

John 2:1-25

What was unique about the miracle at Cana? It was the first miracle of Jesus. And it is not recorded in the other Gospels.

What is the significance of Jesus receiving an invitation to a wedding and accepting it (v. 2)? It shows that Jesus was not a recluse. He participated in the normal affairs of human life which included occasions of rejoicing. The Gospels consistently present this picture of Jesus. Godliness does not require separation from human society.¹

What was the big deal about running out of wine (v. 3)? The wedding feast typically might last as long as a week. It was a major cultural faux pas to run out of wine regardless of financial standing. Failure to provide adequately for the guests would have brought shame and social disgrace upon the newly married couple for years.²

How did Mary react when she discovered the wine problem (v. 3)? Mary seemed to understand the urgency of the situation and mentioned it to Jesus as if asking her son to intervene in the situation. Clearly Mary expected that Jesus would do something (v. 5).

How would you characterize Jesus' response to Mary (v. 4)? Jesus does *not* call her "mother" here. He refers to her as "woman," a term of respect, but not necessarily a term of endearment. Jesus wanted to emphasize that their relationship was different now. He is no longer functioning as her "little boy," obliged to do whatever she asks. He is now taking orders from His Father. Just as we have the start of a new phase of Jesus' life (His public ministry) so we also have the start of a new relationship between Jesus and His mother commencing at the wedding in Cana.

What did Jesus mean when He said "*my time has not yet come*" (v. 4)? Jesus knows it is not yet time for Him to make a public display of His power, by which He will present Himself to the nation of Israel as the promised Messiah. Throughout this Gospel, John made it clear that Jesus was on a divine schedule that His Father controlled.³

At what point was Jesus finally able to say "*my time has come*?" During the time immediately leading up to the crucifixion (17:1). That was the purpose for which He had come.

How did Mary respond to Jesus (v. 5)? Duly informed, Mary certainly is not offended, nor is she put off by Jesus' words. She doesn't rebuke him as a mother might. She simply turns to the servants and instructs them, "*Do whatever He tells you.*" He has made His point, and it seems that she leaves her request in His hands to deal with as He sees fit. She had confidence in His compassion and ability and she pointed others to Jesus, not to herself. These were the last recorded words of Mary.⁴

Who witnessed Jesus performing this miracle? His mother, the disciples and the servants. It's interesting that for His very first miracle, Jesus didn't announce what He was doing, or call for everyone's attention, or even make sure that people saw it. And He didn't even touch the water. What is notable about this sign is that it was not intended for all, but primarily for the benefit of the disciples. We might call this a "semi-private" miracle.

Christ began His ministry on this earth at a wedding. He will conclude it, as far as the church is concerned, with a wedding. At the marriage supper of the Lamb the church will be presented to Him as a bride.⁵

What purpose(s) did this miracle serve (v. 11)? The demonstration of His power to create (wine) glorified Jesus in the eyes of those who witnessed and heard about it. It authenticated exactly who Jesus was. It further solidified the disciples' faith in Jesus. This faith would be tested and developed by a progressive revelation of Jesus, the *Logos*. At this point they did not know about His death and resurrection (John 20:8-9) but they did know His power.⁶

Note: This act of creation contained the appearance of age (fermented wine) as did the creation of the universe.

John calls Jesus' miracles "signs" (v. 11). What is the implication of the word "sign?" A sign is something that points beyond itself. When you see the sign that says "Cleveland 26 miles" you haven't arrived. The sign points you in the direction of Cleveland and lets you know you are not there yet. Jesus' miracles are designed as signs pointing to God for the purpose of glorifying Him.

The Passover scene in the temple (vv. 13-16), which so angered our Lord, resulted from some very practical problems which were what? The temple businesses were essential to the sacrificial system. Every Jewish male, from the age of twelve and up, was expected to attend the Passover at Jerusalem every year. People who came from hundreds of miles away could hardly bring animals with them to sacrifice so they needed to buy them in Jerusalem. They could only trade in the currency of Jerusalem so there had to be money changers to exchange their foreign coinage into Palestinian currency. Plus they had to pay the temple tax in the different currency. The temple businesses provided an essential service.

Why was Jesus so upset?

- The practice of selling animals became a highly profitable business, and eventually a corrupt racket. It was owned by none other than Annas, the ex-High Priest, and operated by some corrupted priests. When Jesus struck out against the evils present at the temple, He opposed the hierarchy of the Jewish religion.
- The inappropriateness of the place where all this activity was going on. Imagine that we are about to begin a time of worship. There is no music quietly playing in the background, but rather the bleating of sheep, the flapping of pigeon's wings, the ringing of cash registers, and the characteristic haggling over prices.
- This took place in the Court of the Gentiles. This was the only place that Gentiles were allowed to enter for worship. This market place in the temple virtually excluded the Gentiles from worshiping.

Is there application for today? We need to be careful that our churches do not turn into shopping malls. No matter whether it is merchandise being sold by a guest speaker or musician, or candy bars being sold to pay for a youth retreat, or the best coffee around. Church should be a time for worship without distraction.

The Jews were not concerned about the evil of making the temple courts into a strip mall. What was the issue in their mind (v. 18)? The issue was not *what* has been done, but *who* has done it. They raised the issues of Jesus' identity and authority.

By what sign did Jesus say He was going to prove His authority to throw the vendors out of the temple (vv. 19-21)? "*Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days.*" **What was he referring to?** He was referring to His resurrection. The temple He spoke of was His body.

These Jews had already demonstrated that they had no real interest in justice but only in discrediting Jesus. They did not sincerely want a sign. They would not have acknowledged Jesus' authority even if He had performed a special miracle for them.⁷

How did the resurrection prove His authority? It revealed that He had authority over death—and therefore much more so over the affairs of the temple. When they finally realized that, they would realize why He had authority to throw the vendors out of the temple.

What was it about these Jerusalem "believers" which caused Jesus to distance Himself from them (vv. 23-25)? The believers' faith was a "sign faith"—incomplete and immature. They believed in Jesus *because of* the signs. And Jesus knew their hearts. When things got tough, their faith, if it did not grow beyond this dependency on signs stage, would continually seek for some new sign. Hebrews 11:1-2 commends faith that is based *not* upon what is seen, but upon what is *not* seen. The Christian life is a walk of faith not of sight.

Application: Jesus saw the heart of these men. In the same way, God sees you and me today. And yet—this is the wonderful thing—God loves us in spite of our sin and has proven it by sending Christ to die for each one of us.

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 68.

² Ibid., 69.

³ Ibid., 72.

⁴ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1474.

⁵ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 76.

⁶ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 279.

⁷ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 85.