

The Gospel of John
Week Three
John 2:1-25

Day One

1 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."

vs. 1&2 – Jesus went to a wedding with His disciples where His mother was also present. This was an inauspicious start to His public ministry, for He was about to save the hosts of a wedding celebration from embarrassment when they ran out of wine. That certainly wasn't dramatic. Yet many have expounded on the symbolic nature of what Jesus did. I also like to interpret this in light of the fact that Jesus came not to sit and discuss theology but to address practical needs.

v. 3 – Jesus' mother made it known to Jesus that the wine had run out. **Why did she tell Him this? Perhaps she had some role in hosting the guests? Had He performed other miracles up this point that John did not report? Did she have some idea of who Jesus was and what He could do?** Whatever the issues, she clearly knew that He could do something special to help the hosts. She also told Jesus, her oldest son, since she obviously no longer had a husband, Joseph presumably being dead.

v. 4 – I have read some interpretations of what Jesus meant here, and I think it is pretty straightforward. He was not at the wedding to perform a miracle. Jesus was a bit harsh in His response, for his mother was attempting to involve Him in a matter for which He had no role or concern. Yet even as I write this and just re-read John Calvin's commentary on this story, I am still not satisfied that I understand exactly what transpired here and why. John must have felt some great need, however, to include this story! *Lord, what are you trying to tell and show us? Grant us insight into your Word and the life of Jesus! Help, Lord, for we don't want to force a meaning, but to grasp Your meaning.*

v. 5 – Obviously Mary was not "put off" by Jesus' response, but read something into it that is not obvious from my vantage point 2,000 years later. Perhaps we can consider these options:

1. God is accessible through prayer and petition.
2. Jesus is involved in the great and the small things of life.
3. Jesus and His mother had discussions about His work and ministry.
4. Mary had hoped that Jesus would bring some comfort to the hosts through some encouraging words.

5. Mary's words were prophetic and good advice to all mankind: Do what He tells you to do!

What else do you see here? Please feel free to [write](#) and let us know.

Day Two

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 aside 10 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 in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

v. 6 – Those were big jars holding many gallons of water used to wash and cleanse before eating as prescribed by Jewish tradition. Jesus used these jars, symbolic of the current Jewish system, and used them to do something new. Now I am beginning to see the meaning of the miracle, if not the events leading up to it. Let's "play" with this account and think of it this way:

1. A wedding feast is a place of joy and hope. Israel had lost those in their legalistic service to God.
2. Israel had run out of wine, often symbolizing joy.
3. Jesus had come to do God's will in God's time, but He came to meet specific needs, just like He did at the wedding.
4. Jesus turned their water for cleansing into wine of rejoicing. Once they were clean in Jesus, the Jews would be free from rituals that had no power to do a permanent job of making them clean before God.

v. 7 – The servants did what Mary commanded, doing what Jesus told them to do! That is still good advice to anyone. Do what Jesus tells you to do! **Are you doing that? If not, why not? If so, how can you do it more effectively?**

v. 8 – This command would not make any sense. **Why would they take a sample of water that they had just poured into those jars?** Jesus was confident that the water had changed to wine and wanted the maitre d to know it as well. Jesus did not have to touch the water or speak to the water. He simply had to will the water to wine. This is an act that only a prophet could perform, just like when Elisha caused the axe head to float (see 2 Kings 6:5-7).

vs. 9&10 – The maitre d didn't know where the wine had come from,, he just knew that the wine was fine. I would imagine that the maitre d knew that supplies were low and

then assumed that the hosts had some wine hidden away that he didn't know about. This would have been highly irregular, so he was surprised not only that there was more wine but that it was of such high quality. God is full of surprises. **When was the last time He surprised you? If it's been a while, why do you think that is?** When I read through Mark's gospel, I see how many times the people who encountered Jesus were astonished, shocked, amazed and fearful. The same dynamic should also be present in your relationship with Jesus.

v. 11 – Jesus performed His miracles in real places and met real needs through what He did. Jesus did not come to put on a show, but He did come to allow God's power to engage man's need, ultimately on the cross. John reported that Jesus performed works to reveal His glory, which here translated into bailing out a family who was about to be embarrassed at a special family social occasion.

His disciples saw these things and the manner and which He performed them and put their trust or faith in Him. What have you watched Jesus do that has caused you to put your faith in Him? **Do you believe that God is interested in and performs things like you read here, that are so practical and personal? Can you see the more complete picture that this story is a microcosm of what Jesus did for the Church in turning the water of the Law into the joyful wine of grace?**

Day Three

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days. 13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.

v. 12 – Jesus returned home after the wedding celebration and stayed there for a few days. John's gospel was the last of the four gospels written, yet John had access to or had a clear recollection many years later of what took place. Jesus went from Cana to Capernaum to Jerusalem in a matter of days. He went from a small stage in Galilee to the main stage in the capital of God's work in Jerusalem. God can take you from a small place to a large one that quickly, too.

v. 13 – Jesus was a good Jew and all Jewish men were summoned to Jerusalem three times every year: at Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles and Pentecost. This was a command that was worded as follows:

"Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord (Exodus 23:17).

Where has God established His name for you? Where do you go to hear and follow the Lord? I am not necessarily referring to your local church, but to someplace special where God speaks to and reveals Himself to you. Don't worry if you don't have such a

place, but, if you do, **when is last time you went there? What did God say or show you?**

v. 14 – Jesus went to the Temple and found a lot of business being transacted there. This was very important business, for people were coming from all over the Roman Empire to worship at the Passover feast. They had to purchase Passover lambs for their family dinners, change money and also to secure animals for Temple sacrifice. It was natural that they would take care of this business at the place that was the focal point for such activity – the Temple. Yet this story follows the water to wine and further indicates that the Jews had become accustomed a level of spiritual activity that was not what God had in mind. The Temple had become a smelly, messy place of the commerce required to serve God in the “watered-down” system. Jesus had come to change that bland water to vibrant wine having saved the best wine for last. Many of the Jews preferred the water in ceremonial jars and some people today do as well.

v. 15 – Wow! Jesus cleaned the house out. He scattered the animals and money, and drove the workers away as well. So much for the mild-mannered Jesus portrayed in most movies. Jesus was angry at what the Jews had done. They had not simply made some mistakes; they made the things of God into something they were never intended to be. When I read this, it almost seems unfair that Jesus would do this and He had not even warned them of their wayward actions. Yet I now recognize they should have known better and they deserved the harsh treatment they received.

I wonder what Jesus thinks of my worship expressions and culture, a culture that I have become accustomed to at this point in my life. I think I will ask Him. **How about you? Will you ask Him about your situation, too?**

Day Four

16 To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." 18 Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

v. 16 – The doves were sold to the poor for their sacrificial requirements. This is significant, for Jesus showed God’s care and deference for the poor. Jesus did not treat those who were assisting the poor with the same contempt that He showed for everyone else. God does have His priorities and our priorities should match His. Here are some of the things the Proverbs says about the poor:

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God (Proverbs 14:31).

He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done (Proverbs 19:17).

If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered (Proverbs 21:13).

Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all (Proverbs 22:2).

He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses (Proverbs 28:27).

What are you doing for the poor? What more can you do? How can you align your work in such a way that the poor will benefit or at least not be hurt? You see Jesus' concern for the poor; His concern is God's concern.

v. 17 – The disciples remembered what was written in God's word and applied it Jesus. These were men who had been raised with the Scriptures and now they were applying it to God's servant, Jesus. That is significant. Jesus' disciples had a sense early in their walk with Him that Jesus was indeed the fulfillment of the Scriptures. They would grow in that understanding. **Do you understand who Jesus was and is in terms of the Old Testament prophecies?**

v. 18 – The powers confronted Jesus and wanted some justification that would prove Jesus was authorized to act as He was. They were indignant and did not inquire as to whether or not Jesus was correct. They wanted to know what right He had to even speak that way. They were not concerned with what God thought, but with protecting the system that had become so important to them.

They were so convinced that all they did was in line with what God wanted that they chose to protect it all cost, even protecting it from God Himself! **Are you guilty of doing the same thing, protecting your doctrine or group from God's scrutiny? Are you offended when someone speaks critically of what you believe or do you work harder to search to insure that it is correct and from God?** Don't answer too quickly.

Day Five

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." 20 The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

v. 19 – The Jews wanted some kind of proof that what Jesus was doing was legitimate. They would not, however, have believed even if He had performed the requested miracle. So Jesus "threw them a curve." He promised them a miracle, but He so shrouded the description in mystery that they totally misunderstood what He said. **Why was Jesus so "obtuse"?** It was because the Jews had already reached the point of no return with God; their unbelief was so deep and pervasive that God was finished with them! That may be a hard thing to read and hear, but it's true. They had so abandoned what God intended in

the Law that they were beyond hope and help. God therefore had given them over to their choice of self-righteous behavior versus justice and mercy. **You don't believe me?** Read what Matthew wrote that Jesus said:

For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him (John 12:39-41).

vs. 20&21– Here we see that the Jews completely misunderstood what Jesus said and they had every reason to do so. He had purposefully confused them, talking about the temple of His body, when they naturally would have assumed He was talking about the temple building in which they were standing and which had just been the focus of His anger. The situation in Israel was grave, for God was about to turn His back on them! This is what happened to Pharaoh who at first hardened his heart and then God hardened it for him! **Does this offend you? Does this seem inconsistent with the image of a loving, gracious that is accurate and widely held?**

Days Six and Seven

22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. 23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing and believed in his name. 24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. 25 He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.

v. 22 – When Jesus came back from the dead, then the disciples understood that what He was saying pertained not to the Temple but to His physical body. They needed the help of the Holy Spirit to remember and Jesus had promised that this would come:

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you (John 14:26).

You and I also have the same help available from the Holy Spirit as those disciples had. **Aren't you glad you aren't in this alone, to figure everything out and apply truths to specific situations?** Also, the disciples needed some experience before they could fully understand the Scriptures. There is nothing wrong with having an experience and then going back to understand it in biblical terms. Just approach your search with an open heart and mind, and allow the Spirit to help you work through all the implications with you. In other words, don't go into a biblical search with preconceived notions of what something means. Allow God to show you.

This means that you must approach the search like you don't know anything so as not to prejudice your search and conclusions, as the Jews did. They had the wrong point of reference and had no idea what Jesus was trying to tell them. The same can be true for a Christian.

v. 23 – Jesus performed miraculous works while He was in Jerusalem for this Passover feast. John does not bother to tell us what they were but He was doing things for people in the midst of people. Some believed and some didn't but Jesus performed them just the same. Jesus, Jesus said this Himself when He was on trial:

At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me (Matthew 26:55).

There are many in the Church today who don't want to be public. They want to do things only in the Church and only where it is safe (although church isn't always "safe"). You cannot choose where you will fulfill your purpose, any more than you can choose your purpose. **So where are you performing your own "great works"? Is it for people to see, appreciate, and gain some benefit? Are you even open to such a "display" of who you are and what you do?** If God gives you influence and wants you to be "public," then that is what you must do and be.

Jesus never shunned the spotlight, although He did not need it. If God wants you to be a public figure, then that is what you must be. Not being or doing that is false humility, trying to deny who you are, whom God made you to be.

vs. 24&25 – Jesus did not entrust Himself to man, for He knew what was in man! What a great description, and what a great state to be in. To be free of what others think, to be in the crowd but free from the crowd, to be God-conscious and not self-conscious – those are all be great things!

In fact, you must free from the people you are called to lead. Yes, you must be among them and identify with them, but at the same time you cannot obtain your identity from them, for the crowds are too fickle. They will be with you one minute and abandon you the next; if you don't know who you are, then you will rely on them to tell you. That can be a dangerous position for the leader to be in.

Jesus knew men but still gave Himself to them. Your caution cannot lead to isolation and defensiveness. You do what you do for men, but ultimately you are doing it for God!
Are you free from people?

Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe (Proverbs 29:25).

Jesus was free to be who He was no matter how people did or did not respond. You and I need that same freedom. Too often how I have performed (or not) had been determined by the response (or lack thereof) from other people. Jesus teaches us how to avoid this trap. **How well are you doing?**

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:44-47).