsh response. It's similar to the caring words the Lord said to His mother when He was on the cross: *"Woman, behold your son"* (referring to John the disciple), and *"Son, behold your mother."* That's the same idea as His response to Mary at the wedding, so it was not as harsh a reply as it might first appear. The Lord's point, of course, was that He was subject to the will of His divine heavenly Father, and not the will and schedule of His human earthly mother. Mary recognized this, and in verse 5 she simply said to the servants, *"Whatever He says to you, do it."*

The six stone water pots were used for ritualistic ceremonial washings. These ritual cleansings were typical of Judaism – both then and now. Each of the pots held 20-30 gallons. They were filled to the brim, and the Lord changed the water to wine. That’s a lot of wine! Is that a problem? Could that make you drunk? What’s the answer?

Well, I don’t think the answer is that this was actually “good grape juice, not “real wine” (as some people teach). If that were the case, the master of ceremonies at the reception certainly could not have told the host of the wedding: *“You have kept the good wine until now!”* (v10). Aged wine – instantaneously! **Good** wine! This was quite a miracle, wasn’t it? This was excellent wine, aged instantaneously!

So what’s the answer? I believe the answer is that there is nothing **intrinsically evil** about wine, so there is no problem with the Lord making wine. In fact, wine is used as a symbol of joy throughout the Scriptures. The problem with wine arises because of **what we do with wine**. The Bible is clear that we are not to be drunk with wine. The Bible is also clear that we should not hinder the Christian growth of weaker or more sensitive believers by the improper and uncaring use of our Christian liberty to drink wine.

“Why so much wine?” The jars held 20-30 gallons each, and there were six of them. That’s a **lot** of wine! First, this was probably a very large wedding. You don’t have six ceremonial pots of water for ritual washing if you have only a small group of people. So probably a lot of people were invited to this wedding. Further, wedding celebrations of that day didn’t last just a couple of hours - they sometimes went on for an entire week!

Verse 11 says that this was the *“beginning of signs”* that Jesus did. It was His first miracle. That statement completely rules out any of the so-called “childhood miracles” that some unreliable, extra-biblical sources claim Jesus supposedly performed. For example, He is alleged to have molded clay pigeons, gave them life, then gave them away. That (and other supposed childhood miracles) is apocryphal stuff. The Bible says it right here: *“This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”* The disciples trusted in Him more fully as a result of this miracle.

Doctrinal / Teaching Points

1. God puts His stamp of approval on marriage and weddings.

The Lord attended the celebration of a marriage in Cana. We know from God’s Word in Genesis 1 that God approves of marriage, and God approves of sexual relations within marriage. He created them! But marriage is to be the union of one man and one woman, in a permanent, life-long relationship.

What constitutes a marriage? If a man and a woman suddenly decide that they’re in love, so “Why don’t we just say some secret vows to each other?” No! Throughout Scripture, we see that marriage vows are a public declaration - not just before God, but also before other people and the civil authorities. Marriage vows should be made before God, and in the

presence of witnesses who can attest to the vows before the governmental authorities. (Remember, God ordained civil authority – Romans 13.) A wedding is a celebration of marriage - a public declaration before God and the civil powers that a man and a woman have made a covenant with each other. They are now husband and wife.

The fact that the Lord Jesus attended this wedding demonstrates that God approves of weddings as the celebration of marriage.

2. Judaism can never produce the joy of Christianity.

All the miracles of our Lord have teaching associated with them. The fact that the Lord Jesus chose to do this miracle using six Jewish ceremonial water pots is not by chance. The Lord certainly could have snapped His fingers and created the wine - but He didn't! He chose to do it this way. Why? He decided to perform the miracle in this way because of the teaching that is associated with the miracle.

In this miracle, the water pots represent Judaism. They represent what the Old Testament Law had become, with all of its regulations and traditions that the Jews had added to it over the years. Judaism had become a religion of rules and regulations. It was powerless to produce joy. Without the miracle, the water pots could produce no wine, the symbol of joy. Joy could only come through change through the coming of Jesus Christ, and the miracle of the new birth in Christ.

The new wine of Christianity is not Old Testament Judaism - but it is based on the Old Testament. It is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. That's why the water was changed into wine **as it was drawn** from the water pots. In the symbolism here, the water pots represent the Old Testament and Judaism. The Lord didn't throw out the pots of water, and He didn't snap His fingers. No. He had the servants draw the water out of the water pots, and as it was drawn out it became wine!

That is the basic meaning of the miracle. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and true joy is available in Christ! Judaism could never produce the joy of Christianity.

Practical Application

1. Invite Jesus to your wedding.

The Lord Jesus was invited to the wedding, and He accepted. Married folks - did you invite Jesus to your wedding? Single folks - if the Lord leads you into marriage, will you invite Jesus to your wedding?

What does it mean to invite Jesus to your wedding? First, it means that you want your marriage to be a biblical marriage: two **believers** who are married **in the Lord**. Further, it means that you want to place the Lord first in your relationship. You want a Christ-honoring relationship, a Christ-centered family – a Christ-centered home!

A Christian marriage is a wonderful reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church. Ephesians 5:25 says, *“Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”* The love relationship between Christ and His Church is to be reflected in the marriage relationship. A Christian marriage can greatly advance the kingdom of Christ when that couple is dedicated to serving the Lord together, in a love relationship that shows forth the relationship between Christ and His Church. What a challenge to all of us! Invite Jesus into your marriage!

2. Come as you are!

In this miracle we have already seen a wonderful picture of new birth in Christ. Notice how the Lord went about performing this miracle. He didn't ask that the water pots be emptied out and cleaned up first. No. He just told the servants to *“fill them up with water.”* Then the miracle happened as the water was drawn out.

This is a divine principle for salvation. The Lord doesn't ask us to get our act together, get all cleaned up and then come to Him - “OK, here I am Lord! Save me!” No! He asks us to **come as we are!**

The filling up with water may represent the importance of God's Word, the Bible, in the process of salvation. Water often represents the cleansing effect of the Word of God. Ephesians 5:26 speaks of this: *“to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.”* And Romans 10:17 says, *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*

If indeed the water here represents the Word of God, there is a great lesson in how to do evangelism. We can't do the miracle, only the Lord can - but we can fill up the pots with water! We can sow the seed. We can fill them up with the Word of God! That is our job. Then the Lord performs the miracle of salvation.

The Lord took those water pots, just as they were. Because they were used for ritualistic washing, they might have been filled with dirty water and all kinds of things. The Lord just said, “Fill them up” - and then the miracle took place! What a great picture here of the divine principle: “Come as you are.”