

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 "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time 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 aside¹⁰ 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 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. (NIV84)

Theme: Jesus Reveals his Divine Glory

A lot goes into planning a wedding. A couple today plans for months if not over a year for their special day. They spend thousands on decorations, food and drinks, a photographer, music of some sort, a venue, a wedding dress, invitations, and so on. You plan so much because you want your wedding to be a perfect day with everyone you invited. What did your wedding guest-list look like? If your list was anything like ours, it included some close friends that you went to high school or college with, relatives both close and distant, and finally some friends of the family—people you don't know well, if at all but they are close to your parents or your in-laws.

How would you like to have Jesus at your wedding? We never find out who the lucky couple was. We know that Mary, Jesus' mother, was invited and judging by her actions, she may have been involved in some sort of official capacity. Jesus was invited too, as well as his disciples. Just two days earlier Jesus called Andrew and Peter to be his disciples and the next day Philip and Nathanael joined them. The day after that Jesus and these four disciples went to Cana, not far from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth.

Wedding celebrations back then weren't a one-evening affair as they often are today. Often, it included a week-long celebration. We don't know how long this celebration had been going on but it must have been awhile because they ran out of wine. This was a big faux pas; wine was an essential part of a wedding celebration. This wasn't like running out of beer or liquor at a wedding today; according to some if a couple ran out of wine at a wedding celebration they opened themselves up to a lawsuit.

It was a desperate situation. So Mary came to Jesus and told him, **they have no more wine.** Judging by Jesus' reaction, Mary wasn't gossiping or telling him this as a statement of fact. Mary was telling or even commanding Jesus to do something about it—whatever that something may have been. She was speaking to Jesus as his mother, telling her child (who was about 30 at the time) to fix the problem.

Don't we often do the same thing with Jesus? We know that Jesus is the son of God. He is eternal and all powerful—the one who created and sustains the entire world. We know his power. And we also consider him a friend. He is a friend who loves us and cares for us. So what do we do? We often tell him what to do. And we tell him when to do it. And it's often not just a request or a prayer, but almost like a command. We say to him, "Lord, heal me from my health problems, or cure my loved one from cancer. Help me find a job or get me that promotion. Make sure I can get all my files after my computer crashed, or lead that certain someone to fall in love with me. Make my family love me or give me happiness at work." We can go on and on with examples of how we tell Christ what to do. And if he doesn't give to us what we want and when we want it then we get upset at him and complain about him. Perhaps feelings of doubt creep into our minds as well—we wonder if he loves us or even

if he has the power to answer our prayers. So what do we make Jesus out to be? Essentially, nothing more than a friend in a high place. Someone who is able to help us in time of need by doing what we want him to do when we want him to do it.

Jesus responded to Mary, **Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.** Let's make it clear that Jesus was not failing to honor his mother here. We know that he never sinned; rather Jesus is rebuking Mary ever so gently. He may have been her son, but he is also God who is just starting his ministry. And so he is going to do what he wants when he deems appropriate.

It wasn't long until Jesus deemed it appropriate! There at the wedding were six stone jars used for ceremonial washing—often to wash hands before eating. Jesus told the servants to fill six stone jars with water and then draw some water out take it to the master of the banquet. And so they did; and when the master of the banquet tasted the water it was no longer water—the water had been turned into wine! When the time was right, Jesus took care of the situation and made sure the wedding had enough wine to drink!

We are told that this was the first miracle that Jesus performed. This is the first time he indicated that he was the son of God and thus God himself by his actions. John tells us the significance of this first miracle, **He thus revealed his glory.** That is the whole purpose of the Jesus' performing miracles. The fact that a miracle was performed, points us to the person who performed that miracle. It leads us to look at just who Jesus is. And since a miracle, by its very definition is something only God can do since only he can go outside the laws of nature, then Jesus must be God. When Jesus turned water into wine he revealed that although he looked like an ordinary man, he is anything but—he is also God's Son. But they don't just point us to who Jesus is, but also to what Jesus says. Jesus may have not said much in this text; but that is obviously not the case elsewhere. So we pour over his words as recorded in Scripture and see that he says, **I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me. Or, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.**

Think a bit more about this first miracle that Jesus performed. Six stone jars, each holding 20-30 gallons each. Let's say their average size was 25 gallons—six of them. That is about 150 gallons of wine! This isn't just a small gift. You go to someone's house for a meal you might bring with you a bottle of wine. 150 gallons of wine is more than 750 bottles of wine! No doubt, a good amount of this wine would have been consumed at the wedding celebration. But there very well could have been some left over. The bride and groom would have taken it home for their own personal use—a great and useful gift since wine was a staple at the meals of the Jews.

Plus, recall what the master of the banquet said about the wine, **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.** This wasn't a bottle of Arbor Mist, a box of Franzia, or something from Modern Craft, St. Julian, or Chateau Grand Traverse. This was some fine, excellent wine. Jesus' miracle, then, provided an abundant amount of excellent wine for the bride and the groom.

That is simply how gracious Jesus is. It's hard, then, not to think of Jesus most gracious and precious gift—his own blood! It was this that Christ shed on the cross as he took our sins upon himself and suffered through the eternal punishment that we deserve for our sins. It was his perfect life that he gave to us so that the Lord looks upon us and declares us not guilty since he sees Christ's perfect life as ours. It is Christ's body that rose from the dead three days after his death to assure us that we'll live with him in heaven forever through faith in him, which is also a gift that he gives to us in the gospel. This eternal life in heaven, Jesus himself describes as a great wedding banquet where he is the groom, and we the Church, is his bride—an eternal celebration with our loving Savior! It is this same body and blood which he shed on the cross for our salvation that he gives to us to eat and to drink the sacrament of Holy Communion which we receive for the forgiveness of sins! Today after receiving the Lord's Supper we will give thanks to him in a prayer in which we call the Lord's Supper a, “foretaste of the heavenly banquet.” Today Jesus reveals himself as our loving and gracious Savior who gives to us abundantly and excellently—not just in physical matters, but more importantly, in spiritual matters.

Paul says in Romans 8 about the Lord, **He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?** Is Jesus a friend of ours in a high place? Yes, he certainly is. And he most certainly wants us to pray for him in every time of need. And the fact that he supplied wine for a wedding shows us that nothing is too small or trivial in our lives that he does not care about. If Jesus cared enough about us to give up his life and suffer through eternal damnation for us, then he certainly cares enough about us to give us anything that we need in this life!

But Jesus isn't just a friend, today he reveals himself as the Son of God—as our Lord and Savior. He didn't perform his first miracle and give his gracious gift on Mary's time table; but only when the time was right. In the same way he will do what is good and right for us and he will do it when it is right for him to do so. He is not just a friend who is able to help us whenever we want. He is God who knows what is best for us and knows when it is best for us. And since he is our all-powerful God we pray to him and tell him our very thoughts, wants, and desires. And then we leave it all in God's direction. As the disciples believed in Jesus after seeing this first miracle, so we believe in Jesus that he'll do what is best for us. If we don't get what we ask for or get it when we want it that is fine with us. What he decides and does and when he does it is the best thing for us at that particular time. We know that he gives to us abundant and excellent gifts—the greatest of all is our salvation. So in all things we leave it up to him and know that he will graciously take care of all our needs.

How great would it be to have Jesus, the son of God, as the one of the guests at your wedding? Even more so when he revealed his divine glory as he performed his first miracle and gave you a great gift! But there is something greater—being a guest at Jesus' eternal wedding banquet—something he has had planned out for us from eternity! That is the gracious gift he has won for us by shedding his blood on the cross and rising from the dead. Out of all the gifts he has blessed us with, this is the greatest gift of all. And so we can say the words the angel told John to write in Revelation 19, **Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!** Amen.