

Opening Words

There are many reasons why Jesus does miracles, but one of the greatest is to teach us obedience and faith.

0372 OSL 019 A Wedding at Cana 2 – Jesus and the Servants

How interesting it is that in the beginning of God's word, the book of Genesis, the first great social gathering was a wedding, where God brought the woman to the man and blessed their union.

In the ministry of Jesus, we see the same. Jesus' first miracle is at a wedding. Surely this is a sign that the Creator has come to bless his world. And bless it he did.

The celebration was going so well. Jesus and his disciples were undoubtedly enjoying the festivities when the unthinkable happened, the wine ran out! If this news had become public, great shame would have come to the groom's family. It would have likely been an event that would live on in tales for generations bringing shame to the family.

But Mary wanted to save the honor of this family. She asked Jesus to help. There was no doubt he could. But would he? He had gently rebuffed her by saying, "My hour has not yet come." It was not the time for him to be glorified. Yet, she has some assurance that he would do something because she told the servants, "whatever he says to you, do it!"

At this wedding, in this home of Cana in Galilee, six stone water pots stood silently in a corner of a back room. They were used for washing and ceremonial purification rites. Normally, a family would have only one. Either this family was wealthy, or others had brought them for the feast. We learn in John 2:6 that they were large as they could each hold 20-30 gallons of water, and they would be about waist high.

Jesus walked to the empty water pots, and in verse 7, we hear him say to the servants, "fill them with water."

Have you ever wondered if the servants resisted this command? "Fill them with water? They need wine, not water!" We must also remember how long it would take to fill such containers. That was 120-150 gallons of water! No small task!

But they did it! The servants began the arduous task of going to the well and bringing bucket after bucket of water until the six stone water pots were overflowing with water. And when they finished, Jesus spoke his second command which we read in verse 8.

"Draw out some of the water that you have put into the stone pots and take it to the headwaiter."

Well, if the first command of Jesus sounded ridiculous, this one was dangerous! They needed wine, not water. If the servants took water to the headwaiter, their jobs would be in jeopardy. The headwaiter might even think they were mocking him. Perhaps it would appear like they were drunk for taking such a foolish action, and they would get blamed for the shortage of wine. This was a risky move Jesus was asking.

But Mary had said, “Whatever he says to you, do it.” And so they went back to the stone water pots, freshly filled with water, probably thinking, “this is foolishness.” But as they drew near, the fragrance from the pots overwhelmed them. It was the fragrance of wine, pure, palate-pleasing, perfect wine. How could that be? Where was it coming from? It was coming from the pots they had just filled with water, and when they looked in they saw a vibrant red color, such as they had never seen before.

The servants looked at one another with astonishment, and then they hurriedly scooped some out and rushed it to the headwaiter – faces beaming with joy. The headwaiter tasted and was amazed – “this is the best wine of the night! Why has the bridegroom kept this wine back until now?”

He went to the bridegroom, with joy in his heart and relief in his voice because he could now fulfill his task as headwaiter making sure everyone had everything they needed. We read in verse 10 that he said to the bridegroom, “My lord, every man serves the best wine first and then after people have drunk freely and dulled their sense of taste, then they bring out the poorer wine. But you have kept the best wine until now.”

And we can be sure that the bridegroom asked, “Where has this come from?” And probably the headwaiter answered, “I don’t know master. I thought you would know! All I know is that the servants have now brought this extra supply of wine for us all. Let’s celebrate!” And they all laughed, the headwaiter from relief that he would be able to do his job, the bridegroom and his family that their good name had been saved. This day would be a day of joy, and the new couple would begin their new life with honor.

The story ends with great simplicity. We read in John 2:11-12, “This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him. After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.”

Let’s see what we can learn from this story. In the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the story of the wedding at Cana and the turning of water into wine is thought to be the first of his miracles. When Jesus did miracles there were always reasons for them. I would like to share five reasons why Jesus performed miracles:

1. He did them to show who He was – this was probably the reasoning behind Mary’s request when she came to him and said, “They have no wine, Jesus, and you can do something about it and show them who you are.”

The stories of the Gospel tell us that Jesus’s miracles revealed His identity. In John 14:8-11 we find this exchange between Philip and Jesus. Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

And Jesus *said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in

the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.”

This miracle in Cana of Galilee was the first miracle that His disciples saw. It was for them and for the servants to see and no one else. It was for them to learn first who He was. But all his miracles would show his identity which is so important for us to learn.

2. He sometimes did miracles to show that the new age that – the age of the kingdom of God – was beginning in Israel. In Matthew 12:28 Jesus said,

“If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

As we have seen in our studies of this event in Jesus life, a wedding and abundant wine was a sign of the presence of the kingdom of God

3. He did miracles to demonstrate his authority.
over death – by raising the dead
Over disease by healing
over demons by freeing people from their control
over creation by turning water into wine, calming the storm, and walking on water

But Christ was doing more than demonstrating authority. Christ was taking authority. He was reclaiming authority over the earth. Remember the wilderness story where Satan offered Him authority over all the earth and Jesus refused? He refused it because he wanted to take authority away from Satan. The miracles of Christ were an invasion of Satan’s territory and the assertion of God’s kingdom over Satan’s.

4. To meet needs
Whether it was healing the sick or giving sight to the blind or releasing a child from an evil spirit, Jesus did his miracles with compassion. In this story, Jesus met a great need. The need was far greater than making sure everyone had enough to drink. The need was to save the honor and reputation of a family and to ensure that the marriage got off to an honorable start.
5. But there is a fifth reason why he does miracles – he does them to teach us lessons in obedience and faith.

When Jesus tells us to do something, as he told the servants, we need to do it. We may not understand it at the time. It may seem meaningless. But when we get to the end of what he asks us to do, we will find that a miracle has taken place.

Jesus often tells us to do things step-by-step without telling us the conclusion because he wants us to trust Him. He can see further down the road than we can.

Only a few on that day knew what had happened, Mary, Jesus’ disciples and the servants. The bridegroom didn’t know. The headwaiter didn’t know where the wine came from. The guests at the party didn’t know. Only the servants knew. Only the disciples knew. Only Mary knew. They

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were in the right place at the right time and because they did what Jesus told them to do they saw a miracle before their eyes as Jesus turned the water into wine.