

John 2:1-12

II. Jesus Reveals Himself to the World (1:19-12:50)

- A. By John the Baptizer (1:19-34)
- B. Meeting the Disciples (1:35-51)
- C. The First Sign – Water into Wine (2:1-12)

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31)

With that, we have the first of Jesus' seven signs or miracles that John records for us: the turning of water into wine. We read in v. 1 that *Jesus and His disciples were invited to a wedding, a wedding in which the mother of Jesus was already attending.*¹ It's likely the wedding involved family friends. Weddings in ancient cultures were an extended affair, and they are still so observed and celebrated in some areas of the world. We're used to the six-hour wedding event: a thirty-minute ceremony, two hours of waiting for pictures to be done, one hour of introductions, thirty minutes for dinner, then two hours of sitting there watching people dance like fools. Here, we have Jesus and His disciples attend a multi-day event.

Throughout the course of the wedding celebration, the supply of wine began to dwindle, which would've been cause for great embarrassment in that culture, perhaps even grounds for a civil lawsuit!² Mary, knowing her Son was capable of remedying the wine problem, comes up to Him: *They have no wine* (v. 3). Jesus didn't own a vineyard, He had no corner of the market on wine. Prior to His Messianic ministry, He was quite likely a craftsman of some sort, especially given Joseph's occupation as a carpenter (cf. Mark 6:3).

So why does she make this statement to Jesus? Based on His response, Jesus knows it's because she wants Him to fix the wine problem using whatever means necessary. Even so, Jesus tells her that His *hour has not yet come* (v. 4).³ He claims it's not yet time.⁴ Nevertheless, Mary tells the servants, *Whatever He says to you, do it* (v. 5). This is a great statement of faith on Mary's part. It's difficult not to see her walking away exasperated, but the Word of God gives us no indication of her body language! Mary knows that Jesus is capable of fixing the wine problem, and that He's worthy to be followed and obeyed.⁵

Do we exhibit that same level of faith in God's promises and His works? When circumstances are overwhelming or hopeless, when it doesn't seem as though God is going to come through, when we can't quite see how God's going to use our situations for His glory and our good, what is our response?

¹Interestingly, Mary is not mentioned by name in the Gospel of John at all. She is only on the scene twice: here and in 19:25ff, although she's also alluded to in 6:42.

²Yes, wine, although it would've been more diluted than today's standards.

³Even though Jesus addresses His mother as *woman*, it's not disrespectful the way we might take it today.

⁴Colin Kruse notes: "[I]n the light of the fact that this is the first of seven references to Jesus' 'hour' (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1), a major theme in this Gospel, it may have greater significance. The first three references indicate that Jesus' hour had not yet come; the last four indicate that it had come. The hour towards which everything was moving was the hour of Jesus' glorification, which took place through his death, resurrection and exaltation. Bearing this in mind, Jesus could have been informing his mother that he was now acting only according to his Father's timetable, with his eyes fixed on the hour to come..." *John*, 97.

⁵Don Carson chalks this up to Mary's knowledge of Jesus' *resourcefulness*, and not that He had the supernatural ability to create wine (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 170).

Do we doubt? Do we try and take circumstances into our own hands? Or do we look to God expecting Him to show up and display His glory in His time and for His purposes? F. F. Bruce notes:

“Mary knew (despite her Son’s unforthcoming reply) that the situation was saved when it had been committed to him. She did not know what he would do, but she knew he would do the right thing. Hence her instructions to the servants or waiters...”⁶

Sure enough, Jesus does just that. He turns to the servants and calls them to *fill the waterpots with water* (v. 7). The servants took the *six waterpots of stone* (v. 6) and *filled them to the brim* (v. 7), somewhere in the neighborhood of 150 gallons!⁷ After the pots were full, Jesus told instructed the servants to take some of the contents to *the master of the feast*. The master of the feast is floored, because the wine was better than any that had been previously served. In v. 10, we see the reason! Usually, the best and most expensive wine was served first, so that everyone can get sufficiently inebriated, and then you can bring out the lower quality. After all, no one cares at that point!

Yet, beyond the intoxication, we have something else that’s worth noting: Jesus’ work only produces the best. His wine wasn’t mediocre or substandard, it wasn’t a work in progress, it didn’t start as grapes, it was complete and full from the moment it came to be. While we can’t press it too far, we do see a parallel between this wine and creation in general. The Word of God teaches that God created the world and everything in it immediately and out of nothing, just as Jesus made this wine!

At the end of this miracle, we read in v. 11 that this was the *beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory*. The purpose of these miracles was to manifest His glory so that others would believe His teachings and, as a result, believe in Him. Indeed, that’s how v. 11 ends: *His disciples believed in Him*.⁸ While His works may benefit people, the primary purpose for His works is the manifestation of His glory. He is deserving of worship even when He doesn’t work the way we think He should!

From there, Jesus and His entourage went down to Capernaum for a short time (v. 12).

⁶F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 70.

⁷Commentators see significance that Jesus takes something from the old order of things (*according to the manner of purification of the Jews*) and puts something new inside of them. Or perhaps it was a nod to passages like Jeremiah 31:12; Joel 3:18; and Amos 9:13-14.

⁸This, after all, is the purpose of John’s writing. Consider the signs and believe!