

Willow River Parish: Clear Lake, Deer Park, and Faith Family

Title: Something Happened at the Wedding

Lesson: John 2:1-11

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

4 "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

(Slide 1) Let me begin with a story I recently came across:

“A priest is driving on the highway when he’s stopped for speeding. The policeman smells alcohol on his breath and notices an empty wine bottle on the floor. He asks, ‘Father, have you been drinking?’ The priest replies, ‘Just water!’ The policeman responds, ‘Then why do I smell wine?’ The priest looks down at the bottle and exclaims, ‘Good Lord, He’s done it again!’”

(Slide 2) Today’s scripture tells the story of an event at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It begins with the phrase: “On the third day...” The number three holds significant meaning in the Bible. Do you remember

the man who disobeyed God and ended up in the belly of a great fish? His name was Jonah, and he spent three days in the fish's belly before being brought back to land. When he emerged, he was a completely changed man. Do you recall how many days passed before Jesus rose from the dead? He was resurrected three days after His death and returned to us. The number three often signifies transformation—from death to life, from despair to hope. So when the story begins with “on the third day,” it foreshadows that something transformative will happen at the wedding in Cana.

Interestingly, in most weddings, the focus is on the bride and groom. However, in this story, the bride and groom are not the central figures. We are not even told who they are. Instead, the focus is entirely on what Jesus does and who He is.

(Slide 3) The wedding was a joyful occasion. Jesus' mother, Jesus, His disciples, and many of the townspeople were invited, creating a lively and celebratory atmosphere. Yet amidst the festivity, the bride and groom's family were secretly worried. Weddings at that time were not a one-day event like today; they were week-long celebrations. During such a long festivity, running out of wine was a disaster. Wine was essential for joy and celebration, symbolizing hospitality and honor for the guests. To run out of wine meant the family faced public shame, and in a small town like Cana, there was likely no way to quickly procure more.

Although we do not know the details, it seems that Jesus' mother had a close relationship with the hosting family. She empathized with their concern and took it upon herself to bring the matter to Jesus, saying, “They have no more wine.” Mary, Jesus' mother, had witnessed His divine nature from the time of His birth and through events like His teaching in the temple as a boy. She knew Jesus had the power to resolve the problem.

(Slide 4) However, Jesus' response was not what Mary might have expected. He said, "Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come." At first glance, His response may seem dismissive, even rude, but it holds deep meaning. By addressing her as "woman" rather than "mother," Jesus conveyed a respectful acknowledgment of His transition from being her son to fulfilling His role as the Son of God for all humanity. When He said, "Why do you involve me?" He was affirming that His ultimate mission was not about solving immediate earthly problems, like providing wine for a wedding, but about offering salvation to humanity. His "hour" referred to the time of His sacrifice on the cross, and that time had not yet come.

Still, Mary trusted Jesus completely. She instructed the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." The servants obeyed, and when they followed Jesus' instructions, water was miraculously turned into wine. The wedding feast continued with even greater joy and blessings.

Friends, what message does this story bring to you? Depending on your circumstances, you may find different lessons in it.

Running out of wine symbolized losing something essential and foundational. Similarly, in our lives, we all desire happiness, but we depend on various elements to sustain that happiness. For some, it may be physical health; for others, financial stability, harmonious family relationships, or the well-being of their children. When these areas are threatened, it feels like the wine at our celebration has run out.

When we face such situations, like Mary, we must bring our concerns to Jesus. In reflecting on this story throughout the week, I realized that Jesus is not indifferent to our challenges. His initial words, "My hour has not yet come," might seem to suggest that He prioritizes salvation over our daily struggles. Yet, the outcome of the story shows that He deeply cares about every aspect of our lives and listens to our prayers.

Of course, not all our prayers are answered in the way we hope. Sometimes we feel disappointed or discouraged. But even then, we can trust in God's goodness, remembering how He has guided us in the past and believing that He wants the best for us. In these moments, we should ask, "What is God's will for me in this situation?" and strive to follow it.

Personally, I have faced challenges in my own life. With the start of a new government and concerns about mass deportations, my heart has felt heavy. The narrowing pathways for immigrants have often left me feeling anxious. During such times, I have knelt in a darkened sanctuary, crying out to God. I have questioned why God brought me here instead of keeping me in Korea. Yet, in prayer, God has reminded me of how He has been with me on this journey, leading me step by step. This assurance gives me the courage to trust Him, even when the future is uncertain.

Friends, what did you take away from the story of water turned into wine? I hope you gain a renewed trust in God, who cares about every aspect of your life. May you discover His will and plan through prayer and grow in your willingness to follow it. As we place our trust in God and live in obedience, we too can experience transformation—becoming like fine wine, bringing joy and blessing to others.