

# Jesus, a Wedding, and a Divine Revealing

6/7/23

Introduction: This year, I felt a clarification about my call.

A. It was in January, and I was reading through Matthew.

1. This passage from Matthew 13:52 provided some clarity:

2. Matthew 13:52 (ESV)

<sup>52</sup> And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

3. This resonates with me so well.

B. One of my greatest joys as a pastor is to tell stories of Jesus and Scripture.

1. It is a joy to read Scripture, meditate upon it, and see the meaning and share it with others.

2. Nothing new here, and yet there is unrealized beauty before us.

C. Today, I want to read with you a passage from John.

1. With this passage, my intention is to take us on a journey that, when finished, I hope leads us to give Jesus even more glory and praise.

2. While we will be focused on John 2, it was necessary to bring many other passages into the conversation.

3. I will reference far more passages in this message than what is usual for me, but they demonstrate to us the beauty of the miracle Jesus performs in this passage and its prophetic significance.

John 2:1–12 (CSB)

**2** On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus's mother was there, <sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding as well.

<sup>3</sup> When the wine ran out, Jesus's mother told him, "They don't have any wine."

<sup>4</sup> "What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?" Jesus asked. "My hour has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup> "Do whatever he tells you," his mother told the servants.

<sup>6</sup> Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained twenty or thirty gallons.

<sup>7</sup> "Fill the jars with water," Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the headwaiter." And they did.

<sup>9</sup> When the headwaiter tasted the water (after it had become wine), he did not know where it came from—though the servants who had drawn the water knew. He called the groom <sup>10</sup> and told him, "Everyone sets out the fine wine first, then, after people are drunk, the inferior. But you have kept the fine wine until now."

<sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

<sup>12</sup> After this, he went down to Capernaum, together with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples, and they stayed there only a few days.

## 1. John's record of Jesus' first miracle puzzles modern readers.

### A. Of all the miracles John could have mentioned including:

1. Raising the dead, restoring sight to the blind, or cleansing a leper, this is the first miracle mentioned.

2. And only the Gospel of John records this miracle.

a. Question: Why did the other writers miss it?

b. Why would John even mention a miracle like this, when he could have chosen from an unlimited number of examples?

3. What does John see in this miracle that we miss?

B. John's Gospel is tightly focused upon Jesus' divinity.

1. Yes, Jesus' humanity is consistently on display also.
2. But John consistently and constantly writes with Jesus' divinity in mind.
  - a. In John, Jesus is the "Word who was in the beginning," and the Word made flesh.
  - b. Jesus is the True Light that has come into the World.
  - c. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
  - d. Jesus is the source of Living Water.
  - e. Jesus is the Bread, the manna, of Life.
  - f. The list goes on.
3. And most of these statements about Jesus occur within the first chapter of John.

C. What portrait of Jesus is John painting here?

1. Verse 11 points us to something significant that happened at Cana:
2. <sup>11</sup> Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.
  - a. We would understand if this was the story of feeding the five thousand or the resurrection of Lazarus.
  - b. But, **Where is the glory in multiplying wine, and why did this seemingly simple miracle result in the disciples believing in Him?**

2. The scene of an unknown wedding.

A. John never mentions who the wedding is for.

1. But we know that there was a bride and a groom.

2. We also know that weddings in Israel were much different than in Western culture.

3. Weddings were a week-long affair.

a. The whole village would be welcomed and expected to attend.

b. And each day, new guests would appear to participate in the wedding feast.

1. The crowd would grow and swell.

2. There was no way to plan for everyone since anyone could attend.

c. The bridegroom and his family were responsible for ensuring that all guests were fed, happy, and fulfilled.

1. Ancient weddings were not focused on the bride, but the groom.

2. They were his guests, his responsibility, and it was his arrival that initiated the festivities.

a. Often, the groom would betroth himself and go off to prepare a home for her with his family.

b. He would also save up the bride-price.

c. And when the bride-price was raised and the home prepared, the groom would come to get his bride.

d. The bride and her party had to be ready, and anticipate his arrival because there would be no delay when he came. (sounds a lot like John 14).

3. When the groom appeared, having finished all preparations for his bride, the wedding would begin.

B. Because this was the social event of the year and maybe a lifetime, there was a lot at stake.

1. To disappoint your guests would lead to loss of “face” and shame.
  - a. Furthermore, several scholars emphasize that weddings were legal affairs.
  - b. The bride and groom were legally bound to each other.
  - c. But guests who did not bring an appropriate gift could be sued, (or thrown out as in Jesus’ parables) and hosts who did not provide a good enough party could be sued by the guests.<sup>1</sup>
2. Therefore, one of the worst things to happen would be to run out of wine before the event was over.

C. For people like me, who do not drink, this is where the disconnect takes place, tempting me to dismiss this parable.

1. While we cannot be sure about the alcoholic content of the wine, what must be understood is the significance of wine in Jewish culture.
2. In the OT, Wine often represents celebration and abundance.
3. Plenty of wine represents God’s blessing upon the harvest.
4. Absence of wine could indicate a time of difficulty or famine brought about by sin and God’s displeasure.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Duncan M. Derrett has a very valuable discussion of this miracle. [p 156](#) He points out that in the ancient Near East there was a strong element of reciprocity about weddings, and that, for example, it was possible to take legal action in certain circumstances against a man who had failed to provide the appropriate wedding gift. This is quite foreign to our wedding customs and we are apt to overlook such possibilities. But it means that when the supply of wine failed more than social embarrassment was involved. The bridegroom and his family may well have become involved in a heavy pecuniary liability. The gift made by Jesus was thus doubly important.<sup>1</sup> **Morris, Leon. 1995. *The Gospel according to John. The New International Commentary on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.**

### 3. This difficult situation prompts Mary to ask for Jesus' intervention.

**2** *On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus's mother was there,* <sup>2</sup> *and Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding as well.* <sup>3</sup> *When the wine ran out, Jesus's mother told him, "They don't have any wine."* <sup>4</sup> *"What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?" Jesus asked. "My hour has not yet come."*

A. This is more than a mom believing her son was something special.

1. Mary is clearly asking Jesus to perform a miracle, even though He has not done so yet.
2. She asks Him to intervene in a situation that wasn't his.

B. Two subtle clues let the reader know something big is happening.

1. The first can be found in the opening, "On the third day..."
  - a. This chronology does not really make sense with the preceding chapter.
  - b. It's actually the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> day of the trip mentioned in Chapter 1.
  - c. Also, according to custom, weddings for virgins took place on Wednesday and for widows on Thursday, neither of which would be considered the third day.<sup>2</sup>

2. Often in Scripture, the third day refers to a time of Divine Intervention.

- a. On the third day, Abraham saw the place of sacrifice afar off (Gen. 22:3-4)
- b. On the third day, God descended upon Mt. Sinai in sight of the people (Exo. 19:11)
- c. Jonah was three days in the belly of a whale.

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<sup>2</sup> Morris, Leon. 1995. [The Gospel according to John](#). The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. pg 157.

d. Hezekiah was miraculously healed and went to the Temple on the third day.

e. Hosea 6:2 says, "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him."

f. Of course, we know that Jesus was resurrected on the third day.

1. In fact, if we read a little further in this chapter, we see Jesus make a seemingly blasphemous prophecy.

2. Jesus cleanses the Temple of the money changers and, when asked by whose authority and by what sign He did this, He proclaimed, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

g. Therefore, it seems John intends for the readers to understand Jesus' intervention in the wedding as divine intervention and not as a party favor.

1. Because what is a miracle other than the intervention of God in the natural world of man?

2. Perhaps John stresses that this is on the third day so that we might be prepared for Divine interaction, intervention, and interruption.

C. However, the clearest clue of Divine significance is in Jesus' words: "My hour has not yet come."

1. Jesus' "hour" is the key to understanding this passage.

2. It is in this simple word that we interpret what Mary is asking and what Jesus is doing, and why the disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God.

#### 4. Hour for what?

A. Jesus uses this phrase regularly throughout John.

1. John 7:6 (CSB) <sup>6</sup> Jesus told them, "My time has not yet arrived, but your time is always at hand.
2. John 7:8 (CSB) <sup>8</sup> Go up to the festival yourselves. I'm not going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come."
3. John 7:30 (CSB) <sup>30</sup> Then they tried to seize him. Yet no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come.
4. John 8:20 (CSB) <sup>20</sup> He spoke these words by the treasury, while teaching in the temple. But no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

B. At first, Jesus said his time had not come. But once the Cross comes into view, He changes.

1. John 12:23 (CSB) <sup>23</sup> Jesus replied to them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.
2. John 13:1 (CSB) Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.
3. John 16:32 (CSB) <sup>32</sup> Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.
4. John 17:1 (CSB) Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you,

C. In view here in John 2, Jesus is not saying His time for miracles hadn't come.

1. Instead, the hour of redemption had not come.
  - a. That day would come.
  - b. When Jesus would take upon Himself the sins of the world.



c. The day would come when His blood would be shed and his body broken so that those who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior would participate in the great and divine mystery of the marriage of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33).

2. The same John who tells of the Wedding at Cana is the same writer who tells us of a future wedding banquet:

a. Revelation 19:6-9 (CSB)

b.<sup>6</sup> Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying,

Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, reigns!

<sup>7</sup> Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself.

<sup>8</sup> She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure.

For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints. <sup>9</sup> Then he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb!" He also said to me, "These words of God are true."

D. In light of this hour, what Jesus does next in John 2 declares to His disciples what His ministry is all about.

<sup>6</sup> Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup> "Fill the jars with water," Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the headwaiter." And they did.

## 5. Ritual water becomes New Wine.

### A. The six stone water jars had a purpose.

1. They were not designed to carry wine but water.
2. The Jewish law required water to be poured over the hands of each guest before eating.
  - a. Earthen vessels could become unclean, but stone could not.
  - b. So stone jars were often used.
  - c. In this way, the people were ceremonially clean to eat.
  - d. The jars were clean, but the water would be dirty.
3. Jesus' instructions were probably burdensome but necessary.
  - a. How hard would it have been to dump 20-30 gallons of water?
  - b. How far did they have to go to draw water?
    1. A few feet?
    2. A few miles?
  - c. Yet it seems quite clear that Jesus had them pour out the old water and fill with fresh, clean water.
    1. For the very water that had been used to purify the guests had, in fact, become dirty.
    2. The dirty water of purification was unsuitable for the miracle Jesus wanted to accomplish.
    3. Jesus doesn't destroy the pots but instead fills them with clean water.
    4. Jesus didn't destroy the earthly temple in the next paragraph, He cleansed it to become what God intended again.

5. At times, what we all need, is the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the rush of Living Water, to purify us again.

B. As the headwaiter, the man responsible for the feast, dips water, a miracle happens.

1. Somewhere between the pouring out, the pouring in, and the dip of the ladle, the water becomes wine.

a. Not the cheap stuff, expected at this time.

b. But the best stuff: a new wine that no one expects.

c. And not only is it the best, but there is an overwhelming amount of wine.

2. At this, they see and believe and give Him glory?

a. But because the wine tasted good?

b. What is it that they see, and feel, and sense in this first sign?

6. The disciples caught a glimpse of Jesus as the Promised Groom of Israel.

A. Several Old Testament prophecies spoke of a day like this, symbolized by an abundance of wine:

1. Amos 9:11–13 (CSB)

<sup>11</sup>In that day

I will restore the fallen shelter of David:

I will repair its gaps,

restore its ruins,

and rebuild it as in the days of old,

<sup>12</sup>so that they may possess

the remnant of Edom

and all the nations  
that bear my name—  
this is the declaration of the LORD;  
he will do this.

<sup>13</sup>Look, the days are coming—  
this is the LORD's declaration—  
when the plowman will overtake the reaper  
and the one who treads grapes,  
the sower of seed.  
The mountains will drip with sweet wine,  
and all the hills will flow with it.

## **2. Joel 3:18 (CSB)**

<sup>18</sup>In that day  
the mountains will drip with sweet wine,  
and the hills will flow with milk.  
All the streams of Judah will flow with water,  
and a spring will issue from the LORD's house,  
watering the Valley of Acacias.

B. When Mary asks of Jesus to intervene in this wedding, it is Jesus' identity of "Groom" that is being pulled upon.

1. First of all, In Isaiah 25, we see the prediction of a heavenly wedding feast that the Messiah would usher in.

Isaiah 25:6–10 (CSB)

<sup>6</sup>On this mountain,

the LORD of Armies will prepare for all the peoples a feast of choice  
meat,

a feast with aged wine, prime cuts of choice meat, fine vintage wine.

<sup>7</sup> On this mountain

he will swallow up the burial shroud,

the shroud over all the peoples,

the sheet covering all the nations.

<sup>8</sup> When he has swallowed up death once and for all,

the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears

from every face

and remove his people's disgrace

from the whole earth,

for the LORD has spoken.

<sup>9</sup> On that day it will be said,

"Look, this is our God;

we have waited for him, and he has saved us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him.

Let's rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

<sup>10a</sup> For the LORD's power will rest on this mountain.

2. Jesus knew what He was called to do.

a. Jesus knew He was the one that would swallow up the  
burial shroud.

b. Jesus would unite the nations and invite them to a wedding  
feast.

c. Jesus would make it possible to wipe every tear and remove our disgrace.

3. Isaiah 25 is echoed in Rev. 21:

**Revelation 21:1–4 (CSB)**

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. **2** I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

**3** Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: 'Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples,' and God himself will be with them and will be their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

C. As Jesus attends another man's wedding, focused upon a different groom and a different bride, His mother's request inaugurates a prophetic promise:

1. Even though her son, she knew that Jesus was the Promised Messiah, the Groom of Israel.
2. And that someday, Jesus would come back to Earth as the celebrated groom and would retrieve His bride.

a. John the Baptist knew it, when he declared:

**John 3:27–30 (CSB)**

<sup>27</sup> John responded, "No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him from heaven. <sup>28</sup> You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I've been sent ahead of him.' <sup>29</sup> He who has the bride is the groom. But the groom's friend, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the groom's voice. So this joy of mine is complete. <sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I must decrease."

## Apply: What do we do in light of John 2?

### A. First, I believe we take a moment and give God glory.

1. This was the original response to this revelation.
2. The miracle wasn't about what was in the jars but in the One who attended the wedding.
  - a. Here stood the Promise One of Israel, the Ancient of Days, the Source of Living Water, the Bread of Life, the Bride-Groom of Israel.
  - b. And very few even noticed.
    1. Mary was first.
    2. Then the servants understood what happened.
    3. Lastly, a few of the observers and disciples.
    4. But the groom, the bride, and most of the guests never realized that the ONE whom their wedding foreshadowed was actually in their midst.
3. Too often, we are so distracted and busy, that we fail to recognize that the Spirit of God is in the room.
4. Therefore, this passage should cause us to pause, worship, and give God glory.

### B. Second, let us remember that God still fills and uses ordinary vessels.

1. Isn't this just like Jesus?
  - a. The One who takes a few loaves and fishes and feeds thousands.
  - b. Or has Peter cast a fishing line and retrieved money from a fish's mouth,
  - c. Is also the one that repurposes some jars, has them poured and refilled with something demonstrably better.

2. Without stretching the metaphor too far, I want to encourage us to allow God to use us however He sees fit.

a. That might require dumping, refilling, and a miracle.

b. Yet, God can and does use willing vessels for His glory.

3. Perhaps what is inside of us has grown stale and unclean.

a. Perhaps you are like me and in need of a fresh refilling.

b. May we allow the Spirit to empty us of ourselves and fill us, fresh, with Himself.

C. **Lastly, remember that Jesus is coming soon.**

1. Jesus is still yet to return.

2. When He does, it will be an event we do not want to miss.

3. I'm looking forward to the day when:

a. He wipes the tears from our eyes for the last time.

b. I look forward to a Kingdom with no more pain, sorrow, or grief.

c. I look forward to eating the Marriage Supper with the Nations, hearing their stories of how Jesus saved them and redeemed them.

d. Most importantly, I look forward to seeing Jesus face to face.

4. Today, we are reminded that Jesus is Coming Soon.