

TURNING WATER INTO WINE

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Scripture: John 2:1-12

John 2:1-12

“² On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; ² and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.” ⁴ And Jesus *said to her, “Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.” ⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” ⁶ Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. ⁷ Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” So they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it *to him*. ⁹ When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, ¹⁰ and said to him, “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.” ¹¹ This beginning of *His* signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

¹² After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and *His* brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.”

Lord Jesus, this is an account of Yourself and we ask that through Your Holy Spirit, You would show us Lord, what we need to take away from this passage that will touch our lives in significant ways. We ask this in your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

The gospel of John is all about sevens; everything that he writes about has this number seven. Seven was the complete number, the heavenly kind of number, one that was full and complete in itself. We look at this passage and we know that these are one of the seven signs that Jesus performed when He was on earth. Now we know that there are many more; the miracles that are recorded in the synoptic gospels are many. But John doesn't use the word miracles. He refers to the significant things that Jesus did as signs. Nowhere will you read the word miracles.

And there's a reason behind it. John was pointing to the fact that whatever He did was a sign of something. And that sign was to point the people from that particular miracle to the fact that Jesus was the anointed One, the Messiah the coming King. When we look at the synoptic gospels, which is Matthew, Mark and Luke (they are called synoptic because synoptic means same), you'll find that there are many miracles. But all the miracles have this final thrust that they're talking about the coming Kingdom of God. John points to signs that have to do with the coming King. That's the difference.

Seven is such a complete number for him that he talks about the seven signs that are performed by Jesus, and we'll be going through each of those signs right through our period of Lent. He also talks about the seven identities of Jesus known as the 'I Am' sayings of Jesus – I am the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, etc. Then he also talks about the seven witness testimonies – the testimony of the apostles, of John the Baptist, of God the Father, of Jesus, the scriptures, miracles, the Holy Spirit. Right through, seven seems to be the number that John is

concerned about, all to show that this completeness that he's talking about is something that is fulfilled in Jesus.

THE MIRACLE AT CANA

Let's go through this episode with Jesus and see whether we can come up with something that will sit upon us. In keeping with John, I have picked out seven important things that I think we should look at.

1. INVITE JESUS INTO YOUR HEART.

2:1-2

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding."

Jesus was invited to the wedding. If Jesus hadn't been invited to the wedding, this miracle would not have happened. And so, it occurs to me that if we want to see significant things that God can do in our lives, we need to be able to have Jesus residing in our hearts. We need to have invited Him into our hearts and that seems to be a prerequisite for anything that can happen. Which begs the question: have we? Is Jesus an integral part of your life? Have you invited Him into your heart so that in His capacity as resident in your heart, He can then take what is ordinary and make it extraordinary? As He did.

The first thing is to be able to invite Jesus into your heart or into your situation. And maybe, that's something that you haven't done before, that you look at the situations that you're in and you say, "I haven't invited Jesus to be a part of my situation as well." Sometimes we like to keep our problems by itself. Then we think that we can worship God in exclusion, to the exclusion of our situations and circumstances.

2. INTERCEDE BEFORE THE LORD.

2:3-4

"When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.'"

Don't get put off by the way Jesus responded to Mary. And sometimes we do. We look at that and say, "My goodness! He's calling her woman." That was an endearing term during that time. In fact, when you read other accounts of history at that time, you will see that Julius Caesar referred to Cleopatra as woman. In fact, from the cross, Jesus also said woman. It was an endearing term. When you read other translations, for example the New Living Translation, it says "my dear woman", to show that there is something loving in that. The NASB, the King James, which are literal translations that have to be word for word, don't have the leeway to make it an endearing term. They have to translate it according to what it is in the Greek. But if you look at some of the others, then the connotation, the understanding of that is brought out. Don't get put off by the fact that He is referring to Mary as woman. The key here is that we share the problem or the issue with Him. Jesus shouldn't be just a resident in our heart.

The second step for us is to intercede before the Lord and to make your requests known to Him. Mary made that request known to Jesus and it brought a significant change to that wedding. Scholars tell us that Mary must have been very close to whoever it was who was getting married. Otherwise, she wouldn't have been involved in the fact that they were running out of wine, or tried to do

something about it. there would have been great humiliation to the family members if they ran out of wine at that juncture. But she recognized that, and she went to Jesus.

And that's the second point that I want us to think about. When we have an issue, when we have a problem in our lives, do we take it to the Lord? Do we say: Here's my problem, Lord. Would You intervene? Would You intercede? Would You do something in this regard? Sometimes we try to handle things by ourselves. We think that we ought not to be taking these kinds of things to God, that I should be able to handle it by myself. And yet, God has this relationship with us that makes it so easy for us to go to Him. And the only way that He can get involved in our affairs is if we invite Him in.

Why is that so important? Because we still have our will intact. And He won't come against our will. And when we invite Him into our situation, into the issues that confront us, then we yield our will to Him. Then He's able to come. I wonder whether there are some of you here who are grappling with a situation, a circumstance, a problem on your own, and you're really down and out. I wonder whether the word for you today, very specifically is "Invite Me in."

I always think about wrestling matches when I think about Jesus and us. Some of you may watch wrestling, and you know that when there's a partner, when two people are fighting, one is outside the ring, and the one who's getting beat up, the only way that his partner can come in is if he tags him. So he's trying everything to tag him. I always think Jesus is there saying, "Tag Me. There is no need for you to get into this situation where you're getting beaten by the problem and the issue. And so, maybe we need to stop keeping Jesus only as a resident in our hearts and give Him access as well.

3. BE OBEDIENT TO THE COMMANDS OF THE LORD.

2:5 "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'"

The third point here is that we need to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord. at the wedding in Cana, Mary, the mother of Jesus, told the servants to do whatever Jesus commanded them to do. And today we must be ready to do everything that we are told. We are told very clearly in the Word what we need to do. But sometimes, we treat the Word of God like a buffet. We pick and choose the things that we want to be obedient about. Yet, we're called to be obedient. Whatever she said, He says to do it. And that must be how we approach our relationship with Jesus as well. that whatever He says, we must do.

The other day we were talking about the children of Israel walking around Jericho. They did that for six days, going round and round. And how they must have been ridiculed by the people of Jericho. They must have stood on top of the ramparts there and shouted down at them saying, "Hey, what are you doing? Going for a walk?" because nothing was happening. They just walked around. But they did it. And sometimes the things that we are asked to do just don't make sense.

Naaman was told to go and dip himself seven times in the Jordan River. And his immediate reaction was, "Don't we have cleaner rivers in Syria that I should go and dip myself seven times in the Jordan River?" Until he told him, "Why don't you do it? if he had given you something hard, you would have done it." And when he did it, he was healed. And so, we must be ready to obey His instructions.

4. GOD USES WHAT WE HAVE.

2:6

"Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each."

I like this line because it reminds me that God uses whatever we have. you remember the question that He asked Moses. When Moses was demurring and saying, "I can't do this," He said, "Moses, what do you have in your hand?" "A staff, Lord." "That's what I'll use. Throw it down." It becomes a snake. "Pick it up." "Okay, Lord."

God is able to use whatever, beloved. Stone pots meant for water that was used to wash feet and hands before they entered the house, was what was used to turn water into wine. Incredible! The things that God can use. And while that was available to Him, I wonder today, what is it that you have in your hand that God is saying, "I can use that. I can use that in your life. Will you give it to me?" Many of us have so many giftings that can be and must be used in the service of the Lord. Jesus Himself said, "Don't hide your lamp under a bushel. Let it light up the place." What do you have in your hand?

At the wedding in Cana, the Lord used the water, the pots that were available. Later on, Jesus used the five loaves and two fish that was available. If you remember Elijah, he used the pots that were available to fill them with oil. And you've heard me say this before, but one line that Tommy Tenney said that struck me: "Heaven didn't run out of oil, earth ran out of vessels." It was when the woman said there are no more vessels, that the oil stopped. God uses whatever we have.

5. GOD WORKS IN TANDEM WITH US TO DO EXTRAORDINARY THINGS.

2:7-8

"Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' So they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.' So they took it to him."

God often works in tandem with us to do extraordinary things. He invites us to be part of the engagement or the involvement; to involve ourselves. If you remember Lazarus, "Lazarus, come forth." He came forth and then, what did Jesus say? He told the people around to unravel him. If Jesus could have brought him out of the tomb, He could have unraveled him Himself too. No problem. And yet, there's a human engagement that happens as well.

God uses us to do His works in the world. God uses us even to bring change in our own lives, in our situations, in our circumstances. Sometimes we are fearful to get involved. Yet, we know that 365 times through the Bible, He tells us: Fear not. Fear is not, cannot be integral to you and me as Christians. maybe today, He's asking you: Can I use you to do something? Maybe it's in your own life, the life of your family, or maybe your friends circle, or maybe in your office – God is saying: You and I can do something significant.

6. FROM THE ORDINARY TO THE EXTRAORDINARY.

2:9-10

"When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, "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."

It's amazing how when God is involved in something, it just becomes something beautiful. When God touches something, He can turn what's ordinary into something that's extraordinary. When God touches something, He can take what is mundane and make it sublime. When God touches

something, He can take something that is average and make it a thing of excellence. When God touches a person, He can take a nobody and make them somebody.

I wonder today, whether you don't think too highly of yourself. I wonder whether you just think that you got planted on this earth and you're here and you just live every day going through the motions. You don't see a plan or a purpose to your life. And yet beloved, I want to tell you when the Lord touches our lives, He moves us from being nobodies into somebodies; somebody with significance, somebody with purpose, somebody with a divine plan, somebody with a *raison d'être* for living. somebody who God has placed on this earth and said, "In you, I can make a difference in the world. I can use you." From the ordinary to the extraordinary.

7. BELIEF ULTIMATELY LEADING TO COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

2:11

"This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him."

His disciples believed in Him. That's what must happen when we face a touch from the Lord, when we experience a miracle from Him. Miracles are never ends in themselves; they lead to increased belief. The disciples believed in Him. Miracles can inspire belief. But belief must grow into faith. Faith must grow into trust, and trust must grow into complete dependence on God. That's the progression. Very often we stop with the miracle. We look at the miracle and we say, Wow! But that miracle must inspire belief that ultimately leads to complete dependence on God.

I don't know where you are in this journey of belief and faith and trust and dependence. Maybe you've got some amount of faith today, but it hasn't moved you to completely trust God. Or maybe you trust Him, but you're not completely dependent on Him. There are some areas that don't include that trust. I wonder whether today the Lord is saying: Would you depend on me fully? Would you get past those steps of belief and faith and trust to the point where you completely depend upon Me?

I ended this sermon in my notes by just writing 'Hand it over' in bold and underlined it. I felt that was our beachhead today. That was where we needed to land, that whether it is completely just the fact that you're not dependent on God today or there are some areas that you are not. Or you've just got stuck with a miracle that happened many years ago in your life and you're saying, "Lord, I want another miracle."

Miracles by themselves don't mean anything. They must lead to increased belief in God. Because Satan himself can do miracles. When Moses was in front of Pharaoh, he threw down his rod and it became a snake. And the magicians did the same. It cannot be an end in itself. It must lead to belief. It's the starting point. It helped the disciples start believing in who Jesus was.

The previous chapter talks about the disciple called Nathanael, and Jesus' engagement with him. But when they saw His power, the authority, they began to believe in Him. And that's the start of a journey that leads from belief to faith to trust to complete dependence.

I wonder today whether there are some of you here who need to let go, that you're holding things tight in your hand. It's been in your grip for a long time. I wonder whether today, God is saying: Let go. As the old adage says, "Let go; let God."

Amen.
