

Jesus Rescues the Reception

John 2:1-12

Reading: Genesis 2:18-25

Bethany Baptist Church

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...pray...

The New Testament claims that Jesus of Nazareth performed so many *miracles* you **couldn't** write them all down ...

...or if you *did*, there'd be **no** room anywhere to *store all your books!*

The *purpose* of Jesus' miracles was to *validate* His identity as the Messiah, and to *create faith* in His followers.

The Gospel of John records **eight** of Jesus' *many* miracles.

It's **not** hard to identify Jesus' *last* miracle...the *Resurrection*. That ultimate *demonstration of power* in which Christ's body *returns* to life on the third day and *steps* out of the grave!

But do you remember Jesus' *first* miracle...?

A sign that *also* pointed to His power...?

It was a miracle Jesus performed in the midst of an *unsuspecting crowd*; a miracle He *hid* in *plain sight!*

Join me as we read John 2:1-12 → Jesus *rescues* a wedding reception!

Jesus' love for a *bride* and *groom* resulted in His *first* recorded miracle - a miracle that the crowd *missed* – including the *groom* and *bride!*

In fact, *that* was Jesus' plan...

Jesus *hides* His first miracle in *plain sight!*

1. A wedding *celebration* (vv.1-2).
2. A wine supply *problem* (vv.3-5).
3. A wonderful *solution* (vv.6-12).

Jewish wedding celebrations were a big deal (read vv.1-2)!

1. Our text *wraps up* Jesus' first **seven** days of public ministry at a *wedding* in Cana of Galilee.
 - a. "On the third day" (1) means **three** days after Jesus had called *Philip* and *Nathaniel* to be His disciples (*fourth* day; 1:45-51).
 - b. *Cana of Galilee* was probably about **8-9** miles north of *Capernaum*, and days *five* and *six* were probably spent *traveling* from the Judean River wilderness (John the Baptist, ch.1), to the wedding at Cana.

2. *Jewish weddings* were a big fat *Jewish deal* in the **1st** century!
 - a. To understand how important weddings were, you really have to *rewind* several months to the *beginning* of the *betrothal*.
 - b. *Betrothals (engagements)* were as legally binding as *marriage* (requiring a legal *divorce* to terminate). The betrothed couple was legally *husband* and *wife* and spent the months preparing for marriage **w/o** *living* together or physically *consummating* the relationship.
 - c. When the *wedding celebration* finally arrived, it was a week-long affair, with the *ceremony* and a *feast* on the last day (usually a *Wednesday*).
 - d. And it was the *groom* (**not** the *bride*) that was responsible for the *arrangements* and *expenses* of the celebration, including *food*.
 - e. *That* could be kind of *tricky*, because people kept *joining* the party all week long.
 - f. On the wedding day, the *groom and his friends* went through the community to the bride's home and escorted the *bride and her party* back to his house for the *ceremony* and *final banquet*.
 - g. *And they lived happily ever after...!* ☺

3. The *first person* we meet at the wedding is Jesus' mother – *Mary*. Except the author doesn't **name** her.

4. *Jesus* and His newly called *disciples* are there, too.
 - a. The disciples **aren't** named either, but we know who they are (ch.1): *Andrew, John* (our author), *Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathaniel*.

5. You know how when we *arrange* weddings, we *draw heavily* on our family and friends to help out! **Uncle Fred** sets up his *video camera*. **Aunt Alice** bakes **300 cookies**. **Cousin Jane** plays her *tuba* during the reception.
 - a. *Nothing new under the sun!*

 - b. Because as the story *unfolds*, it becomes *clear* that Jesus' mother is **not** simply another *guest*, she's there to *help* with the *food* and *drink*.
 - i. And perhaps has been *put in charge* of some of the *servants*.

 - c. And because of *that*, and because *Jesus* was *invited*, it seems likely that either the *groom* or the *bride* are *relatives/friends* of Jesus' *family*.

Yup...those weddings were a big, fat, wonderful Jewish deal!

Did anything go wrong at your wedding? We attended a wedding once where one of the groomsman *passed out* (at least the groom *kept his feet*). Best men *fumble* to find the *ring*. Grooms *stumble* over their *lines*.

At the Cana wedding, the wine supply ran out. Now that was big fat bad deal (read 3-5)!

1. Jesus' mother comes to him with *bad news*! In fact, it was *so serious*, that she probably *broke protocol* by initiating the conversation with her *adult son* in the company of *other men*. But... "*They have no wine.*"
2. I went to a *church pizza party* once where they *ran out of pizza*, and **I** was at the *end of the line*. It seriously challenged my *sanctification*! Running out of food is every host's worst *nightmare*!
 - a. But when Jesus' mother *quietly* but *boldly* interrupts Him with: "*They have no wine.*" It was an absolute *disaster* waiting to happen!
 - b. In their **1st** century *honor/shame* culture, this would become a community -wide *reproach* on the *groom* (host) and an *insult* to the *bride's family* (implying he hadn't *cared* enough to *buy* enough or to *plan* carefully enough).
 - c. In fact, the bride's family could *sue* the groom over a *faux faux* like this, because of the *public shame* he'd bring on them!
3. So consider Jesus' reply to His own mother (4); "**Woman**, what does that have to do with **us**?"
 - a. "*Woman*" – **not** "*mother.*" It **isn't** an *insult*, but it's certainly more *formal* than was customary.
 - b. "*What does that have to do with us?*" Lit. "*What to **Me** and to you.*" This was a fairly common Hebrew *idiom* and it meant "*Why is this **My** concern?*"
 - c. Jesus is being *polite*, but He's a little *distant*. He **doesn't** say *no*...but He **doesn't** *ask* how He can help.

4. But these are Jesus' *friends* and this is a *serious problem*; what is Jesus' *concern...?* It's a *timing issue*. In fact, it's an *eternal timing issue!*
 - a. "My hour has not yet come."
 - b. By "My hour" Jesus is referring to God's *eternal calendar* on which the *day is marked* when Jesus' *glory* is to be fully disclosed and His *identity* is completely validated in His *sin-paying crucifixion* and His *death-defeating resurrection*. That's still many months away.
 - c. And Christ must **not** *initiate* the plan a *day* (or a *miracle*) **too soon!**
 - d. "My hour has not yet come." Jesus is reminding Mary that He is **not** merely *her Son*; He is her *Savior* and *Lord*. He is the *Lamb of God*, the *God's Son*.
 - e. And God's *Son* is on God's *timetable!*

5. Does Mary *slink away* to sulk? Does she *wring* her hands and *look* for another answer?
 - a. **No...**she *gets it!*
 - b. Jesus' mother has been *stockpiling* the *truth about her Son* since that *angel* first appeared to her, over **30** years earlier! She has been *treasuring the truth in her heart* ever since the *shepherds*, and then the *magi*, visited them in Bethlehem. Ever since He was a **12-year old** boy among *Jewish scribes* in the Jerusalem temple. ... **She gets it!**
 - c. Her Lord **can't** *compromise* God's *plan*, but she is confident He **won't** *abandon* His friends!
 - d. So Jesus' mother said to the servants who were helping her with the food (5): "*Whatever He says to you, do it.*"
 - e. As if to imply, "*You may **not** understand it...but just **do it!***"

And that's just what happens as Jesus comes up with a wonderful solution that hides a miracle in plain sight (read vv.6-11)!

1. Did you notice those **six stone water vessels**? They were just *sitting there* when Mary spoke to Jesus. They were *large* (**20-30** gal., each) and they were *important*.
 - a. To the *Jews* they were *important* because **1st** century Jewish rituals included lots of *washing*. The NT comments (Mk 7:3-4): *the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully **wash** their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless the **cleanse** themselves; and there are many **other** things which they have received in order to observe, such as the **washing** of cups and pitchers and copper pots.*
 - i. Lots of *washing* requires lots of *water*.
 - ii. Especially when there are lots of *guests*.
 - b. But to *Jesus* their *big capacity* was *important* because *big power* and *big love* make for a *great big miracle*!
 - i. We are talking about a total of **150-180** gallons!
 - ii. That's like **30** or more of our white, plastic **5-gallon** buckets!
2. Jesus *spoke* the servants, and even though He was a guest, they *obeyed* Him. "*Fill the waterpots with water.*"
 - a. In fact, He wanted the vessels *filled to the **brim***. Then there would be absolutely **no room** for anyone to suggest that they *also* added *wine*!
 - b. The Lord *ordered* the servants to take a *dipperful* out of a *waterpot* and take it to the *chief steward* of the banquet.
 - i. This man was a likely to be a *friend* of the groom or his family. And the *conversation* makes it clear that he *knows* something about *wine* and he knows the *wine-supply* has been *drained*! He's probably *sweating bullets*...!

- c. Do you remember the **OT** miracles of *Elijah* and *Elisha*? The *widow's* dwindling supply of *flour* and another *widow's* meager supply of *oil*, yet both simply **wouldn't run out**?
- i. Those were pretty good *previews* of what Jesus is about to do for His friends!
 - ii. Somewhere between the *waterpot* and the *chief steward* Jesus **wills** for something *miraculous* to happen. He doesn't *touch* or *talk to* the vessels (or the dipper). He simply *wills* **180** gallons of *water* to become **180** gallons of the *best wine* the steward had ever *lifted to his lips*!
 - iii. The *shocked steward* called for the *groom*. This is *exactly* the *opposite* of any celebration he's *ever* attended!
 1. **V.10** – “*Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.*”
 2. You get the *point*, right? Everyone starts out with the *good* (expensive) *stuff*, but just enough to last until everyone's *judgment* is just a little *fuzzy*. Then break out the *discount* vintage. No one will ever know....
 - iv. But Jesus has not only *rescued* the groom's *reputation*, He's *enhanced* his reputation by providing the *best wine* anyone in Cana had ever tasted!
 1. And with **180** gallons, Jesus has blessed the *newlyweds* with a *very handsome gift*.
 2. A gift given out of *lavish love*!
 - v. Yet He did in a way that **didn't** *compromise* God's timetable by opening declaring His *identity* and drawing *attention* to Himself. Jesus *hid* that miracle in *plain sight*!
 - vi. In fact, as Jesus *left* the celebration, almost *no one* knew what had just happened. Just His *mother*, a few *servants* (9), and His *disciples*. Maybe His *brothers*.

- vii. But like *all* miracles, for those who *did* know, the wedding miracle *magnified* Christ's glory and *strengthened* their faith in Him.
3. Soon Jesus' group (*mother, brothers, disciples*) went down from *Cana* to *Capernaum*, our Lord's *base of operations*.
 - But they were there for only a *few days* (12) – His *next* stop (and His *next miracle*) were in *Jerusalem*.

There is a lot we can draw from Jesus' first miracle...

1. God cares about *marriage* and *your* marriage. In fact, God *invented* marriage (Genesis 2) – you know what I like to say: “*God still holds the patent on marriage.*” How important that it is for the church in these days in which we live!
 - a. His *marriage blueprint* is simple: **one** man, **one** woman, and a *covenant of commitment* before a Holy God.
 - b. Beloved, Jesus brought *joy overflowing* to a wedding in Cana, and He can bring *joy to your marriage*. Follow His disciples' example: *believe in Him*, then follow His mother's advice: “*Just **do** what He says.*”

2. But are you troubled about the *wine* thing? Clearly, from the *reaction* of the *steward* (10), this was **180** gal. of the extra good wine. The typical **1st** century composition was **one part** fermented grape juice to **two/three parts** water. So, a real alcohol content.
 - a. This is another reminder that while the Bible *clearly* and *forcefully* commands *self-control* and forbids *drunkenness*...
 - b. ...it never commands *abstaining*.
 - c. Let your *conscience be your guide*, consider your neighbor, and exercise *self-control* with *dignity*.

3. Most importantly, this *first miracle* demonstrates Jesus' *identity* and creates *faith*.
 - a. Making *wine* out of *water*, an illustration of making *something good* out of *nothing*, **is what God alone can do!**
 - b. And then to do it with *overflowing love*, for the *joy* of His people, is just the way God does things for *you* and *me*!
 - c. **Friend, Jesus is the *Eternal Word in human flesh*. The *Lamb of God* who takes away the *sin of the world*. And can make *something good* out of *nothing*. **Believe in Him!** *...pray...***