

Jesus turns water into wine!

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[0 : 0 0] Oh dear. So on the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee.! Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had been invited to the wedding.! When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, they have no more wine.

Jesus says, woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you. I like that.

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons. So nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind they used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons.

They were big, big things. Jesus said to the servants, fill the jars with water. I love the fact that Jesus uses jars and he uses water.

Very simple. So they filled them to the brim. I'm not quite sure what they thought at this point. They probably thought he was going to produce some wine from somewhere else. Then he told them, now draw out some and take some to the master of the banquet.

[1 : 0 9] They did so. And the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He didn't realise where it had come from. Though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

I wonder why they felt carrying what they thought was water to the master of ceremonies and him having a drink of it. Assuming the change hadn't taken place at that point.

There must have been a bit, I'm going to get into trouble here. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheap wine after the guests have had too much to drink.

But you've saved the best till now. What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs to which he revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him. Now I'm going to try my best.

But everybody knows that I'm not the greatest timekeeper in the world. So I'm going to try my best to keep it simple. Can we have slide two of the thing up?

[2 : 1 3] That's lovely. There's a bit of wine there for you. A bit of wine. I don't know quite what wine is. It's like fizzy pop actually. Anyway. So can everybody read that? Is it big enough?

I've tried. Okay. Let's just go through a few points. So I'm going to do verse by verse. Firstly, verses one and two. The fact that Jesus and his mother and his disciples were all invited suggests to me that this wedding was one of a close friend.

Or maybe even family. Because Jesus was invited. His mother was invited. And all his disciples, yeah, bring the disciples along. No problem. Yeah? So there need to be, I think here Jesus was most likely personally collected.

Emotionally invested in the person that was getting married here. We'll come back to that a bit later on. In verse three, it says, it talks about the actual miracle.

The miracle itself, I want to just reiterate, was not, it wasn't, it wasn't a party trick. It wasn't just something Jesus did on the side to make everybody happy.

[3 : 22] Running out of wine, the financial responsibility for that whole wedding was very firmly on the shoulders of the bridegroom and his family. If he was to fail in this way, he would be seriously embarrassed to run out of wine so early.

Hebrew weddings went on for days, apparently. They could go on for a week. Yeah? Crikey, Moses. I don't think I could cope with that. Don't have anybody else. I couldn't cope with a week of wedding, could you?

I like to eat my scrum, have a dance and then go. So I like it. But Hebrew weddings were sort of like, they were longer fays. And to run out so early in the event here of wine was a serious thing.

And I only, when I looked actually, it was so serious that a fact, it wasn't extraordinary that the lawsuit, the bride's family could actually bring a lawsuit against the actual bridegroom.

Because the financial responsibility was in it. And he screwed it up. It was terrible. It was a terrible thing. Yeah? So there's a bit of balance to be looking at this with.

[4 : 37] Bearing in mind that the water that they drank was highly fermented. And they usually had to mix it a little bit with water. So when Jesus said to the servants, go and fill those jars with water.

They probably thought he was going to appear with a great big vat of wine somewhere. And they were going to be watering down this wine because it was so strong. So that it wasn't too, it didn't make them too tipsy.

Yeah? So that's an important thing to remember, I think. That, you know, part of the process was quite normal. We think, well, why would they just go and fill water?

Vats up with water. The point was that they thought probably that they were going to be mixing this with some wine that was going to appear from somewhere. On the flip side of that, the third point I want to make is God doesn't do miracles to order.

Jesus' mother here. When I've read this in the past, I've often thought to myself, ah, Jesus is having his arm twisted by his mother here. But there are things that suggest in this passage that that is not the case at all.

[5 : 48] Okay? And the first thing is the way that Jesus talks to his mother. It seems quite abrupt. Seems quite rude, doesn't it, actually? Woman. Yeah?

He calls her woman. It's almost like, I don't recognise you as mother at this moment in time. I'm not recognising you as mother. Yeah? He says woman. Yeah?

He's not being rude, but what he is doing is actually bringing the point forward that he's separating himself from his nature of his mother's son.

And he's actually standing alone in this miracle. This has nothing to do, in some ways, with the fact that his mum's asked. Yeah? It's nothing to do with that.

What he was about to do was an act to reveal his divine nature. It wasn't a favour for his mum or his mum's friend, although he will have had the compassion for the friend, no doubt, to keep him out of trouble.

[6 : 51] You know? And to save his embarrassment. Jesus was putting distance between his physical nature as Mary's son and his godly purpose.

Doing only what God the Father tells him to do. Everything he did was at God's command. Not his own desire. Or the whims of others. In John 6, verse 38, in the NIV, Jesus says, For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but to do the will of him who sent me.

So this wasn't a cheap party trick that he was doing because his mum twisted his arm. I don't want you to think that. Okay? This is Jesus' way of setting a boundary for the ultimate purpose of his miracles.

And his miracles are to lead people to him. I'm pretty sure that sometime prior to the actual miracle taking place, Jesus had already asked his father what to do here in response to Mary's request.

Yeah? Because he did nothing except what the Father told him. Then in verse 4, he says, My hour has not yet come. I've always thought this. That means he's not ready to do a miracle.

[8 : 06] But then again, he goes and does a miracle. So that can't be right, can it? So that's where I've been in the past. But it could well be a reference to the fact that Jesus needs to die and be resurrected, as the Old Testament prophets referred to at the time.

When the Messiah was to be revealed, they talked about it as being the time when wine would flow freely. In other words, provision would be free.

Wine would flow freely when we entered into the Messianic period, when Jesus was revealed as Messiah. And we can see reference to that in Jeremiah 31 verse 12, where it says, Streaming to the Lord, the people, God's people, streaming to the Lord for wheat, new wine and oil.

And then in Hosea 14 verse 5, They will grow like a vine. Again, talking about God's people. The scent shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

And then in Amos 9 verse 13, The mountains shall drip with sweet wine. So, those verses for me, when I had a look at them, I thought, that's probably a better explanation of where we're going here.

[9 : 24] Jesus was likely referring to the fact that he would need to go through suffering on a cross and rise again before the ultimate fulfilment of his purpose and his full provision was realised.

Slide three, please. Mary doesn't take a bat and ball home. You know, quite often when we ask God for a miracle, we ask him to do something for us, and it doesn't happen in the way that we want it.

We take our bat and ball home pretty quick. Well, come on God's will, they're not bothered. Right, leave it then. We'll move on to something else. Yeah? Yeah? But Mary doesn't do that. She persists in expectation.

I can tell you somebody who persists in expectation. My grandson, that Rory down there, is the king of persistence. If he wants something, he will plague the life out of you.

Yeah? He will plague you until you either crack or tell him a very firm no. Wait, Dad, is that right? Yeah. Oh, he's crying.

[10 : 31] He knows how to turn them tears on. He's good. He's good. But the thing is about Mary here, she doesn't take a bat and ball home because she recognises that Jesus was her son, and she also recognised that her son was God's son, called for a divine purpose with divine power.

Yeah? So when Jesus is operating here, he's not operating as Mary's son, he's operating as God's son with divine purpose within what he was doing. Okay?

So maybe her offence, her initial being taken back by Jesus saying, woman, you know, her offence at Jesus not doing a miracle for her as Ema.

I like that. Ema, that's what Jesus calls Mary in The Chosen, if you've ever seen it. It's really good. Yeah, he calls her Ema. It's lovely, isn't it? It's a lovely term of Indian, Ema.

It didn't stop her following through the will of God through Jesus. My response to anyone who's looking for a miracle is very simple, and I felt this very heavy on my heart today.

[11 : 42] Don't look at how God's going to do it. Do whatever he tells you. If you're looking for a miracle, do whatever he tells you.

That's really, really important. So there are the six stone water jars, big water jars. I love the fact that they were the kind used for ceremonial washing.

Could go on a bit about that, I think, but we're not going to spend a lot of time except to say that stone was more impervious to uncleanness than earthenware. So it's important that they stow.

And I think it's fact that it's ceremonial washing. I think it's great. It fits in with the previous idea of this all being about God's kingdom coming and God's deliverance of his people through Jesus.

I love the fact that Jesus takes the simple earthly things that we have to hand and consecrates them.

[12 : 42] Sets them apart for his glory. God did this with Jesus' physical body. Just as Jesus did it with the water.

And ultimately, what he does with us. He sets us apart and consecrates us for service to God. Interesting, isn't it, that Jesus never touches the water.

The servants act under his command. We have to be willing to do our part in doing whatever he tells us to do. Sometimes it will seem like Jesus has not got his hands on your situation.

Nevertheless, do whatever he asks. You know what the problem with miracles are, don't you?

Yeah. They're like this lovely present. Well, I say, you know what we're like with miracles when we look for miracles, don't you?

[13 : 54] What we do is we do this. We go. Well wrapped, Suge. Thank you. I could have never had that like that.

It has to be wife to do it. What we do is we look at the box. And we go. Wow.

Oh my goodness. Wow. Wow. What lovely wrapping paper. That's fantastic.

That's fantastic. What a useful box. I could make a good puppet out of that. Yeah. Oh, look at. Oh, lovely paper. Fantastic.

With miracles, we're often looking at the wrapping and not looking at the precious thing inside. Yeah. That's the danger of miracles.

[14 : 55] Miracles are great at bringing your attention to, but you have to strip the miracle back. You have to look at what the miracle is offering. You have to look at the present. Jesus is the present.

Jesus is the present. And all the miracles he ever did all pointed to his divinity. All pointed to him as the son of God.

Come to take away the sins of the world. And that's where we should be looking at, even in our miracles now. Even where we need miracles now. Look to Jesus. Look to Jesus.

What do you want turning around? What do you want turning around? Look to Jesus. Don't look to the miracle.

Look to Jesus. The precious thing inside the wrapping of the present. For those of you who are not here, this is not unusual, by the way. Those of you who don't normally come will not have seen me blood before.

[15 : 59] Which I do, uncontrollably. The miracle is the wrapping paper to point to the deeper realities beyond them.

Which we can only see by the eyes of our faith. In some ways, the nature of the miracle is insignificant. Except that it's the display of power.

Which leads us to recognise God in the situation. A real miracle is God's best solution for a situation. The wine here is described as the best.

It was tasted. It was verified. It was no trick. It was the best. To the confusion of the master of ceremonies. Rather than just looking at how we want God to answer our prayers.

Let's stay open to what he wants to do. Knowing that he has an eye on what's happening to us. While changing us from glory to glory. And making us into a bride fit for the ultimate wedding feast.

[17 : 01] Anything that this world challenges with is not our ultimate destiny. It's not our ultimate destiny. If we commit our lives to Jesus, he becomes our Lord.

If we embrace his purposes for us, enabled by the Holy Spirit. We will one day be with him. Amen.

Slide four, please. Final thoughts. I bet you're pleased to see that come up, aren't you? In 2 Kings 6, verse 8.

We're giving a story about the king of Aram. Arameans, yeah? And they've come to attack the people of Israel. They're waging a war against Israel.

But Elisha, being a prophet of God. God was guiding his people. Even at that point. And he kept whispering into the ear of the king. Did Elisha? They're going to attack you on the west.

[18 : 03] Went out and met him. And the king of Aram could not get past this fact. That all his moves were being tipped off to the king of Israel. So they were making no headway in battle against him.

And he got really, really annoyed about this. And he thought maybe there's somebody in the camp. Maybe there's somebody in my camp who's a spy telling them. And then what happened was, he was told by one of his people.

That actually, no, this was Elisha, the prophet, that was doing this. Now this might seem a little bit different to what we've been talking about so far. But I want you to get the link.

Yeah? So let's pick it up. Let's read it. So the army of the Aramaeans has come up and it's surrounded Elisha with the purpose of doing Elisha in.

Because he was the problem, really. Because they couldn't overcome Elisha's sort of insider knowledge coming from God. Okay? So let's read from verse 13.

[19 : 06] I'm sorry, I should have put this on the slide, but I haven't. Let's pick it up in verse 13. It says, Go and find out where he is, the king of Aram ordered, so I can send men and capture him.

The report came back. He's in Dothan. Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city.

Oh no, my Lord. What shall we do? The servant asked. And Elisha prayed. Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.

Then the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

[20 : 07] Just a few points. Elisha saw what was really happening with the eyes of faith. When he was under attack, he saw the vast heavenly army standing with him.

He prayed to the Lord that his servant could have his eyes open to see what he saw. And there it was.

Elisha's servants saw that actually they were not alone. They were not alone. Sometimes it's not what we see with our physical eyes, but in whom we believe.

I'm going to finish now with the words of a Don Francisco song, because I know a lot of people feel like they're under attack at the moment. A lot of people may feel that they're in a situation where they need a miracle.

And God knows. God knows. He knows all about it. And he's got it covered.

[21 : 18] He'll provide. He might not provide in the way you want. But he'll provide. And this song is a bit of an old one. It's an old country, a bit country-fied, country-western type song, so I know Alan will like it.

It's not particularly my cup of tea, but I recognise the truth in it and the words in it. I've stuck a link already on the Sunday Services WhatsApp. But if you want to look it up, it's Don Francisco, More That Stand On Our Side.

And it tells the whole story of the experience of Arab, yeah, and Israel together. But here are the words which I think, oh, it's on an album called The Power.

It says this. There's more that stand on our side, no matter what you see. It doesn't matter how it seems, how strong the enemy.

Don't believe your eyes. Believe your father's guarantee. There's more that stand on our side, no matter what you see.