

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S5E6

The Wedding at Cana of Galilee - (John 2:1-5)

Description – The wedding feast in Cana is where Jesus performs his first miracle. Join us today as we look at this town, the people there, and the significance of the miracle.

Today we're looking at the wedding feast in Cana, where Jesus performed his first miracle.

John lays his book out around three sets of seven.

1. The seven miracles
2. The seven "I Am..." statements
3. The seven witnesses

Cana of Galilee is 3-4 miles away from Jesus's hometown. But archeological evidence shows that it might have been further to the north, closer to Mt. Carmel.

This was a city known for religious zealots.

"Cana" is the word that can mean stick or reed, but can also mean "Zeal."

The Zealots were one of 5 major groups in Israel at the time.

1. Essenes
2. Pharisees
3. Sadducees
4. Zealots
5. Herodians

Zealots were the silent assassins of the day. They wanted to bring the kingdom about through radicalism and violence. They were zealous nationalists who wanted to overthrow Rome using the sword.

It's ironic that Simon the Zealot was called to be one of the 12 disciples of Jesus. A radicalized man following a man of peace.

John's audience he was writing to would be believers scattered throughout Asia Minor.

John 2:1-4

On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus's mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding as well.³ When the wine ran out, Jesus's mother

told him, “They don’t have any wine.” ⁴ “What has this concern of yours to do with me, woman?” Jesus asked. “My hour has not yet come.”

So first observation: Why is there a wedding on the third day? (Tuesday)

You have to go back to the creation account. On day 3 of creation, God says it is “very good” twice. So they viewed the “third” day of the week as double blessed.

So we’re here at this wedding feast and the host runs out of wine. Which to have this happen to you would be completely embarrassing and humiliating. The culture was all about honor and respect.

This was not grape juice, this was actual good wine. Jesus made wine. Remember, the Bible doesn’t call drinking a sin, but drunkenness clearly is a sin.

But you can’t use John 2 as a proof text for drinking wine.

Pastor Robby’s sermon on “Is it wise for a Christian to drink alcohol?”
<https://longhollow.com/is-it-wise-for-a-christian-to-drink-alcohol>

Wine to the Jewish culture was synonymous with “Joy.”

Psalm 104:15

¹⁵ wine that makes human hearts glad— making his face shine with oil— and bread that sustains human hearts.

Isaiah 55:1

“Come, everyone who is thirsty, come to the water; and you without silver, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without silver and without cost!

One rabbi said, “Without wine, there is no joy.”

Mary, Jesus’s mother, must have had a prominent role at this wedding. If she was just a guest, why would she be so concerned about the host running out of wine?

Jesus’s response to Mary is really saying, “What does this have to do with me and you? Why is this our concern?”

Two opinions on why Mary went to Jesus:

1. Mary knows who Jesus is and she’s expecting him to perform a miracle
 - a. If anybody can get them out of this mess it would be Jesus
2. Mary knows Jesus is resourceful, and can make things happen
 - a. Based on church history and on the lack of references to Joseph, we’re assuming that Joseph has already died.

- b. In that culture, when the father dies, the firstborn son takes on the role of leading the family.

“Woman” here is not a derogatory term; he’s not being disrespectful. It’s the same term he uses to Mary when he says at the cross, “Woman, here is your son.”

What Jesus is doing here is disconnecting himself from parental authority. He’s beginning to move out on his own. Yes, he’s supposed to honor mother & father, but before that he’s supposed to honor God.

The rabbis used to say that it is more important to honor your rabbi over your earthly father. Your father brought you into the world, but your rabbi can lead you to the next world.

Jesus is no longer the little boy in the temple. His obedience is now to God, but notice that he continues to honor his mother, Mary.

What we’re about to see is Jesus and Mary doing a dueling match with scripture.

Genesis 29:21

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, “**Since my time is complete...**

Jacob says to Laban, “My time has come...” but Jesus says the opposite to Mary. Jesus is at a wedding, but Jacob is ready to have a wedding.

Jesus is saying, “It’s not my time; I don’t want to be part of this zealot, radical community”

Mary shoots back with Genesis 41:55,

Genesis 41:55

⁵⁵ When the whole land of Egypt was stricken with famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh told all Egypt, “**Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you.**”

Mary is saying to the household servants, “Do whatever Jesus tells you.”

One interesting sidebar here is how everyone is trying to get Jesus to do what they want:

1. Mary wants Jesus to save the wedding feast
2. Peter wants Jesus to quit talking about all this death stuff
3. James & John want to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus
4. Judas wants Jesus to take the perfume and sell it for money
5. The crowds demand a sign or a miracle from Jesus

But the same thing still happens even today. When is the last time we’ve prayed, “God, put on my heart what is on your heart”?

Jesus ends up performing the miracle, but it's not out of obedience to his mother.

John 2:5-8

⁵“Do whatever he tells you,” his mother told the servants. ⁶Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. Each contained twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷“Fill the jars with water,” Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim. ⁸Then he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the headwaiter.” And they did.

Catholics take this verse as a proof-text to say two things:

1. Mary is the one who got Jesus to do this miracle
2. Jesus is busy, so don't go to him, go to Mary.

This is why they want to go to Mary or pray to Mary.

But God loves when we come to Him in prayer, why would we go to or through an intermediary to request something from him instead of just going directly to him?

Notice the numbers here: 6 water jars used for Jewish purification.

6 jars, 6 being the number of incompleteness, or incompleteness, used for purification and washing of hands.

Why 6 and not 7, or 5 or 10 jars?

Jesus is taking jars that symbolize purification in Judaism; they represent the entire Jewish system and say that it cannot save, it cannot be enough. It will never be enough to save or to cleanse them fully.

This miracle shows a transforming power with Jesus. The water of Judaism transformed into the wine of Christianity, the law of water changing to the gospel of wine.

Jesus is going to do his first miracle by turning water into wine. The clear becoming bloodred. The Prophet, the New Moses. Moses's first miracle was water into blood.

Jesus's first miracle is at a wedding; and the last thing he will do is the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19.

Remember, the greatest miracle here is a miracle of time. That the wine here, “the best wine” would have taken a long time to ferment. This is a nod to the fact that only God / Jesus can manipulate time.