**JESUS CHANGES WATER INTO WINE**

September 18, 2016

John 2:1-11

Key Verse 2:11 “This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.”

This passage is the account of Jesus’ first miraculous sign at the wedding at Cana in Galilee.

This miracle shows that Jesus came to this world to bless all mankind. Jesus wants us to live our lives full of joy and happiness as in a wedding feast. Ultimately, this miracle points toward the great Messianic wedding banquet when Jesus comes again. Jesus also demonstrates that he had the transforming power to change people from tasteless, ordinary people to very important people who bring joy and happiness to others. Jesus used Mary’s simple request and servants’ obedience to reveal his glory. Let’s experience Jesus’ transforming power through our humble prayer and absolute obedience. May God bless us to taste the kingdom of God through Jesus. I pray that God may bless us to put our faith in Jesus through this passage.

**First**, marriage is God’s blessing (1-2). It was the first week of Jesus’ ministry. At this important stage of his earthly Messianic ministry, what did Jesus do? He went to a wedding. It is amazing that he went to a wedding to bless it. Here we see that Jesus is full of grace. Probably the people holding the wedding feast were either some of his relatives or friends. To the Jews, a wedding was a most blessed event in life. Customarily, the festivities began on a Wednesday, and normally lasted seven days (Gen 29:27a). According to Jewish customs, the bridegroom and bride were dressed in wedding robes and crowns, and were treated like a king and queen. They opened their house for a week to welcome wedding guests, both to entertain them, and to celebrate together. A wedding was always a joyful occasion for the whole community in a country where life was hard and full of toil and struggle. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 teach us that God created the heavens and the earth for his own glory. After the creation, God planted the Garden of Eden, that is, Paradise. There God established and ordained the first marriage between Adam and Eve. Marriage is God’s expression of utmost blessing for mankind. Each person must know that marriage was established by God, and was ordained and sanctified by God. Many people think that if they marry, they would live happily ever after. But it is not true. If they want to be happy, each family must accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of the family. When they do so, God blesses the family both spiritually and materially. Otherwise marriage would turn out to be a burden, and heartbreaking to their precious children.

**Second,** Jesus’ time and Mary’s time (3-4). At the wedding at Cana in Galilee, a serious problem arose. In the midst of the wedding feast, the wine ran out. Wine was essential to a wedding feast, for it made the wedding guests delightful in the blessedness of the occasion. And offering good hospitality was traditionally very important in the East. So, it was embarrassing for the bridegroom and the bride that the wine ran out at their wedding. It was a breach of hospitality. The host could have actually been sued for a breach of hospitality to his guest.

Mary is the first to notice the impending disaster. She brings this crisis to the one person who can solve the problem: Jesus. She went to Jesus and said, “They have no more wine.” Jesus replied, “Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come” (3,4). Jesus’ reply sounds rude. But here “woman” means “Ma’am” today. It’s not rude, but it is not intimate. Jesus is distancing himself from mother/son relationship which had existed for 30 years. When Jesus said, “Woman,” she is now dealing not with her son, but with the Son of God. She is no longer in a position to tell him what to do. When Jesus said, “My time has not yet come,” it meant that he was living and acting on God’s time schedule. We live according to the time schedule of our boss, girlfriends, parents or our own in order to please them and gain some benefits. But Jesus only sought to seek God’s glory. In John 7, Jesus’ brothers urged Jesus to go up to Jerusalem to show himself up to the world. But Jesus said, “The right time for me has not yet come; for you any time is right.” Jesus was conscious of God’s time schedule for himself. “My time” is a theme of John’s gospel. “My time” or “my hour” refers ultimately to his death on the cross as the Lamb of God. Sometimes we idle away our time, thinking that we can do it tomorrow. But it is not true. As God had his definite time schedule for Jesus, so he has his own time schedule for each of us.

**Third**, Mary’s prayer (3-5). Mary brought the problem to Jesus. She knew that running out of wine at the wedding was no small problem for the family. But she could do nothing with her own ability. Still, she felt that the problem was her own. Mary came to Jesus with the problem. Her coming to Jesus seems to be a small matter. But her coming to Jesus with the problem was the first step of her prayer. We have to bring our problem right away whether it is small or big. Many people worry first when they have a problem. Then they miss an opportunity to experience Jesus’ power. We must bring the problems as they are to Jesus and ask his help in prayer. Mary did just like that. James 4:2c says, “You do not have, because you do not ask God.” Are you too busy to ask God? Stop everything and ask God what you need. Are you too proud to ask God? Humble yourself and kneel down before God and he will listen to your humble cry.

When Mary came to Jesus in prayer, Jesus said to her, “Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Mary, the mother of Jesus, could have been embarrassed by her sons’ response. But she was not upset, despite the seeming refusal. She was calm, believing that Jesus would deal with the problem in his own way. This was the second step of her prayer. We call this “the faith of waiting on the Lord.” But it is not easy at all to have this waiting-on-the-Lord faith.

Let’s see what Mary did next. Mary did what she could. She quietly stepped out to where the servants were. What did Mary say to the servants? Out of exasperation did she say, “Go and see if any liquor store is open”? Or did she rebuke the family for not preparing enough wine? No! She said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you” (5). She helped the servants to have obedient hearts toward Jesus’ words. This was the third step of her prayer. We can see that Mary was a woman of prayer, and a beautiful woman of environment-making. When we pray, we have to do our part and then God will do his part. For example, if you have a school problem, you have to pray to God, “Lord, help me get an A in Calculus class.” What should you do after your prayer? Do you enjoy a computer game because God will answer your prayer or do your part by doing homework? We have to do our parts after we pray. Then God will do his part and answer our prayers. Jesus was able to use the servants because Mary prepared them to listen to him.

**Fourth**, the servants’ beautiful obedience (6-11). When his time came, Jesus spoke to the servants. Look at verse 7. “‘Fill the jars with water’; so they filled them to the brim.” When Jesus first told them, “Fill the jars with water,” they obeyed him without a word of complaint. We can imagine this must have been very difficult task for them to obey. Servants in a wedding feast are very busy. They have to move fast to take care of all the menial work and run errands. When the command to fill the jars with water came from Jesus, who was not even their master, they could have objected, saying, “Don’t you see that we are very busy?” Above all, what good was it to fill the jar with water when the problem was wine? They could not understand Jesus’ command. Besides, filling the jars with water was no small task. Without the benefit of today’s tap water, they had to draw water from the well and carried it from a distance. And the six stone jars held about 120-180 gallons of water for the purpose of ceremonial washing of hands and feet. This required a good deal of their effort and time. But verse 7b says, “so they filled them to the brim.” The servants obeyed Jesus’ word and filled the jars to the brim. Here the phrase “to the brim” tells us that their obedience was not half-hearted. They obeyed wholeheartedly and with great willingness. They obeyed, not 70%, but 120%. The servants teach us what it means to obey God’s word.

Look at verse 8. “Then he told them, ‘Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.’” They had obeyed Jesus’ word 120% when he gave them the task of filling the jars. But now Jesus was asking them to take foot-washing water to the master of the banquet to serve the guests. This was even harder to obey. But they obeyed anyway. When they obeyed, a miracle happened. The water turned into wine. The foot-washing water turned into sweet wine. Someone said poetically, “The unconscious water saw their God and blushed.” Look at verses 9, 10. “...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 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.’” The guests really enjoyed the wine Jesus had made. The banquet master had no idea what had happened. He only knew the wine was better. On the other hand, the servants who obeyed Jesus knew what had happened: They experienced the power of the Creator God. Only the Creator God can change water into wine. Here we learn that without participating in God’s work, we cannot know the secret of how God works, nor the changing power of God. This is the reason why we have to participate in the work of God no matter how small it is.

The servants’ obedience is a glimpse of our Lord’s own obedience. Our Lord Jesus came into this world to show people how to obey the will of God. As Adam’s disobedience brought forth curse on mankind, so Jesus’ obedience became the fountain of salvation. Hebrews 5:8 says, “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered....” Sinful human beings cannot obey naturally. We must learn how to obey the will of God; we must do our best to learn how to obey God’s word. Here we learn the formula of the miracle. Mary’s prayer plus servants’ obedience equals miracle. P + O = M.

Look at verse 11. “This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.” Through this first miraculous sign Jesus also manifested that he came to this world to change useless people like foot-washing water into useful people like the best wine. Jesus revealed his transforming power when he changed water into wine: $H\_{2}O$ to $CH\_{3}CH\_{2}OH$. No one can change another person. No one can change himself either, even if he really wants to. But Jesus can change us. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

Until we meet Jesus, we are not the best we can be. Jesus brings the best out of us when we believe in him. Jesus changed common people to become the best people. As we know, all his disciples were ordinary people like fishermen or a tax collector, but Jesus changed them to become the most influential people of the world. Jesus transformed Simon the sand to Peter the rock. Jesus changed Levi, the tax collector to saint Matthew. Once I was a country boy from Jeju island of Korea, full of despair, thinking that I was useless because I was not like Einstein. In reality I was a selfish man. But Jesus brought the best out of me. He showed me his great purpose to live as a shepherd for young college students.

This first miraculous sign shows us that Jesus came to this world to make our life joyful like a wedding feast. Without Jesus, our life is like a wedding feast without wine, so dry and no joy. Jesus came to give us joy in our lives. There are three joy robbers: anxiety, stress and fear. Anxiety is worrying about something that may or may not happen. But according to the statistics, something we worry usually does not happen. So we worry for nothing. But anxiety robs our joy. Stress is when we focus our attention on something beyond our control. When we don’t trust in God for things beyond our control, our hearts are always troubled. Then our joy disappears. Fear is worse than anxiety or stress. Fear is caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or harm. Fear makes things appear worse than as they are. The only way to be freed from these joy robbers is to look at Jesus and believe him. Then our life will be changed from joyless life to life with joy. I pray that you may enjoy life as in wedding banquet.

In this passage Jesus demonstrated that he was the Son of God by changing water into wine. Jesus can change a person who is tasteless and dull like water into a person who is dynamic and powerful and entertaining like wine. I pray that we all may experience the power of Jesus through our humble prayer and absolute obedience. May God bless you to have the joy of life in Jesus.