

**"Here Comes the Groom"  
(John 2:1-11)  
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**(John 2:1-11)**

<sup>1</sup> On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, <sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

<sup>4</sup> "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

<sup>6</sup> Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

<sup>8</sup> Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so,  
<sup>9</sup> 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 aside <sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Children and grown-ups are familiar with this story in the life of Jesus because it was the first miracle that he ever did. But what is the main teaching from this story? Why was it included in John's gospel? The gospels were written primarily to tell us who Jesus is. That's the main reason. That's the thing we should be looking for first, whenever we read the gospels. What does this story, what do these teachings, first and foremost tell me about Jesus. And then secondarily, we learn things about the world we live in, about sin, about ourselves, about ethics, and so on. But always remember that the first thing the gospels aim to teach is "who is Jesus?"

Well, let's look at this story. There happened to be a wedding. It tells us that Mary, the mother of Jesus was at this wedding and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. Most likely it was a close family member given that Mary felt responsible to do something about the there being no more wine.

Now, in those days it wasn't uncommon for a wedding to last for several days and even up to a week and it was the groom's side that was responsible for all the festivities and the reception. What is blaringly absent from this wedding are the names of the bride and groom. In our culture that's the most important thing. We want to know who it is that's getting married. We don't just place in our church bulletin, hey there was a wedding yesterday and a bunch of people were there. Of course not.

We announce the names of the couple. Now, I don't want to make too much from something that's not there, but I do think the absence of the names is telling us to focus on something else or someone else.

Now, why did Mary go to Jesus about the wine problem? Well, most scholars agree that Jesus' father, Mary's husband, Joseph, most likely died when he was young, so taking care of and providing for the family fell on Jesus' shoulders as soon as he was able, perhaps as early as when he was a teenager. The other gospels tell us that Jesus was not only the son of a carpenter, but that he himself was a carpenter and he probably provided for his family this way. Well, as the host, and the relative of the host, you can imagine the stress levels rising when the drink began to run out. So since Jesus was most likely a very capable son, Mary turns to him for help.

Now, I must mention that Roman Catholics use this text to show that Mary plays a role as a mediator and she is even known as the mediatrix. A Roman Catholic would pray the Rosary, and the "Hail Mary" is at the heart of the Rosary. It goes like this. "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Part of the reason they assign a mediatorial role to Mary is because of this passage. Mary asked Jesus to do something. Jesus did it and as a result the disciples believed in him. Well, it's unfortunate that they believe in this teaching because it is not supported in Scripture. Nowhere are we encouraged to pray to anyone other than the Father, Son or Holy Spirit.

Back to the story. They're at a wedding. There's no more wine. Mary asks her son to do something about the problem and Jesus replies, "Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come." A couple things to note here:

First, Jesus addresses Mary as woman, not mother, not mom, not mama. And this is not the only time. When Jesus is hanging on the cross, he looks over at Mary and says, "Woman, here is your son, but when he looks at the disciple, he says, "Here is your mother." Why?

*Now children, imagine this. You mom has been out all afternoon grocery shopping so she could prepare a delicious dinner for the family. She's selected all the best ingredients at the best prices, so she has some money leftover to buy you your favorite brand of chips, Doritos. You're sitting in the living room watching TV and you hear her keys jangling outside. Then you hear the click of the lock unlocking. You hear the rustle of all the plastic bags and so you glance over and see that your mom is holding around 20 bags full of groceries. Sweat is pouring down her face. Her fingers are about to fall off from the weight of all those grocery bags and she says, "Honey, come and help with these bags." And you say, "Woman, why do you involve me?"*

*What do you think will happen next? You would get the severest beat down for two reasons. One, you called her woman. Two, you said, why do you involve me?*

Now, why does Jesus respond to his beloved mother that way, his mother that brought him into the world, his mother that fed him and raised him? Why does he call her 'woman' and not 'mother'? The title 'mother' or 'mom' or 'mama' is the most intimate term that a child could call the person who brought him into this world. To be called 'woman' is similar to calling her lady, miss, ma'am. So to call your mother 'woman,' something must be going on.

A clue lies in the rest of his response. He says,

"Why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come."

"Why do you involve me?" literally means "What to me and to you?" or "What do you and I have in common?" Or "What does this have to do with me?" So, this is a kind of gentle rebuke to Mary.

Well perhaps the greatest clue is with the second part of his response, "My hour has not yet come." The "hour" is always a reference to the hour of his death. Listen to John 13:1.

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (**John 13:1**)

And also John 17:1:

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. (**John 17:1**)

Now, let's try to put all the pieces together. Mary is trying to avoid a hosting-catastrophe in running out of wine, so she asks Jesus to help. Jesus responds somewhat harshly, addressing Mary as 'Woman,' and says, "Why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come."

Here's what's going on. At this point, Jesus is no longer a young man who is living under the roof of his parents. His official ministry as the Messiah and Savior of the world has begun. He's been anointed with the Holy Spirit. He's begun to search out and select his disciples. So when his mother asks him for a hand, he calls her woman, and says, why do you involve me? He's saying what does this have to do with why I've come to the earth? What does this have to do with my true calling? My job is to get to the hour. My job is to die for the sins of all people. So, I will not be controlled or manipulated or distracted by you, even though you are my mother or by any other person. My job is to do the will of my Father, which he says explicitly in the chapters to come (5:30; 8:29).

As well, in addressing Mary as 'woman' I believe Jesus is saying, "Even you Mary, even you mother, even you woman, must have your sins forgiven. Even you must come to me like all other men and women. Yes, you are my mother, but you are also part of the fallen race of Adam. And now that I've officially begun my role as Messiah, you too must approach me that way." It can be seen as harsh, but it would've been worse if he didn't do that. Because he loves her, and cares about her soul more than anything.

Now, I think there at least a couple of applications for us. First, do we ever use Jesus as something other than what he truly is? Do we try to make Jesus into something that is just for our gain, or do we come to him as Savior and Lord? I think we can do that. We try to use Jesus for ourselves.

Second, we must never presume our standing with Jesus. We must never think or believe that we have some sort of insider, special track with Jesus. We should never saym "Well, my dad was an elder. I have an uncle that's a pastor and a cousin who's a missionary. Our family has always been Christian." Listen. If anyone's ever had an inside track to Jesus it was his mother Mary, yet he expects her to come to him as savior and Lord. Remember this story? Jesus went to his home town and some people went to him and said, "Hey Jesus your mother and your brothers are looking for you." He says, while looking at the people who were following him, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3:34) So, we must be careful not to presume that we have an inside track. We must all personally and individually come to Jesus.

Now, as we move on in the story, we see that Jesus starts doing something? Though he responds somewhat harshly, almost rebuking her, he actually goes ahead with finding a solution to the wine problem. Why? Jesus uses this crisis as an opportunity to fulfill his purpose. In the Old Testament we find descriptions of the new age, or the age of the Messiah, to be flowing with wine (Jeremiah 31:12; Hosea 14:7; Amos 9:13-14) and, in the gospels we see Jesus using the image of the wedding banquet in some of his parables to describe the coming of his new kingdom (Matt 22:1-14; 25:1-13). In the letters, Paul makes explicit that Jesus is the groom and we, the church, are his bride.

In the book of Revelation, we are told that when Jesus returns, to judge, to rule and reign it'll be like a wedding. So, Jesus uses this wedding as an opportunity to reveal something to us about himself. We'll see what that is shortly.

In Verse 5, his mother says to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now, before we move on from this statement, I think it's good for us to pause a bit and think about this some more. In these words of Mary, we have the description of what it means to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus Christ. Take these words alongside Jesus' words at the end of Matthew's gospel, "Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." So, what does your Christianity look like? Do you do whatever he tells you only when you feel like it, or when it's agreeable, or when it doesn't inconvenience me, or when it doesn't bother me? Or as long as it doesn't get in the way of my sleep or my work or my plans? That is not Christianity. To be a Christian is to do whatever Jesus tells us to do. This is the genuine response of faith.

Well, let's move on.

Nearby were six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. This would have totaled somewhere from 500-750 liters of water. These jars were for the purpose of cleansing--cleansing a utensil or a container, or for washing your hands, but it was done for a religious purpose. It served as an act of purification.

There are a couple important details to notice. First is that they were ceremonial jars and second the sheer quantity of liquid. The ceremonial jars and the water they contained were part of the old way to be pure and clean. But now someone greater is here. Remember what John the Baptist said. "I baptize with water, but there is one that baptizes with the Holy Spirit." The same idea is meant here. There is one here at the wedding that replaces the old way with a new way, a far better way. He doesn't merely cleanse the hands of dirt, he cleanses deeper, into our hearts. This is what Jesus came to do. He didn't come to be some charlatan, some magician, some guy on the corner doing tricks for our loose change.

As well, consider the sheer quantity of liquid. It's not unlike him to such a huge miracle. When he fed the 5000 men, perhaps up to 15,000 people when you include women and children. And they had twelve baskets left over. When Jesus comes he does things in such a way that there is no doubt that something very significant has happened, something inexplicable has happened, someone very special is here. Jesus brings things in abundance.

Next, Jesus tells the servants to fill the jars of water. Now I don't know what their water source was, but I am sure this took a lot of time. 500-750 liters filled not by turning on a hose, but one container at a time. Maybe they had a bucket brigade, we don't know. The author does note that each jar was filled to the brim. I think that's there to imply that nothing could have been added to it to take away from the miracle. If it was only 2/3 filled then it might have been said that Jesus added some really concentrated wine, so it wasn't really a miracle.

Next Jesus tells them to draw some out and to take it to the master of the banquet. And they did so. So sometime after all the jars were filled the water was turned into wine. The master of the banquet tasted the water that turned into wine and is surprised that such good wine was saved for later. The master of the banquet, who had no idea what had happened becomes the one who verifies that a miracle has occurred. The master of the banquet leans over to the groom and gives him the credit. He says to him. Most people bring out the good wine first and then when they are a bit tipsy, you bring out the less tasty wine, but you have done the exact opposite. The wine we had so far was good, but the wine that has just come out is even better.

So, this groom, who was in charge of the banquet, receives the praise and the glory, but behind the scenes there is another groom, the one that truly deserves the glory. He's the one that performed the miracle. This tells us that the story is occurring on two levels, a surface level and a deeper level.

On a surface level, at the banquet, there are clay jars used for ceremonial washing. On a deeper level there is one at the banquet who cleanses the heart.

On the surface, Jesus is the able and competent and resourceful go-to son that Mary goes when she's in a terrible bind. But on a deeper level, even Mary, Jesus own mother, must await the hour for which Jesus came. She too must approach Jesus as Savior and Lord.

On the surface, it's just a wedding of a family member, a celebration, a party where they ran out of wine. On a deeper level, this wedding and this groom point to another wedding and another and greater groom. It'll be a wedding where the wine will never stop flowing; a wedding where Jesus will be the glorious groom and we, the church will be his purified bride.

On the surface, the urgent hour is now, to solve the crisis of running out of wine. On a deeper level the hour is yet to come, an hour of great suffering in the place of sinners.

We, too, must go beyond the surface of the story to the deeper level and meet the true groom and that's this miracle occurred, to reveal the true groom to us, to reveal to us the glory of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Savior of the world. This miracle happened back then, so that you and I, would also give him glory and believe in him today.

Let's pray.