

Bi132 The Gospels

Lesson Bi132-12 Water Into Wine

Have you ever been to a wedding where they ran out of food and drink for the guests? In any culture this would be very embarrassing, bringing ‘shame’ or ‘loss of face’ on the family involved. To fail in proper hospitality is a serious offense. A wedding should be a time of joy, not a time to worry. In this story you will hear how Jesus entered into this very situation and used it to teach an important truth. He saved a family from ‘losing face.’

Early in Jesus’ ministry, a wedding took place in the town of Cana. The town was west of the Sea of Galilee. In those days a wedding feast was very important and might go on for several days, even a week. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. Suddenly, in the midst of the wedding feast, the wine ran out. The supply was gone! Jesus’ mother Mary became aware of the dilemma and said to her son, “They have no more wine.”

This was more than a social embarrassment, since the family had an obligation to provide a feast of the socially required standard. But Jesus replied to Mary, “Dear woman, why are you bringing this situation to me? My time has not yet come.”

So his mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” So they looked at Jesus, waiting for his instructions. Now up to this time, a few of his disciples had seen the miracle catch of fish, but Jesus had performed no other miracles that the disciples had observed. They had no idea what was about to happen at that ordinary wedding. We don’t even know the names of the family or the bride and groom. We have no idea what connection they might have had with Mary and Joseph. But the disciples were watching Jesus very closely—curious about what he would do. They did not know what to expect.

Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing. Jews could become ceremonially defiled in many ways, and they had to pour water over their hands to be cleansed. During a long feast, a large amount of water was required for this purpose. Each jar held close to 100 liters. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim.

Then he told the servants, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” The servants could not understand why they should take a drink of water to the host. They reluctantly did so, and the master of the banquet took a taste. Jesus had turned the water into wine! This man did not realize where the wine had come from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew and so did the disciples. To his surprise, it was better than any wine yet served during the feast!

Then the master of the banquet called the bridegroom aside and asked, “Where have you been hiding this? Everyone brings out the best wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink. You have saved the best till now!” (John 2:10).

Consider this question for a moment: Who was Jesus thinking of when he manifested his glory by turning the water into wine?

What Jesus did there in Cana was the first of his miraculous signs. He thus revealed his glory and, as a result, his disciples put their faith in him. Jesus performed this miracle, because he saw that there was a greater purpose. The word ‘sign’ emphasizes the significance of the action, rather than the miracle itself. A ‘sign’ points to something—in this case it points to Jesus’ deity and his role as the Messiah. John tells us the sign was given so that the disciples would see the glory of Jesus through this event. And so they would believe he was the Messiah. After this Jesus went down to Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, with his mother and brothers and his disciples.

This story is about more than Jesus providing for a wedding where the host had not planned ahead. Though Jesus began by saying that his time had not yet come, we understand that this miracle did become the start of his public ministry. He was beginning to move toward the destiny for which he had come. His public ministry led to the time of his crucifixion on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. At the cross and then at the empty tomb, Jesus’ time would truly come.

This story is **important** because it shows us that Jesus is concerned about our needs, both small and great. He desires to reveal his love and power to meet our needs, so that we can grow in our trust of Him.

The **main truth** of this story is that this miracle was the first of several signs that point to the truth that Jesus is the true Messiah and that God the Father was revealing himself through his son.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What problem did Mary tell Jesus about while they were at the wedding in Cana?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said Mary told Jesus, “They have no more wine,” you are correct.
2. What did Jesus do to solve the problem of no more wine at the wedding in Cana?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said "Jesus changed the water in the six big jars into wine," you are correct.
3. What was the result of the miracle of the new wine in the lives of Jesus’ disciples?
A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said "They saw the miracle and believed that Jesus was the Messiah," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn this story by memory so you can tell it to someone who has never heard it. After telling the story ask, “Why did Jesus involve the servants in filling the water pots and not the disciples, since, in a sense, the disciples were his helpers?” The answer is that because Jesus involved the servants, they became part of the miracle and were forced to decide for themselves whether or not Jesus was the Messiah.