

Here Comes the Bridegroom!

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[0:00] Let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts upon them be pleasing in your sight.

! O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen. If you have your Bibles open to John chapter 2, we're in John chapter 2 this morning, verses 1 to 11.

If you don't have one, there should be a Bible in the pew there, and it's on page 1054 in our pew Bible. Be good for us to follow along in your Bible as we go through this passage this morning.

This passage is a familiar one. It's one of those Sunday school trivia answers that if you spend enough time in the church or in the Sunday school, you would have now committed to memory.

What is Jesus' first miracle? You would have known to answer, he turned water into wine. I'll admit, and I bet you are probably like me in this regard, upon thinking about this miracle, I spent an inordinate amount of time pondering the chemistry of water turning into wine.

[1:18] And we're not the only one, by the way. There's lots of books that have been written, ink spilled, pondering the nature of this miracle. Is it wine that he turned it into?

Is it grape juice? Some was, like, was it red wine or white wine? But most of our speculation focuses on details that the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle John, does not deem necessary for us to know in this account.

Whereas, there are important things that God wants us to know about this miracle. And it is up for us to turn to the end of John, the Gospel of John, chapter 20, verse 30 and 31, to see, John tells us there, that Jesus' miracles, which he called signs, were recorded to convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing in his name, we may have life, life eternal.

That is the author's intent. Both the author, capital A, and the author, Apostle John. The intent in telling us about this account of the wedding of Cana, and the miracle of water into wine, is so that we may come to believe more in Jesus, that he's the Son of God, and he's the Savior of the world, that we can come to faith in him.

So the right question then is, how does this story show that Jesus' Messiah is the Messiah of God? And how does this story invite me to believe and trust in Jesus?

[3:03] And if we seek to answer that question, we will look at this familiar account in John's Gospel, with new eyes, I think, and we might discover new insights as well.

So how does Jesus, turning water into wine, bring me to faith in Jesus? It will help us to know the Old Testament background, which John has in mind, as he tells about this first miracle.

So far, we know in John's Gospel, we covered it last week and three weeks prior, that this man, Jesus Christ, is God incarnate.

Remember John chapter 1. The Logos, through whom, that is the Word, through whom all things were made. We know that he is Emmanuel, God with us.

God has tabernacled, dwelled among us. We have already been told that he is the one from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[4:10] And of his fullness, that is, those who have come to believe in his name, of his fullness, we, that have come to believe in his name, have received grace upon grace.

Grace, instead of grace. The grace that Christ gives, supersedes, supersedes, John tells us in chapter 1. The grace that Christ gives, supersedes the one that is offered in the law, under Moses. It renders, even that pile of grace, obsolete, because the grace of the law, the mosaic law, the mosaic grace, was always a shadow, pointed to the fullness of grace and truth, that can be found in Jesus Christ.

So, keep that disclosure in mind, as we look at this story. We already know, John's intention, is that we will know, we will come to know Jesus more, through this display, of his glory.

And come to believe in him. We also know from verse 11, of this, of this account, that this is the first sign, that Jesus performed.

[5:20] It's his first miracle. It's his first sign. But our story begins with a crisis. Now, if you've had to prepare for a wedding, you probably understand, that although it is a joyful occasion, it can also be a very stressful one.

You plan meticulously for weeks, even months, before the date, to make sure that everything goes well. This wedding, that we're reading about this morning, although in the first century, is no different.

In fact, there might be more pressure, in the first century wedding, than we can imagine, in our 21st century world. Unlike in our culture, where the bride's family, customarily, bears the cost of the wedding, and the major planning for it.

In Jesus' time, the bridegroom, the bridegroom, presumably with the help of his family, but really, the bridegroom pays, for the wedding feast.

He organizes the wedding feast, he pays for it, he organizes all the refreshments, and the wine, and the food. It is on him, to make sure that everything goes well.

[6:39] And in a shame culture, he's especially responsible, for making sure there is no embarrassment, to the family. Especially his bride's family.

Now, if things don't go to plan, and there's a disaster, the bride's family can bring a lawsuit, against the bridegroom, for hosting a back party.

Presumably, even the whole wedding can be called off, if there's a deep insult, to the bride's family.

So, you can imagine the pressure, that comes with hosting a wedding, if you're a bridegroom.

Crazy Uncle Bob's antics, might require having to smooth things over, with your in-laws. But to run out of wine, that's a whole different, a far worse disaster.

This kind of disaster, might incur a lawsuit. We don't know. But the problem is clear. The problem is clear here. There are guests, the ceremony has commenced, people have gathered, they've been eating, they've been drinking, and everyone is having a good time, and, they've run out of wine.

[8:04] The bridegroom, is among his guests, when this problem occurs. But he has, among his wedding guests, the author of creation.

Although, he doesn't know it. And it's very likely, that this bridegroom, actually is a relative, of Jesus. The reason I say this, is because Jesus, and his whole family, were invited.

It's a wedding in Cana. They were invited, from Nazareth. And, he was invited, along with his disciples. Not only that, Mary was privy, to the news, that they run out, of wine.

There's only, the only way Mary, would have probably known that, is because, she, maybe has been helping, in the background. Helping with, making sure, the guests are being fed, and being given, enough drink.

So she was able to know, about the news. And, the only reason, she would have known that, is because she's close, to the bridegroom's family. And so, presumably, these are really, either really close family friends, or distant relatives, of Jesus, and Mary.

[9:16] Now, this has happened. They've run out of wine. Everyone is, you know, panicking. Everyone that already knows. The crowd didn't know, yet, and they would, as we look in the story, they would never know, that there was no more wine.

But it's likely, that Mary, landing a happy man, being on the inside, knowing of this, she comes to, a saint Jesus. By the way, Cana would have been about, five to nine miles, north of Nazareth.

So this is, you know, a short, you know, a few hours, walk, to, to the neighboring town of Cana.

Both towns, would have been, really small towns.

Small, small towns, in the central region of Galilee. These were small towns, where gossip, travels faster than anything else. Remember, shame culture, right? So, this is not just, a, a, a kind of disaster, that can be kept quiet.

This would have, if, if this has persisted, if the in-laws have not, you know, just called the whole thing off, this will have been, a story that will be remembered, probably for the lifetime, of this bridegroom.

[10:28] He's the one, who, did not have enough wine, at his wedding. Right? So, the mother of Jesus, there, John tells us, with our son.

There's another interesting note here, in the fact that, if you notice, at, later at this junction in the Gospels, both in John, and even the other Synoptic Gospels, there is no more mention of Joseph.

In fact, Joseph disappeared from the picture, after the account in Luke chapter 2, when he and Mary lost track of Jesus, the boy Jesus, in, in Jerusalem. in the temple, and they were looking for him, for three days.

After that account, Joseph disappears, from the picture. Early church tradition, owing to his absence, in the Gospel, in the Gospel account, after this, supports the claim, that Joseph likely died, when Jesus, maybe in his teenage years, mid-teenage years.

So, what does that mean? Jesus, as the firstborn son, is the man of the house. He would have had to provide, for his mother, and younger siblings. So, it makes sense, when something goes wrong, Mary goes to Jesus, to tell him.

[11 : 43] both as the man of the house, but also, more than that, as Jesus. Mary does know, fully, she doesn't know yet, fully, that her son, is God incarnate.

Don't think she knows that. But she does know, already, that he, was no ordinary child. and he is no ordinary man.

She knows that much. From the outset, from the outset, she believed the words, of Angel Gabriel, concerning him. And she continually, remember what Luke says, about her.

She continually, stored these things, that she had seen, and had been spoken about, concerning, her son, in our heart. So, John tells us, that Jesus, was there, with his disciples.

But in many ways, Mary, was the first disciple, of Jesus. She had been, storing these things, in our heart. She had been, examining and studying, her son.

[12 : 46] And as a widow, she would have, had to lean, on her son. You can imagine, that Jesus, perfect and sinless, man that he is, would have been, a trustworthy, son, to depend on.

So, in verse 3, she went, to her son, we see, and she told him, they have no wine. Now, again, this is more, of a disaster, in a Jewish context, than you can imagine.

The fact, that they have no wine. There must be wine, at a wedding, of all occasions. Right? My wedding, was a teetotaler wedding, not because, we preferred it that way, but the venue, in which we got married, did not allow us, to have.

So, it was, you've probably been, to weddings with, that's not, that's not a thing, in a Jewish, in a probably, a first century world, feeling a Jewish culture. Not to have wine, at a celebration, like a wedding, would be a disaster.

Wine, especially, to the Jewish mind, is a sign, of God's blessing. And to run out, of wine, is to have run out, of God's blessing.

[13 : 56] In Deuteronomy, for example, one of God's curses, for disobedient Israel, is that the land, will not yield for them, and there will be no grapes, to make wine.

So, the lack of wine, is a sign, of God's displeasure. Whereas, the abundance of wine, is a sign, that God is pleased, with his people. If you remember, the Old Testament reading, that we even read, today, it talks about, God as the bridegroom, making Mary, the hearts, of his children.

Right? It's a picture, of covenant God, with his covenant people, blessing them, when they are faithfully, in covenant with him. So, the Jewish mind, would have read into this, all kinds of portents, of bad luck, and you know, bad omens, of the fact that, they didn't, they ran out of wine.

Wine, also, is a sign, of redemption, and, of coming, into the land. When Israel, was in the wilderness, there was no wine, for them, because there was no grapes, to make wine.

There were nomad, nomad people. There need to be, there needed to be vineyards, and wine presses, and permanents, in order to be able, to make wine. Wine, is associated, associated closely, in the Jewish mind, to coming, into the land of promise, that God has promised them.

[15 : 16] So, in the wilderness, there is only water, to drink. Even though, even that water itself, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, is provided by God, right, that Jesus is the rock, from which the water comes.

But it was only water, that was available for them. But as they come, into the promised land, then comes wine, the promise of wine, signifying abundance, signifying covenant, blessing, for Israel.

So, Mary, this is the significance, of wine. This is, and also, the dire consequences, and the picture, of not having a wine, at a wedding feast. So, we understand a little more.

So, Mary then, tells it, telling her son, this, that there is no more wine, or they have no more wine, might suggest to us, that she wants them, to do something, that she wants Jesus, to do something about it.

But it very well, could also have been, she doesn't, John doesn't, put a question mark, to that statement. It doesn't seem like a, it means like just a statement, from Mary. It could have been just Mary, unburdening herself, to her son.

[16 : 25] She knows the significance, of what running out of wine, is. And if she's a family member, she knows she, bears some of the, the, in the shim culture, the dire consequences, of that.

So, she's probably just telling her son, about this great misfortune. Maybe she is, maybe she is asking her son, to do something about it. But look at Jesus' response, to this request, or this statement.

I'm not even sure, if it's a request. It's a statement, at least, at the minimum, from Mary. There is no more wine. They have no more wine. But look at Jesus' response. It seems odd, and even us, to our modern ears.

He says to his mother, woman, what does this, have to do with me? My hour, has not yet come. Now, here's one of those times, when we have to remember the saying, the past, is a different country, they do things differently there.

This means that, to our ears, this sounds like an insult, or harsh statement. But, in the first century Jewish world, this would have just, been a benign, it's not as harsh, as it is to our mind.

[17 : 35] If you remember, the word woman here, that Jesus used, in this phrase, is the same word he uses, in the end of John, John 19, verse 26, when he says, woman, behold your son.

When he was talking to, Apostle John, and he was, he was committing the care, of his mother, into the ends of John. He uses the same word, woman, behold your son.

In that context, you wouldn't have read it, and think it's harsh. It's very likely, it's very likely, the NIV, I think, translated it rightly. They translated it as, dear woman, what does this have to do with me?

The word probably is, in our context, would have been like, man, or lady. We don't even use lady very much. We're not in the northeast. We don't use the word lady. You know, I was reading, I was listening to, Alistair Beggs, like the only time you, you hear someone say, lady is like, a New York City cab driver.

And that's not meant as a compliment, in that sense. But you can think of it as, man, this is what it means by woman. Man, what does this have to do with me? And the word itself, what does this have to do, is an idiom.

[18 : 45] It means, what to me and to you, is this. It's an idiom that is often used, if you read the New Testament, in the Bible, it's a common idiom. It expresses a level of protest, and distance from the situation.

So Jesus is protesting. You know, but the reason for the protest, is given to us, in the next sentence.

My hour has not yet come. His hour, has not yet come. What does he mean by that? Throughout the gospel, especially throughout this gospel of John, Jesus uses these words, my hour.

In the first half of the book of John, he often uses it to say, my hour is not yet come. My hour is not here. The hour there, the time, refers to his death on the cross, and the subsequent resurrection, and exaltation that follows it.

So Jesus has, in his mind, his death, his resurrection, and his glorification, in view, even as he answers his mother.

[19 : 58] Now, how are we to understand this, in the context of this story? Because Mary doesn't have that in mind. She just thinks, they don't have any more wine.

And then she makes this statement. But how are we to understand? I think Jesus, in saying what he said, committed himself, to doing something about the lack of wine. But it is to be done, in secret, without public acclaim.

Because it is not yet time, for the Son of Man to be lifted up. Jesus would later declare, in John chapter 12, that the hour has come, for him to be lifted up, and to draw all men, to himself.

This is one of the areas, where we see that, Jesus' timetable, God's timetable, is not dependent, on man. Not even the mother of Jesus. Right?

Jesus is listening, and obedient, and perfectly surrendered, to his Father's will, and his Father's timing. So, let's just look at it again.

[21 : 06] If Jesus had the cross, in view, as he performs this miracle, we also, are meant to understand, that there is a deeper truth, that Jesus is trying to, convey to us, in this very miracle, of turning water into wine.

Now, Mary, as you said already, is only concerned, with embarrassment, of the bridegroom, and his family. Jesus, on a deeper level, is showing us, that the wine, and the wedding, are both associated, with the dawning reign, of the Messiah.

Because, his hour of exaltation, has not yet come, he lends his glory, to the bridegroom, and only a few, will be privy, to the sign.

But, to them, he reveals, that he, in fact, he, indeed, is, is the divine bridegroom. John the Baptist, in John chapter 3, verse 28, John the Baptist, later confess about Jesus, that, when they, they came to him, they came to him, and asked him, are you the Christ?

And he says, he denies, John the Baptist, denies being the Christ. But then, he refers to Jesus, as the bridegroom. He says, I am not the bridegroom, I am just a friend, of the bridegroom.

[22 : 27] Send her head, to prepare the way for him. So, throughout the Bible, there is this language, of marriage, and of God, being married, as a husband, to his people.

This is God's covenant, with Israel, on Monsanah. He made a covenant, with Israel, to marry himself, to his people. And this, it was his constant appeal, to them, throughout, the prophets, especially Nosesa, that, this, people, that he's married himself to, will be faithful, to that marriage covenant.

But Israel, was never faithful. And because of her unfaithfulness, she lost a covering, and a protection. But it's, there's also, in the Old Testament, the theme, of the kinsman redeemer.

If you've read the book of Ruth, that might be familiar to you. The kinsman redeemer. If you look in there, and that, that notion, of the kinsman redeemer, points ultimately, to Jesus, as the ultimate, kinsman redeemer.

Who redeems, his bride. Who was unable, to redeem herself. So we have all of this, John has all of this, in his background, as he's, as he's presenting this story to us.

[23 : 41] And I want us to, to think of it, in light of that too. And although, it is not yet time, for the bridegroom, to redeem his bride, he still foreshadows, what that redemption, that is coming, in this sign, that he displays.

Note, in, in the next verse, his mother's instruction, to the servants. Do whatever he tells you. Do whatever he tells you.

Jesus, Mary knows. I wonder, you know, we might know, in eternity, some of the things, that she has seen, being the mother of Jesus.

We were talking about this, in our family, around Christmas Eve. How would it be, to have Jesus, as a family member? And we thought about it, we're like, it might not be, as easy as we think.

How would it be, how would it be, to have someone, who's perfect, without sin, living under your roof. And you're a sinner, and not perfect. How would it be, to be a sibling of Jesus? Jesus. There's a reason, why they didn't like him, throughout the gospel.

[24 : 48] His siblings never liked him. Not because of what he did, but because he was just, he was always perfect. He was without sin. So, but, that's, that's, that's, I'm digressing there.

Let's get back to, but you can imagine, when Mary tells them, do whatever he tells you. There's a lot of, you know, history behind that statement. And Jesus then, instructed the servants.

He tells them, to fill six stone jars, holding about 20 to, this stone jars, would have held about, John tells us, 20 to 30 gallons, of water. He told them, to fill these stone jars, with water.

There's probably a reason, that the water, the jars are already empty. The jars, are meant, for, purification. So, what would have likely happened, is, as people came, to the party, to the ceremony, all the guests, would have used the water, you know, to, to cleanse themselves, to, to purify themselves, before they sat down, for a meal.

Which is, a, a, a, a, proper, and, um, Jewish custom, to do. Um, so, this, what, this jars now, are empty.

[26 : 01] But now, Jesus asked them, fill it up again. These six stone jars, holding about 20 to 30 gallons of water, with water. I think, we shouldn't, lose sight of the fact, that these stone jars, were meant, for purification rituals.

It again, shows, how Jesus, comes, and supersedes, the old order. The covenant, under the Mosaic law. He comes, to replace, that old order, with something better.

This is why, John says, in the previous chapter, that from him, we have received, grace upon grace. Grace that supersedes, the previous grace. Under the Mosaic law, Israel, add water from the rock.

But under Christ, instead of water, we will receive wine. And so, upon filling the stone jars, six in total, it probably would have yielded, about 150 gallons, of wine.

Such is the extravagant abundance, that the Lord provides his people. He supplies all our needs, and he is limitless, and inexhaustible, in his provision.

[27 : 18] He does away, with the ritual washing, of the stone jars, by cleansing us, once and for all, by his blood. And he provides, wine, to sustain us.

Wine in abundance, filled to the brim, we're told, to gladden in, and delight us. This is our Lord. And so, in verse, in verse 9 and 10, when the master of the feast, that's a wonderful title, by the way, master of the feast, when he tasted the water, now become wine, and not knowing, anything about, what's transpired, up till now, he's oblivious to it.

Most of the people, at the party, oblivious to it. Remember that. He tasted, he tasted this water, now turn to wine, and the master of the feast, called the bridegroom, to him, and said to him, everyone serves, the good wine first.

And when people, have drunk freely, then the poor wine, is served. But you've kept, the good wine, until now. Remarkably, we are not told, in this story, when the transformation, took place.

We don't know, if it's between, the filling the jars, with water, or drawing some out, to take to the master of the feast. But we do know, that the transformation, had occurred. It had happened, by the time, the master of the feast, was tasting, the wine.

[28 : 44] The word, the word, who spoke, all of creation, into existence, can suddenly, suspend, the laws of nature, and bring this miracle about.

If you believe, in John chapter 1, verse 1 to 5, when John says, he's the word of God, he was with God, in the beginning, he was through him, that all things were made. If you believe that, none of the signs, that Jesus did, in the rest, of the gospel of John, would be odd for you, to believe.

But if you are, as the psalmist says, a fool, who says in his heart, there is no God, then you'll jump through, every hoop, and tie yourself in knots, to try to explain away, this miracle, as is disclosed to us.

And many, many have tried. But the words, of the master of the feast, reveals the truth. It is no longer water. He was tasting wine.

And it's not just any wine, it's the choicest wine. Presumably, because he's a master of feast, he knows this. He knows his wine very well. If it was me, I would just know, okay, I can tell that's wine, and that's not water.

[29 : 55] I wouldn't be able to tell what is, how good it is. But maybe, maybe you'll like that. You know, I imagine that, you know, for him to be a master of feast, he must have gone to the master of feast school, where he's, he's learned about, you know, wine tasting.

So he knows, he knows his wine. This guy, if anybody at the party knows, what good wine is, this master of feast would have known. And he, he, he, he lends this credible, entrant palate, to the fact that, this wine that he's tasting, is the choicest of wine.

And he tells the bridegroom, in amazement, everyone serves the good wine first, but you have now waited, till the last serve the best wine. And look at the bridegroom of Cana, this man, we're not told what his name is, he received the credit, and the praise, for the wine.

He received the acclaim, for putting on a great wedding feast. There will be no lawsuit, from the in-laws. His shame has been covered up, and instead, all of Cana, all of Nazareth, will hear of what a great wedding feast, he threw.

But he knows, he knows, and the disciples, and the servants know, even though they've been warned, not to disclose it, they know that the one, the one who is to be credited, is Jesus.

[31 : 23] So it is with you and I. If you've come to believe in his name, the blessings you enjoy, the goodness of God, towards you, the peace, you have with God the Father, the extravagant, lavishness of his riches, towards you, is not something you've earned.

It has been conferred upon you, by grace, through the credit of another. This, John tells us, is the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and he manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Now, this word, Jesus manifested his glory, in this first sign of his, which caused his disciples, to believe in him. This is the point of the sign.

John has told us, it's so that we can come to believe, in this Jesus, and put our trust in him. But what about the servants? What about the other relatives, and the bridegroom himself?

We're not told of their faith. Perhaps they became, one of the disciples at this point. But if you were to read, the rest of John, or the other synoptic gospels, you'll see the many people, thousands of people, saw the manifestation, of Jesus' glory.

[32 : 48] They saw his miracles. But remember that the manifestation, of God's glory, is the display, of his power, and it's also a display, of his character.

God, when he shows forth his glory, reveals, something about himself, about his own character. So many in Israel, saw the power. Many even experienced, his power, by healing, or deliverance. But not, many believed. There's a distinction, between seeing the glory, seeing the power, and coming to faith, and trust, and believe.

Seeing, and putting faith in that. And there's a distinction there. And I think, John is, piecing that out. The disciples are said, to have come to believe, and trust in him.

The question for you, and I today, is where are you today? Have you been in the church, seeing, and experiencing, his glory, and his power, and yet, and yet, ordering your heart, towards him?

[33 : 53] The divine bridegroom, Jesus Christ, has come, to secure salvation, for his people. In him, is redemption, and restoration. In him, this redemption, and restoration, are accomplished, have been accomplished, through his blood, shed for you and me, on the cross.

But in him, the redemption, and restoration, are also being applied, through his blood, shed for you, and for me, to preserve your body, and soul, to everlasting life.

When you come, and partake of the Lord's Supper, he's imparting himself, to you. He's giving of himself, in the, in the, in his body, and in his wine. To preserve, hear this, to preserve your body, and soul, to everlasting life.

So you, have to come to him, by faith. This is important. You must come to him, by faith. Not by just, sort of, rote, custom.

Not by just, this is the thing we do. We're just, you know, we're Anglicans. We come to church, we hear the sermon, and then we come, and get, the wafer, and take a sip of the cup.

[35 : 10] This, this deeper meaning, that God is imparting himself, to us. He's giving himself, to us. But those, who come, and receive, and partake of that grace, that he's imparting, have to be people, who come, by faith, in him.

Believing in his name. To partake of the body, and the blood, which he freely, gives. And he lavishly gives, to his bride. The church. We are his bride.

He's come, to sustain, and to feed us. The divine bridegroom, is here. The beckoning call, then, is for us to come to him. To believe in him.

Let us pray. Lord, help us to see you, Lord.

Help us to see your, disclosure of yourself, in these signs, that we read about, in the gospels. Help us, Lord, to look beyond, just the mere story, and amazement, at the miracles.

[36 : 13] To see the one, who's performing, the miracles. to look beyond, the signs, themselves, and to see the one, making the signs. Help us, Lord, to come in faith, to trust you.

And all, I pray, Lord, that you will help us, even as we, continually come, to your presence. That as we partake, of the Lord's supper, as we come to this table, that you, Lord, will remind us, of that which you've, done for us, in securing our salvation, in delivering us, from the slavery of sin.

And also, as we look back, in remembrance, we will also look forward, looking forward, to that day, when we will have, the marriage supper, with you, when you, when you come back again, to restore, all that is broken.

When we will feast, with our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, of our soul. And help us, Lord, to partake now, in this, in this world, and in, in, in presently, Lord, to be filled, and to continually, come by faith, to partake of your body, and your blood.

That it may be, a means of grace to us, Lord, we pray, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.