

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."⁴ "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."¹¹ This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

In the name of our Lord Jesus—true man and also true God—dear friends,

Weddings can be stressful. Just ask any bride or groom...or mother or father of either the bride or groom...or pastors...or musicians...or any number of people. On a day when you would love to just relax and enjoy God joining two people in marriage, there are things that can cause stress—things that can go wrong. I have attended or been involved in weddings where the ring-bearer and flower girl received more attention than God did from some people. I've seen Unity Candles refuse to light and brides' feet get tangled up in their wedding gowns. Musicians have hit squeaky notes and photographers have distracted worshipers by roaming all over the place during the ceremony—including over the rails by the altar! Members of the bridal party have felt not-so-good and had to sit down. A Marriage License was left at home once and in another, none of the pictures from the wedding and reception turned out. On such a big day, everyone wants things to go smoothly and everything to be perfect, but often little things don't go exactly as planned. I bet if I asked those of you who are or have been married to think back to your wedding, you might come up with a thing or two from your own special day!

Today, we're looking into God's Word and we get to peek in on a wedding where something has gone wrong, something that could cause a bit of embarrassment for the bride and groom. And it just so happens that Jesus and his family and his friends had been invited to attend the wedding celebration which took place in the city of Cana, not even 10 miles from Jesus' hometown, Nazareth. As we catch a glimpse of this Jewish wedding, we are reminded that we can see **MIRACLES IN EVERYDAY LIFE**.

Now Jewish weddings of the day were a little different than ours. The bride would be brought in a joyful procession from her father's house to that of her husband. A bridal veil would cover her face as her bridesmaids surrounded her and friends of the bridegroom and children would lead the way. Once she came to her husband, they were covered with garlands and would then sign the *ketubah*, or marriage contract, before the marriage supper began. That supper could last all day. In fact, the wedding celebration could last a whole week. During that time, the host would be responsible for providing wine for the guests. It was a major social *faux pas* to let the wine run out! But that is just what happened at this wedding.

Weddings, although special for those involved, are a regular occurrence. They are part of everyday life. When the bridal couple invited Jesus to their wedding, it appeared that they had invited a regular person, maybe a prominent person even. But they could not have known that it would be at a regular event like this that Jesus would first make his divine glory known to his disciples and, perhaps, to a few others.

At a wedding, there are always people helping with the reception, aren't there? It was no different at a Jewish wedding. Jesus' mother Mary may have been helping the couple that day, judging from her involvement in their little problem and her directions to those serving to do whatever Jesus asked of them.

It may strike us as odd that when she tells Jesus that they have run out of wine, her son rebukes her. It may or may not strike you that way in your English Bible, but in the Greek there is no mistaking how Jesus responds to her. He says **Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.** The phrase that Jesus used was a common one that put distance between two people. It was like saying "*What do you and I have in common where this is concerned? Nothing!*" What may not have been clear to Mary before probably was now. This was no longer the baby Jesus that Mary held in her loving arms. This was no longer the boy Jesus whom she reclaimed from the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus had begun his earthly ministry as the promised Savior. An extremely focused 3 year run toward the cross of Calvary had begun. He would decide when to do what he needed to do as the world's Savior. He may have already planned to help but was waiting for the right moment. In any case, her prompting was not necessary for Jesus to reveal his glory. He was not being rude to his mother, but he was clearly drawing the line.

As we hear Jesus speak to his mother and see him perform his first public miracle, we also see a behind-the-scenes miracle. The miracle is that the Savior loved you at that point as much as he loved his own mother. He would reveal his glory to those present to show that he was true God, not to please his mother or even just to help out the wedding couple. But the miracle that catches our attention is his changing of about 150 gallons of water into the finest wine ever to pass over the lips of human beings. This wine that Jesus created on the spot shocked the master of the banquet because of its high quality. He points out that the good stuff was usually served first, the lesser quality wine saved for after the guests had "drunk freely". (That would be a better translation and understanding than as our NIV Bibles say—"have had too much to drink.") The result was that Jesus provided an excellent wedding gift and saved the couple from embarrassment.

However, this was not the most important thing that happened there at that wedding. At the end of the account we hear **He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.** This "man" showed himself to be much more than a simple human being. This was the first glimpse of Jesus' divine glory and power that those first disciples—Andrew, John, Peter, Philip and Nathanael—were privileged to see. These

men believed that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior, already. What is meant here is that their faith was reaffirmed and deepened by what Jesus did. Think of it—they stood there and saw these huge clay jars of water change into wine. You and I can't truly appreciate that because we've never seen such a thing! They saw a miracle there at that regular life-event, the wedding. I'm sure when they got cleaned up and dressed up to go to the celebration Andrew didn't straighten his tie in the mirror and say to Philip, *"You know, I think we're going to see something incredible today at this wedding."* No! I'm sure it was a day like any other day—but Jesus' miracle of changing that water into wine made that a day those disciples would never forget!

But can we really call this an EVERYDAY MIRACLE? Yes, God's Son was here on this earth. Yes, this was the beginning of his earthly ministry. Yes, this was his first miracle. I guess all that does make it pretty special and uncommon. BUT, isn't this the same Jesus who promises that he is with you throughout your day every day? Isn't Jesus at work as our Savior every day now just as he was then? And besides, I happen to believe and I hope you know it too, that Jesus still does EVERYDAY MIRACLES!

Does Jesus not sometimes have his angels intervene when a person has injuries or cancer and those people—against all odds and human wisdom—overcome them in seemingly miraculous ways? Does Jesus not sometimes work in the everyday events of our lives giving us just what we need in times of financial difficulty? I've had it happen and others have shared examples of how money has come in unexpectedly and just in the nick of time. Those are just a couple examples—and you could try to find logical reasons for some things and chalk others up to coincidence or chance, but the Christian witnesses miracles when he or she knows God works all things for our good...and often pours out so much blessing we can hardly handle it...and sometimes sends angels even though we don't see them!

Why does God do all this? For the same reason he changed water into wine at a wedding. Because he wants to reveal his glory and extend his love. Every time God comes through for us and we recognize the greatness of it—our faith is deepened like Jesus' disciples' were. We respond with the confidence and faith that Mary displayed when she encouraged those servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. We end up with a stronger trust, a deeper faith—one that responds by loving our Lord even more and marveling at him from different angles.

Someone might suggest that a thoughtful bride and groom or a good wedding banquet manager would have been better prepared, that they didn't deserve to have Jesus bail them out. After all, they caused their own problem. Perhaps we can see in this account how undeserving we are of the miracles, and more importantly, the love, of Jesus. Because of our sin, we are not prepared to come to God and believe in him. Because we cannot and will not let go of our sinful nature, we have caused our own problem of facing an empty life here in this world and eternal punishment when we die. That's what would have happened had Jesus not bailed us out! But that is just what he did!

We did not deserve the miracle of Jesus' perfect life. We did not deserve the miracle of his love shown by willingly bearing the punishment for *our* sins on the cross. We did not deserve to have the glory of Christ shine over us in the promise of our resurrection to eternal life because *he* conquered death. Yeah, you could say that our condition was far more serious than just being embarrassed by our lack of preparation. We were lost, but Jesus found us—and he revealed his glory as our Savior and he saved our lives here and for eternity.

The miracle of Jesus at Cana has the power to reveal his glory and love for sinners, if you know how to look for it in that wedding story. And you, as a child of God, can also see the MIRACLES IN your EVERYDAY LIFE—if you will remember his amazing forgiveness and salvation and watch for his care of you in everyday things. I pray that you will see Jesus for who he is, like those disciples and his mother did that day in Cana so long ago. Because they didn't just see a man attending a wedding like many others saw—they saw God, their Savior. And he is your Savior too. Amen.

**Now the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.**