

# John 2:1-11

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[ 0 : 0 0 ] While you're standing, let me pray for us. Heavenly Father, would you open our hearts to hear! your word this evening in Christ's name. Amen. Folks be seated. Hello everyone, it's nice to see you. If you don't know me, my name is Aaron. I work here. We are week two into a series looking at people encountering Jesus in the gospel of John. Now, if you heard the story just read by Theo, and you could be forgiven for thinking, look, I know what this is about. Jesus goes to a wedding. There's a problem. He does a miracle. He saves the day. Jesus is really kind. Jesus likes to help people. Well, let's think about it a little bit more, okay?

In John's recording of Jesus' life, this is one of the first things that Jesus does that's really huge, like a miracle. Later on in the gospel, towards the end, John says, do you know, I saw Jesus do a ton of stuff, huge amounts of miracles, but I didn't write them all down, because there are too many. In fact, John only records seven, eight, I think. I think seven or eight big miracles in John. So that being the case, why does John include this story, this miracle, and give it such a prominent place in the overall story?

Like, up first. There must be more going on here than Jesus does this cool kind of trick, and, you know, just to kind of get the ball rolling in his ministry, like get some runs on the board, help a guy out at the same time.

There's got to be more to it than that. So let's dive into the story, and I'll give you a heads up. But this story, the wedding at Cana, is about four things, I think. I think it's, one, it's about mother issues, and I don't want to trigger you. I don't want to trigger you when I talk about mother issues, but it's about mother issues.

Two, it's about the cross. Three, it's about transformation. And four, it's about abundance. Mother issues, the cross, transformation, and abundance.

[ 2 : 1 4 ] I'll talk for a few minutes about each of these things. So Jesus, the disciples, his mum, they go to a wedding. We don't know whose wedding it is. Good chance that it's a relative. And back in the day, his weddings were long. Well, the ceremony itself was pretty short, like an afternoon.

But they'd have, like, a big celebration for a few days, and hospitality was a big deal then. Okay, verse three. And then the wine ran out, and the mother of Jesus said to him, they have no wine.

So it's a crisis. It's a catering crisis. At my wedding, there was a minor crisis. I didn't know about it for weeks. My mother-in-law bought the cake. It was like a big, multi-level cake. It was in the trunk. She arrived at the venue, and when she opened the trunk, it all just slid over. All the layers had slid off, right? And so they just brought it in. The caterer sorted it out.

So not a big drama. Not like this. Not like this. In an honor-shame culture of the ancient Near East, running out of drink, this is a disaster.

So what happens next? And here we get to the first point. Mother issues. So Mary says to Jesus, they have no wine. Now, there's something behind those words.

[ 3 : 35 ] She wants to get the host family some help, obviously. And she probably at this point has some understanding, some kind of understanding of who Jesus is. We don't know how much, but you know Jesus has got something going on.

Enough for her to think that he can sort it out. So he looks at Jesus and says, they have no wine. It's like, and maybe, Jordan, you experienced this when your kids were younger, and Susie said, the baby has a poopy diaper.

It's not a statement of fact, is it? It's not like, Jordan, you may be interested to know. The baby has a poopy diaper. She's implicitly saying, come on.

Let's get something happening here. Let's sort this out. Now, you might think I'm reading into this, but it's the only way to read it that makes sense of Christ's response to Mary.

So let's look at that response. Jesus said to her, woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come. There's a few things tied up in that answer there. First of all, there's the mother stuff.

[ 4 : 50 ] And second of all, there's the cross, which is the second thing that this is about. But we'll deal with them one at a time here. Let's talk about the mother issues. First of all, what does this have to do with me?

It's quite a soft version, that translation. The original Greek, there's a number of ways to interpret it. One of them that makes sense, I think, is what to me are you, woman?

The translation makes it sound like he's saying, what has this problem got to do with me? But it could also be, who are you with regards to me? Either way, it's a bit of a rebuke. Jesus is rebuking his mother.

Jesus sees a problem with what Mary says. There is no wine with its sort of implicit request there. But what is the problem? Well, the first issue is this, is how Mary and Jesus relate to each other.

She wants him to fix the wine problem. She's coming to him as his mom. It's like, there's no wine. Come on. Will I do your thing? Do something? And his response is, like, I'm not, I'm not like a magic guy.

[ 5 : 58 ] As we go through John, you'll see a number of occasions where Jesus just distances himself from his mother. creates a little bit of distance there. And why is that?

It's because she must come to him like everybody else. She has to come to Jesus like everyone else, a sinner in need of forgiveness.

There's no inside track for mom. I think it's fair to say, if there's no inside track for Jesus, mom, there's no inside track for you. It doesn't matter if you grew up in a Christian family, if you're a young person here and you grew up in a Christian family, there's no inside track to Jesus.

You still have to come to Jesus saying, I'm broken. I need your help, Jesus. Forgive me. Give me your Holy Spirit. It doesn't matter if you've got a theological education.

There's no inside track there. It doesn't make you special. You still have to come to Jesus in great humility and say, Jesus, I need you. Forgive me.

[ 7 : 04 ] Empower me. So, mother issues. Now let's quickly talk about the second thing Jesus is in response here. She says, there's no wine, fix this.

And he says, who are you to tell me what to do? And then there's this famous line, my hour has not yet come. I think what's going on here, now the hour part, you probably know this. When Jesus talks about the hour, he's talking about the crucifixion, right?

Jesus is, I think what's going on here is Jesus saying, if I did this big public thing, outing myself, this big miracle that everyone sees like my mum says I've got to do, I'd be known as, here's Jesus, come to rescue people from, you know, embarrassing situations.

But Christ's big message is not, watch me do cool stuff. You know, watch me do these amazing things. His big message is, is watch me die.

I've come to die. My hour has not yet come. I think what he's trying to get across here is like, if he, he's not going to reveal himself, who he is completely at this point, because they'll misunderstand what he is about.

[ 8 : 17 ] And they'll view him as some like, like, divine utility, that we can call upon when we have a couple of problems we need solved.

Which is the temptation, isn't it? Jesus is the miracle man. We're calling on, we get in trouble. But that's, there's more to Jesus, isn't there?

Jesus' goal here is, he's saying, right from the outset, it's the cross. So he can't be just a helper. He's, he's the savior. Interestingly, I think, despite sort of rebuffing his mother, he does actually go ahead and solve the no wine problem.

But did you notice, it's, it's in there if you look at it, he does it secretly. Like, no one really knows, apart from the people that, just in that little circle there. Only a few people know that this has happened.

But what he does do, is he creates this opportunity to tell us something about what he has come to do with this miracle. So, let's get to that. Let's get to that.

[ 9 : 24 ] Let's get to the third point. I want to talk about transformation. This miracle is a miracle of transformation. So, Jesus turns water, water, into wine, which is pretty, pretty great.

But here's the thing about miracles, and I know you know this, Jesus' miracles are never just these naked displays of power. It's never just amazing things to impress the masses.

There's always a point there. They're always something, they're always pointing to beyond themselves, which is why the passage calls them signs. It doesn't call them miracles, it calls them signs. And what do signs do?

They point to something. So, back to the passage, what is it pointing to? The miracle of the wedding that came to is a sign, and it's trying to tell us something, and what it's trying to tell us is, it's kind of in the details.

So, we've got to go into a few little details here, so come with me into some details. Verse 6. Now, there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification.

[ 10 : 29 ] Each holding 20 or 30 gallons. If the big problem was they've run out of wine, then why didn't Jesus do like Hogwarts, miracle, and just, you know, wine just come out of the sky?

Or just appear? Wine, all of a sudden right there on the table. wine. Why is, why is the transformation from water to wine important?

Why involve water at all? Well, details. You've got these six big vestibules, hundreds of litres of water, and they're there for the washing at the wedding, but that wasn't the only place you found massive vestibules filled with water back in the days.

So back in the ancient era, Jews, before they would go into the temple to meet God, they would ceremonially wash using water in massive clay jars, jars like the ones mentioned in the story.

And they would do that as a reminder that they needed to be cleaned before being in the presence of a holy God. Now, the washing was just a symbol. It didn't actually change people's hearts. It was more pointing to the need that, the need for change.

[ 11 : 50 ] So when Jesus uses these jars in this miracle, it's a big nod to that ceremonial washing in a temple, and the Jewish readers would have got that straight away. So again, the big question, stay with me here.

In this miracle, what does Jesus want us to be thinking about? It's ceremonial temple washing. Jesus is saying, in the old days, like, all the old temple rites, customs, and ceremonies symbolized the cleaning that you needed, but didn't actually change you.

That ceremonial washing didn't do anything. It pointed to your need to be made pure, but it couldn't actually do it. Jesus is saying, I can bring that change. I can do that. I can bring real forgiveness.

I can bring real cleansing. I can transform you like I transformed that water into wine. All these old customs couldn't change you, but I can. What I did to the water, that complete change, I am going to do to you, and it won't be a small transformation, which brings us to the last point.

It will be an abundant transformation. Let's have a look at verse 9 here. When the master of the feast tasted the water, now become wine, and did not know where it came from, the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, everyone serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then the poor wine, but you have kept the good wine until now.

[ 13 : 11 ] This is a miracle about change, transformation, and it's a miracle about abundance. The jars were full to the brim, really, really good wine.

What's your favourite wine, Jordan? New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, right? I don't even have to ask you. Hundreds of bottles of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc was served 2,000 years ago.

California? Some awful Californian wine. Come on. So, it's a miracle in terms of quality, and it's a miracle in terms of quantity.

It's a miracle of abundance. What's it pointed to? It's like a big billboard. It's saying, God wants to bring abundant change to your life. He wants to bring abundant life to your life.

He wants you to know abundant grace. I know some of you are thinking, you are reading a lot into this. Did you do summer school or something?

[ 14 : 19 ] I mean, is it honestly, is it all in there? Or are you just making stuff up just to sound clever? Maybe. Maybe. But, here's the thing.

Look, the pitcher of lots of wine, this is not the first time this is talked about in the Bible. Lots of wine.

There's something really interesting in the Old Testament. So, as you know, Jewish history, God's people were enslaved many times, and during those times, God would speak to specific people, individuals, and would give them a message to bring to the people and they were called prophets.

And these prophets, back in the day, would talk about a future where God would bring his people back from captivity, out of slavery and restore them. And there would be a time where God would be with his people, would live with them in a land with peace and joy.

It's a fantastic promise. And one of the significant marks of that day, according to the prophets, Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah, you can look this up, one of the significant marks of that day is an abundance of very high quality wine.

[ 15 : 30 ] That's part of the picture they paint. And Jesus knows this. So, through this miracle, Jesus is saying, that time has come that the prophets talked about.

So, he's using this wedding miracle as this great announcement and he's saying, the time the prophets talked about, that time has come. All that ceremonial washing you used to do, it didn't change anything. I can change you, I can give you peace with God, I can give you life, I can give you an abundant life.

Now, let's finish up here. This first sign, this miracle, is linked to a summary statement right at the end of John, found in chapter 20. Jesus says, says this, John says this.

Now, as I've already referenced this passage before in the sermon, now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in the book, but these were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John is saying, I chose these particular signs and I wrote them down so you would read them so you would believe in Christ and receive this life. And we see that in the passage.

[ 16 : 41 ] A byproduct of that is in verse 11. This, verse 11 here, this, the first of the signs, Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested his glory and the disciples believed in him.

Literally means believed into Jesus. They trusted their lives over to Jesus and I think this is the application for us here. Let's really finish up here. I want to tell you why this matters.

My first question is this. My only question is this really. What is it about Jesus we're believing in, that we believe in for? What are we believing Jesus to do?

You know, we can go, I believe Jesus for salvation, but you know, not much else. I believe for salvation. Do you believe Jesus can transform you?

Do you think he can do that for you? I've got to say, you know, I know people they've given up. They just kind of give up sometimes. They're Christians, they believe Jesus can transform them.

[ 17 : 51 ] But it's things like, you know, like pornography. It's like, some folks, it's like, I'll never get past this. This will just be part of my life.

I'll never get over this. Christ wants to give you life. No. Christ wants to give you abundant life. Let's believe that Jesus can transform us. So think about the places, the points, the everyday places in your life, the embarrassments, the pains, the fears.

Do you believe God can intervene? Do you believe Christ can transform you through the Holy Spirit? The places where shame has gripped you. to believe you can be released from that.

Friends, there is abundant life on offer. Now that intervention, that abundance, it's going to look different for different people. And sometimes it might look like a miraculous intervention, a miraculous change in circumstances.

Praise God. Let's see lots of that. But perhaps Christ's intervention and transformation will look like a quiet work in your hearts, which allows you to persevere in very difficult situations, difficult relationships, difficult jobs, difficult living situations, difficult health issues.

[ 19 : 08 ] Perhaps it looks like a weight of guilt lifted off your life. I don't know. But let's be people that believe in transformation and abundant life. I think that's what it's about.

Amen. Amen.