



One Page Sermon

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Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

John 2:1-12 Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana

The story of the wedding at Cana begs many questions. Whose wedding was it? Why did they run out of wine? Why did Mary know they ran out of wine? What's the deal with Jesus' curt response? Who knew about this "sign" (The Gospel of John does not use the word 'miracle.' Instead, the word 'sign' is used to describe these actions that reveal the divinity of Jesus).

Some speculate that this may have been the wedding of a relative of Mary. This would explain not only their invitation, but also her position of authority at the party. Most speculate that the families involved were poor and could not afford the amount of wine needed for such a celebration (that some commentators claim may have lasted a full week).

As to Mary's request of Jesus, we yearn to know more. Did Mary know that Jesus could do such a thing? Had he done it before at home? Why was Jesus reluctant? Why did this seemingly small crisis prompt Jesus to step forward in such a public manner.

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) Jesus begins his ministry much differently. In all three of them, the catalyst that starts his ministry is the arrest of John the Baptist. Then he begins with major teaching—either the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew or his reading at his home synagogue in Luke. Here though, Jesus becomes "public" without really going public.

After all, in the end no one really knows about this sign but the disciples and the servants. The headwaiter simply thinks it is an act of extreme generosity by the bridegroom. The servants know what happened, but their response is unrecorded.

We who believe know that this is the start. This is the first sign that Jesus is the Son of God. This is the beginning of the wedding celebration that the people had been waiting for for centuries. A wedding has been a way to describe the messianic hope of Israel since the time of the prophets. A marriage was a metaphor for the relationship between God and Israel for centuries.

Here, Jesus turns water into wine and we know that the wedding has officially begun. This is a celebration. The coming of Jesus initiates a party—an extravagant one at that. One that had over 120 gallons of the finest wine (600+ bottles in today's measurement).

The Word of God became flesh, and this is reason to celebrate. Jesus' life on earth is a time of joy, generosity, and cele-

bration. It is not a reason for solemnity, fasting, or judgment.

One of the most important clues to the meaning of this story comes in the very first words. "On the third day."

This wedding happened on the third day. Like the original readers of this story, who were already a Christian community, as we read this, we know what else happened "on the third day."

The third day is the day of resurrection. It is the day of joy, generosity, and celebration. The third day is the end of fasting, mourning, and judgment. This wedding is a foretaste of the Resurrection which we are allowed to live every day.

At the moment Jesus was crucified, this sign is reversed. On the cross, Jesus is given sour wine to drink. Upon his death, he is pierced in the side and water comes out. At this wedding water is turned to wine. At his crucifixion the wine is turned back into water.

Jesus' life—the time when the Word was flesh and walked among us—was a wedding. It was a celebration. It was a time that was marked by turning water into wine, and at his death the wine was turned back into water. Yet this wedding at Cana gave us another clue as to what really happened. On the third day there was celebration again. On the third day there was so much joy it overflowed. On the third day shame was turned to joy. The wedding at Cana was the initiation of Jesus' ministry and a foretaste of our lives as Christians. The wedding started it all, and in our life of discipleship we will live into the marriage which is abiding with Christ in our lives.

