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Glory Revealed

John 2:1-11

Intro: The 6 individuals who were now trusting in and following Jesus are starting on a lifelong walk with Him and from the very outset; they began to learn more about Him. Since we're familiar with Gospel record of Christ's life and ministry, we often take some smaller events for granted; but to the disciples, each day and each new event brought wonders that were difficult to process or understand. But, as we'll see, each event that they experienced with Jesus gave them greater revelation of who Jesus was, which lead to greater understanding, which lead to greater faith! Just in this chapter alone, Jesus reveals 3 characteristics to the disciples: His *glory*, His *zeal* and His *knowledge*.

1-2- 3rd – This is the last day of the 1st week of Christ's ministry; 7 eventful days that culminate in Cana of Galilee. **3rd day** from what? **1:43**. They leave for Galilee on the 5th day, collect a few more disciples and walk all the 6th day. We should note that this is also the day on which the public ministry of Jesus officially begins (**2nd main section of John**).

Why was Mary at the wedding? Why was Jesus and His disciples invited? We don't know. Cana's close to Nazareth; it's quite possible this was a close relative's wedding or Mary was simply operating in some service capacity. Regardless of the reasons, what we learn from this is that Jesus wasn't a recluse like John the Baptist was. He accepted invitations to social events even though His enemies would use this practice to accuse Him later. Still, in many places in the Gospels, Jesus was always welcome among those who were *having a good time*! It's sad that some Christians think that being spiritual means always being serious or grim. That's not the case. The Christian life does have serious moments but not every moment. Some Christians assume if others are having a good time the cause of the fun must be illegal, immoral or at best – fattening! Jesus wasn't like that. He didn't *condemn* those who were enjoying themselves, and He wasn't *jealous* of them. Thus, He was welcome at their gatherings, ***and those who had invited Him were always open to listening to His teachings***.

Have you ever considered that? Your presence at a social gathering used as an opportunity to witness? Clearly, there are some "parties" that we should be separate from but for the most part, if people are pleased with your company enough to invite you, they may also be willing to listen to your testimony. Our lives should reflect joy!

Also, Jesus' presence at this wedding serves as His seal of approval on the divine ordinance of Biblical marriage. It's just wonderful seeing Jesus going to a wedding – just for info: He still does that! If you're planning a wedding, you better plan on inviting

Jesus because a marriage these days doesn't stand much of a chance without Jesus being a big part of it. "It's just a piece of paper." It's more than that. It's a covenant, a legal agreement & Jesus endorses it!

3-4- no wine – Jewish weddings were lavish affairs. Cana was a small town so this would have been a big deal in the community, maybe the only marriage that year! The wedding feast would carry on for 7 days. Since the bridegroom was on the hook for all the food and drink for all the guests for the week, it would be embarrassing for a family to run out of either. In fact, Rabbinical tradition held that wine was a symbol of joy – "Without wine there is no joy" So, to run out of wine would imply that neither the guests nor the bride and groom were happy. For this reason, a family that ran out of wine could actually be fined! This dilemma could prove costly for the family both socially and financially. Faced with this crisis, Mary realized she couldn't do any better than call upon the resourcefulness of her Son. Maybe she'd learned from experience that the best way to get something done was to bring the need to Jesus' attention.

But, what is Mary really asking of Jesus here? True, she doesn't tell Him what to do, she merely reports the problem but in light of Jesus' response, might there have been a deeper implication in her request? Keep in mind, for nearly all of her life, Mary has paid a tremendous price for being the one whom God chose to bring forth the Messiah. Jesus was born before Mary and Joseph were married and that only meant 1 thing in that society and culture. No matter how many times she told the story, Mary carried the stigma of bearing an illegitimate child her entire married life. "Virgin birth? Yeah, right!" So now, just maybe, she's asking Jesus to manifest Himself as Messiah, the true King of Israel so that her story would finally be believed. Maybe she wants more than just assistance – a little vindication?

Woman – I wouldn't advise anyone to use this response for any request that comes from your Mother. If you say, "I want to be just like Jesus" well, the Bible also says he was "**stricken, smitten by God and afflicted**" (Isa 53:4b). If you don't know exactly what that means – talk back to your momma like that and you'll find out soon enough! No, of course Jesus isn't sassing Mary but He is making an important statement! The term "**Woman**" isn't a cold response, it was actually a polite way to address her, like saying Madam or My Lady. The rest of it could be translated: "Why are you getting Me involved in this matter?" or more literally "What is there to Me and you in regards to this problem?"

Mary might not have realized it at first, but since Jesus had left home some months before, something had happened which brought about a major change from their previous relationship. Jesus had been anointed with the Holy Spirit and received power to undertake the special work His Father had given Him to do. Now that He had begun His public ministry, everything else (including family ties) must be subordinate to this. He's making it clear to Mary that He is no longer under her authority and that from now on; He'd be doing what the Father wanted Him to do. If she wanted His help now, she

must not seek it on the basis of their mother-and-son relationship.

My hour – John is introducing one of the key elements of his book. We'll see Jesus refer to "**My hour**" 7Xs in John. Jesus is now keenly aware that He is living on a **heavenly timetable** marked out for Him by the Father that would eventually lead to His ultimate revelation as Israel's Messiah. In essence, He's saying to Mary, "**It isn't up to you to get this timetable rolling. This is all about My Father's business now. Someone else is calling the shots.**" The point of His reply was that He wasn't ready to do anything **openly** because the "hour" of His crucifixion was still years away.

Take note: despite His reservations, Jesus did grant Mary her request. He just did it in a way that brought resolution but only manifested His glory in a limited way (**to just a few**). He wouldn't be manipulated. And yet, He wouldn't allow the lack of joy or embarrassment to mar the occasion. So **He moved quietly**. The Lord may answer our prayers but He reserves the right to answer them the way He sees fit, in such a way to fulfill His will and to reveal His glory.

5- do it – This is as good of counsel as you could give to anyone about Jesus. It would be wise for every believer to obey what she says here! Mary's comment reveals she was willing to let Jesus do what He pleased. She didn't know what He would do but she knew He'd do the right thing! It was Jesus, not Mary, who took charge and solved the problem. Mary wasn't calling the shots and she wasn't pointing to herself, she pointed others to Jesus.

6-8- Jesus began this miracle by using what was at hand. He could have provided more wine any number of ways but He started with what was there. It is significant that these water pots were used for ceremonial purification, it means they are connected with the Mosaic Law. This will have greater ramifications later in the study.

the brim – Notice: the servants obeyed Jesus **as much as was humanly possible** to obey the command. They didn't fill them half way, $\frac{3}{4}$ or up to the neck – they filled them **to the brim**: until they couldn't put any more water in them! Now, they had no idea that He would turn the water that they brought into the wine that they needed. They had no idea that the degree to which they obeyed Him was going to be the degree to which He was able to fully bless them. Here's an **important spiritual principle**: the way to be blessed in the Christian life is to obey the Word of God to the brim (**as far as it can be obeyed**) so you can experience the **fullness** of every blessing that's behind every command.

Too often Christian's limit God's blessings because they balk at God's Word. "**Well, it doesn't really mean that...**" Fullness of blessing comes from fullness of obedience, not half, $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{7}{8}$ th but all the way!

The servants were unwitting co-laborers with Christ in this miracle just by their obedience.

9-10- The practice was so common, it was proverbial! Everyone expected inferior wine to be served but instead, the servants brought in much better wine! In fact, it was the best! Why wouldn't it be? (**Jam1:17; Matt 7:11**) Not only did Jesus produce a better wine, He produced the wine in abundance! Why? Because in Christ, there's fullness of joy!

Now, the governor of the feast attributes this to the bridegroom & Jesus doesn't correct his error. Mary, the disciples and the servants knew what happened but nobody else at the feast realized a miracle has taken place and Jesus was okay with that. His 1st miracle's a quiet event at a wedding; His last miracle will be a public event after a funeral.

11- signs – John doesn't use the terms *mighty works* or power to denote this miracle, in fact, he doesn't even call it a miracle – he calls it a **sign**. What is a sign? *Something that points to a reality greater than itself*. In other words, we can say that the miracles recorded in John's Gospel are not just literal events, they're also symbolic. I'm not implying that the miracle didn't happen; it did, there were witnesses. But, there's much more to this miracle than just meeting a human need and saving a family from social embarrassment. This Gospel seeks to share the inner meaning – the spiritual significance – of Jesus' works so every miracle is a sermon in action. What sign does **this** miracle point to?

The great contrast in this miracle is between water and wine. The great contrast in the Bible is between the old covenant and the new. John's Gospel is sensitive to the fact that Jesus will bring the old covenant to completion, in effect, displacing the Jewish religion. The key is John's reference to the purpose of the water pots in **vs6 purification**.

The water, used in Jewish rituals, represents the whole ancient order of Jewish ceremonial law. Jesus will replace it with something better. The water symbolizes the old covenant, the wine symbolizes the new covenant.

In the OT, Israel was married to **YHWH** & this wedding symbolized the state of her marriage. Israel had run out of wine (**joy**) & all she had left were 6 empty water pots. These pots held water for external washing only; they provided nothing for internal cleansing or joy. In this miracle, Jesus brought **fullness** where there was **emptiness**; **joy** where there was **disappointment** and something **internal** for that which was only **external**. What Jesus did in this miracle is what He came to do for Israel and what He can do today for you.

glory – what was the result of all this? Jesus manifested His glory to His disciples and their faith in Him grew. “**And we beheld His glory**” is what John said in **1:14**. This was the 1st in a sequence of “signs” by which that glory was shown, leading up to the surpassing glory of His death, resurrection and ascension. As the glory was

manifested, faith in Him was strengthened in the hearts of His disciples.

Judaism, as a religion was still functioning when Jesus arrived but it ministered no comfort for the heart. It was a cold, mechanical routine utterly devoid of joy in God. The empty water jars and lack of wine points to the emptiness of the Jewish religion. This is true of every religion that doesn't have Jesus as its center! Apart from Him who is **the source of life**, religion is **cold and lifeless**. Apart from the joy He brings, religion is **joyless & hardens personalities**. Do you have religion? It won't help you or save you. Only Jesus can do that. Only He can satisfy the hunger of your heart. Only He can turn ceremonial water into celebratory wine! Has He done that for you?

When did the miracle actually take place? When the servants filled the pots; when they carried to the governor or when he drank it from the cup? We don't know, the passage is silent on this. What we do know is that the water turned to wine because the servants co-operated with Jesus and obeyed His commands.☺