

Mothering Sunday

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 March 2024

Preacher: Andy Meadows

[0 : 00] The reading this morning is taken from John chapter 2, which is on page 1069 of the church Bibles, if you have one to hand.

We're starting to read from verse 1. On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine. And Jesus said to her, Woman, what does this have to do with me?

My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you. Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.

Jesus said to the servants, Fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, Now draw some out, and take it to the master of the feast.

[1 : 29] So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water, now become wine, and did not know where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew, the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, Everyone serves the good wine first.

And when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now. This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory.

And his disciples believed in him. After this, he went down to Capernaum with his mother and his brothers and his disciples. And they stayed there for a few days.

Well, good morning, everyone. May I add my welcome to Bruce's. My name is Andy. I'm the acting lead pastor here. And it's great to be here on Mother's Day. Who has got their mother a present? No one. Okay, no one. Maybe you got your mother some chocolates. Maybe you got them a nice plant or something like that.

[2 : 54] Or maybe you got them some bluey bubble bath. Maybe something like that. But today is all about mothers. And we're going to look in the Bible with a story involving Jesus' mother, Mary.

But actually, Mary is not the centre of attention. Now, this story is at a wedding. And who is normally the focus of a wedding?

Who's normally at the centre of attention at a wedding? Hands up. Who's normally the focus? Who does everyone look at at a wedding? It's the bride and groom, isn't it?

Well, actually, the bride, really. But in this story, they're not really the centre of attention either. Did you notice? We don't even know their names. We're not even told their names.

But who is the centre of attention? Who is the story all about? It's about Jesus. Jesus. Because Jesus did something really amazing, didn't he? Now, Jesus was at a wedding with his friends and his mother.

[3 : 59] And here they are. There was lots of dancing, lots of music. But then something happened. Oh, dear. Look at verse 3 in the Bible.

That little three. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, They have no wine. They have no wine. It's completely run out. Oh, oh, dear. This is really bad. Now, my in-depth knowledge of this part of history tells me that running out of wine at a wedding was the equivalent nowadays of running out of wine at a wedding.

You see, to run out of wine at a wedding is really embarrassing back then. They would have called it wine gate, going around. And the groom was responsible for the wedding reception.

And did you know this? I read this. That if it went wrong, the groom could be sued by his new in-laws. That's not a good way to start her marriage. I'm not sure my marriage would have survived that.

[5 : 09] So this is a bad situation. And Jesus' mother, Mary, seems to know about it. Look, she tells Jesus. Now, we're not sure what connection she had with the bride and groom.

Or she just knows what's going on. Mother's Day, maybe your mother is a bit like that. Just always aware of what's going on and what's happening.

Always in the thick of the action. Some might say a bit nosy. Not me. Not me. But other people might say a bit nosy. But mums have that great skill, don't they, of averting a crisis.

Of stopping a crisis. And Mary knows her son is special. We know that from the Christmas story, don't we? She knows Jesus is special.

And so she says to the servants, do whatever he tells you. She completely trusts Jesus with this bad situation. And then Jesus does something amazing.

[6 : 15] He says this. Verse 7. Have a look down. Jesus said to the servants, fill the jars with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

And he said to them, now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast. So they took it. I need a volunteer. Volunteer. I need a volunteer.

Go on, Rebecca. Up you come. Now, so Jesus, what did he do? He got the servants in. Now, he needs to come over here. They got the water. They poured it into a big stone jug.

A lot bigger than this one. Rebecca, you come around this way. So everyone can see you. Now, you pour the water into there.

And they filled it all the way up to the brim. Oh, oh, oh, oh. All right, all right. Yeah, yeah. Well done.

[7 : 17] They filled it right up to the brim. And then they took the stone jug to the... You hold that. Took the stone jug to them. And what? And they draw the water out. Be careful here.

Oh. Oh. And it was wine. Jesus does something really amazing.

Thank you, Rebecca. You can sit down now. Jesus did something amazing. And then the wine was brought to the master of the feast, who does what I guess anyone does when they want to look like they know about wine.

They swirl it around a bit. Maybe he sniffed it. Oh. Berries. Bit of oak.

Maybe he said hint of vanilla. Who knows? Not me. I don't know. But he saw... He tasted it. It was the most amazing wine. It was the most amazing wine.

[8 : 21] It's the best wine he'd ever tasted. And it's an amazing miracle. That's why. And did you spot the reaction of Jesus' friends?

Have a look down at verse 11. The little number 11. If you put your finger on it. This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee.

And manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. Jesus showed his glory by turning water into wine.

He showed his glory. And he's worthy of praise. And the disciples believed in him. That's what it means. Show his glory.

He was worthy of praise. And his disciples believed in him. But that's a bit of a funny reaction, isn't it? All he's done is turned water into wine. He's not healed anyone.

[9 : 19] He's not raised the dead yet. This is his first miracle. He's just averted. He's just stopped an embarrassing situation. Maybe he's just warming up.

Maybe this is kind of, he's just warming up to doing the big miracles. He's doing something small just to get his eye in, maybe. But no, this miracle shows that Jesus is glorious.

That he is so amazing. And his disciples, his friends, believed in him. They put their trust in him. Why? Well, because there's two things that this miracle shows us.

And the first is this. Jesus shows his glory as the creator. Jesus shows his glory as the creator.

In this true story, Jesus turned water into wine. Now, I'm going to come clean. I hid some blackcurrant juice in the jug. I did not turn water into wine.

[10 : 19] But Jesus really did. And no one except God can do that. Jesus had so much power, he didn't even have to touch the jug.

He didn't even have to command the water to change. He didn't have to pray and ask God to do it. He simply willed and wished that the water would turn into wine.

And it did. No one except God could do that. Because Jesus shows us that he is God come to earth.

He is God come to this creation. In fact, John said this at the start of his gospel. Through him, all things were made.

And without him, nothing was made that has been made. You see, Jesus has the power over creation that only God could have.

[11:18] Because he made everything. Here's something that we made this week in our house. We've got to be very careful.

We made a Lego bird. Took a long time to put this together. It's a Lego bird. But you know what? Jesus actually made real birds. We made Lego birds. Jesus made real birds. All the ones that we see flying around in the air. And if Jesus made everything, or everything was made through him, well that includes us.

We are completely dependent on Jesus for life. Now everyone, touch your belly button. Touch your belly button. Don't ask. But our belly buttons are reminders that we came from a mother.

They're reminders that at one stage we were connected to our mummies inside them. That's how we got all the nutrients that we need.

[12:27] The oxygen to breathe. When we were inside our mummies, we were completely dependent on them for life. And the Bible says, well behind that Jesus gave us our mummies.

It's Jesus as well. He made us inside our mummies. We are completely dependent on him for life. Every breath that we take now is because Jesus is the creator.

And so Jesus' miracle here, it's not him showing off. It's not him going, look what I can do. He's showing us who he is. That he is the creator.

That he shows his glory as the creator. That's the big thing that we are to see from this first half. We can look at the next one after we sing our next song.

And our next song is all about this miracle and all the other miracles that Jesus did. He changed water into wine. He cured the sick. He healed the blind.

[13:34] And these miracles show us who Jesus is. That he is God's son. As the musicians come up, Jesus did something really amazing.

He turned water into wine. And he did that. He showed his glory to everyone there as the creator. He showed his glory to his disciples as the creator.

Now Jesus showed his glory in another way through this miracle. Now who likes parties? Hands up if you like parties.

Okay, I love parties. What do we like about parties? I like cake. I like hats. I like party bags. They're great. I love balloons. I love balloons.

[14:35] I love balloons at parties. Do you want to take that? Oh, Andrew. I love balloons at parties as well. Cakes, party games.

Now Jesus, as I said, he didn't just do this miracle to save the grooms. Some embarrassment and maybe a lawsuit. He did this to show his glory that this is a little taste of a really big party to come. It's a little glimpse at the future. And so the next big thing is Jesus shows his glory as the Christ. Jesus shows his glory as the Christ.

Because in the time before Jesus, God's people were waiting. They were waiting for God, for the Christ. God promised that he was going to send a special saviour king called his Christ to bring in God's kingdom.

And so people were waiting for this person to come. And the Old Testament, the time before Jesus, described what this kingdom was going to be like that they are waiting for.

[15:47] There's lots of places we could have gone to. Here is Isaiah 25, verses 6 to 8. I'm just going to read that out. On this mountain, as I read, listen out for the word wine.

Okay, listen out for the word wine. On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples. A banquet of aged wine. The best of meats and the finest of wines.

On this mountain, he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples. The sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces.

He will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. You see, God had in store for his people a really big party.

A really amazing place of joy and celebration. And this miracle in John chapter 2 that we saw, Jesus turning water into wine, is meant to get us excited.

[16:55] As it did for the disciples back then. It's a sign that Jesus was the one who is going to make this happen. Who is going to bring in God's really big party.

You see, look what the master of the banquet said to the groom in verse 10 of the Bible story. Everyone serves the good wine first. And when people have drunk freely, then the poor one. But you have kept the good wine until now. Jesus brought the finest of wines. Just like Isaiah looked forward to.

And a lot of it as well. Jesus changed enough water into wine to fill 1,000 bottles. 1,000 bottles. And just as an aside for adults here in the room. This miracle runs counter to what we might think God would do if he turned up at a party.

[17:56] We would imagine maybe that if God turned up to a party, he'd be the one to turn wine into water. That he is some kind of cosmic killjoy.

The fun police. That's not what he does. He turns water into wine. To show us. Give us a glimpse. That he is the one to bring in this amazing future. It's an amazing party. And one of the best things is that sadness and death will be no more.

That's what the prophet Isaiah said. You see, Mother's Day is a happy day, isn't it, for lots of us. But it's not happy for everyone all the time.

That some people weren't treated well by their mothers. That some would love to be mothers but aren't. And for some, their mother or child has died.

[18:57] And all this comes with tears. But God says, tears will one day be wiped away for all time. Death will be swallowed up.

Death will be gone forever. Now, I love looking at brochures. Here is a brochure for London Zoo. Been thinking about going there. Might take the family. But brochures are a little glimpse, aren't they, of what to expect.

You read a brochure, you look at their pictures. And you think, that's going to be great. But however good a brochure is, however good it is to look at pictures of animals, it is much better, isn't it, to actually look at the animals.

And to be there at London Zoo. Well, in the same way, the wedding here, Jesus turning water into wine is a glimpse. It's like the brochure.

[20:01] What is going to be better is actually being there. Actually being in God's kingdom. It's the best party ever.

Because there's going to be no more sadness, no more tears, no more death. And Jesus is going to be the centre of attention for all eternity, forevermore.

Well, then the question is, well, if that's a great party to go to, then how can I go? How can I get to be there? Well, Jesus gives us a clue.

You see, when Mary tells Jesus about Winegate, Winegate, Jesus said this in verse 4, if you look down. My hour has not yet come. My hour has not yet come.

That's a bit strange. What is he talking about? Well, Jesus uses this phrase, the hour, to talk about his death and eternal life in God's kingdom.

[21:01] In John's gospel, he says, My hour has not come. But, there was a time when his hour did come. So when he says his hour has not yet come, he's saying it's not yet time for God's kingdom to come.

It's not yet time for me to die and for me to bring in this amazing party. But as we go through John's gospel, there is a point just before he dies where Jesus says, The hour has come.

The hour has come. You see, just before he died, Jesus says, It's time.

It's ready. It's ready. I'm ready to die. And that's what we'll be thinking about in Easter in a few weeks' time, won't we? And this is why Jesus, the creator and Christ, came to earth.

You see, although Jesus is the creator, we don't live his way. We said that earlier as we confessed and we told Jesus that we were sorry for how we lived. We don't always live his way.

[22:08] Just like we don't always live our parents' way, let's be honest. When our mum tells us to do something, we don't always do it, do we? Straight away, without arguing. And it's the same with God.

And the Bible's word for that is sin. The Bible's word for that is sin. We can easily think of sin in three little lines.

Sin, shove off God. I, I'm in charge. N, not ye. Shove off God, I'm in charge. Not ye.

But it's amazing that Jesus, at Easter, the hour he was talking about, of him dying for us. To go to the cross, that's to take the punishment that we deserve.

And so by trusting in Jesus' death, our sin is forgiven. It's taken away from us. And God sees us as perfect. And by trusting in Jesus' death, we can get to enjoy this perfect, eternal life that he speaks about, that gives us a little glimpse about in this story.

[23 : 19] But being at this great party to come is not automatic. You see, we all have to accept an invite. We're used to getting invites, aren't we?

You're used to getting invites to parties, whatever age we are. They might not look like that when you're an adult. But we like getting invites through the post, or on WhatsApp, or however you get your invites.

Well, Jesus gives us the best invitation anyone can get. Better than being invited to the Euros final in the summer. Better than getting invited to a Taylor Swift concert, and going backstage to even meet Taylor.

Better than a bouncy castle party. Even better than a bouncy castle party. You see, the best invitation that we can get is an invitation to be in God's kingdom forever.

And just like the parties we go to now, we have to say yes if we want to be there. We have to accept the invite. And we do that by we say sorry to Jesus for not living with him as our creator, but thank him that he is the Christ.

[24 : 33] The promised king who came to die for us. And we put our trust in him, and we'll be welcomed into God's party. That will never, ever, ever, ever, ever end.

End. So where are we then? So Jesus turned water into wine to show us that he is the creator, and that he is the Christ.

And that as the Christ, he is the one who's going to bring in God's amazing big party to come. The only logical response, if we've understood that, is to accept the invitation by putting our trust in Jesus.

That's what Jesus' friends did. And the question is, will we do the same? Will we do the same? And if we do that, well then, will we keep looking forward to that big party to come?

And whether Mother's Days are happy, or whether Mother's Days are sad, we can look forward to God's kingdom party to come. Everything good, and nothing bad.

[25 : 44] All because of Jesus, the creator, and the Christ. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for Jesus, who came to earth to show us that he has your power, that he is the creator.

And to show us that he is the Christ, he is your special king that you promised, who brings in this party. Please help us to trust in him, and look forward to that party to come.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.