

Wedding at Cana

I. Introduction

A. Epiphany

1. The word means “to show” or “make known”.
2. Visit of the Magi
 - a) Jesus Christ has been revealed or made known to be the divine Son of God and sovereign king who will draw all nations to himself.
3. Jesus’ Baptism
 - a) Jesus is the Son of God, who offers forgiveness of sin (as the lamb of God) and the presence of the Spirit (as the Spirit empowered one) for all who identify with him.
4. Wedding at Cana
 - a) Jesus has been baptized; tempted; called his first five disciples (Andrew, Peter, John, Philip, and Nathaniel), these are following Jesus around (haven’t left their nets yet—recorded later in Marks gospel), Jesus uses the events in John 2 to sink these truths in to these 5 disciples.

B. The process of Revealing

1. Observing, Experiencing, Reflecting—these are all part of the process of coming to understand who Jesus is. It rarely happens overnight, process is part of it. This is what we see with the disciples in John 2. They are just beginning to see and come to understand (in-part) who Jesus is.
2. 5 disciples (Peter and Andrew; John; Philip and Nathaniel (all disciples of John the Baptist). Jesus is not well known, Jesus’ popularity is growing. Baptized, Dove Descended, Tempted in desert for 40 days.
3. John 2:11, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.”
 - a) A sign is a signifier of something else...not called a miracle (although it is)—but rather a sign. No one is dying, no one is starving, no one is demon possessed... but this is Jesus’ first miracle. He’s in a place where you might not expect him to be, and does something you might expect him to do (miracle).

II. Wedding at Cana

A. The Situation (vv. 1-5)

1. Jesus is invited to a wedding in Cana, just north of Nazareth.
 - a) Take note that discipleship happens in the events of daily life; life with Jesus was not, and is not a perpetual bible study or church service.
 - b) The Lord affirms human life and its joy. Life has enough grief—don't feel guilty for the joy you get to experience. Jesus was not a monk...He affirms the joys and pauses of everyday life...C.S. Lewis, "Joy is the serious business of heaven."
 - c) This story affirms the joy's and the pauses God gives us for our refreshment.
2. Depending on the resources of the family, a wedding could last somewhere between two to seven days. This was a large community event; and the financial responsibility lay with the groom; therefore, "to run out of supplies would be a dreadful embarrassment in a 'shame' culture; there is some evidence it could also lay the groom open to a lawsuit from aggrieved relatives of the bride."¹
 - a) Deep sense of shame associated with this, as well as guilt.
 - b) Honor/shame culture—whereas we come from a guilt/innocent culture
3. Mary learning of the potential embarrassment (possibly of a close friend or family member) asks Jesus to do something, Jesus tells Mary that his hour has not yet come=his time to do something public to gather people's attention by way of a sign—Jesus knows what she is implying; Mary leaves and tells the servants to do whatever Jesus says...He instructs them to fill up six stone jars (which held 20 gallons of water a piece)

B. The Sign (vv. 6-11)

1. The Significance of the Wedding
 - a) Long anticipated in the OT
 - b) Revelation 19:6-9, "Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with

¹ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1991), 169.

fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

2. The Significance of the Water

- a) Stone jars=custom of purification (ritual hand washings, required by the law), for the purpose of cleanliness. What happens in these containers is something the Law could never do, in these containers of the Law, Jesus creates something entirely new. “Judaism’s vessels of purification are now being filled with new things.”²
- b) “By performing his miracle in those stone urns, our Savior was testifying that the old religious rituals were dead and that he was filling the urns with new life. F.F. Bruce says, ‘Christ [is] changing the water of Jewish purification into the wine of the new age.’”
- c) As Marianne Meye Thompson states, “Jesus is seen transforming the water set aside for the Jewish rites of purification into the wine symbolic of the presence of the messianic age.”

3. The Significance of the Wine

- a) Wine as a symbol of joy and celebration.
 - (1) Jeremiah 31:12-14, "They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more. ¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the Lord.”
 - (2) Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13-14; Isaiah 54:4-8; 62:4-5; Hosea 2:14-23; 14:7
 - (3) Jesus made so much wine to show the long-promised age has arrived and the blessings that accompany his kingdom are overflowing.

² Gary M. Burge, *John : From Biblical Text ... To Contemporary Life, The Niv Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2000), 99.

- b) Wine as a symbol of judgment and wrath
 - (1) Cup of the wine of wrath (Jer. 25:15; Isaiah 51:17; Rev. 14:10)
 - (2) My Time is not yet come (John 7:30; John 8:20; John 12:27)--Jesus says this to Mary in the text—my time to die has not yet come.
 - (3) Matthew 26:39, “And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”
- c) Wine as a symbol of blood
 - (1) And keep in mind that in John 6:55, Jesus said, “My blood is true drink.” “Unless you . . . drink [the] blood [of the Son of Man], you have no life in you” (John 6:53).
 - (2) Matthew 26:27-29, “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”
 - (3) There is no ritual any more for cleansing. There is one way to be clean before God. John says it plainly in Revelation 7:14, “They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” The glory of Jesus is that he alone, once and for all, made purification for sins. You don’t turn to ritual. You turn to Jesus.

C. Transition to Closing Remarks

1. John 2:11, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.”
 - a) Signs which manifest His glory, which gives birth to belief.
 - b) “The signs are not merely acts of power and might, they unveil that God is at work in Jesus and indeed is present in him.”³

III. Closing Thoughts: What does the Wedding at Cana reveal to us about Jesus?

³ Burge, 93.

1. Jesus is the one who drank the cup of wrath (justice, punishment, and death); so that we might drink from the cup of joy and festival blessing. His cup of sorrow has become our cup of celebration. It is through his blood, not through ritual ceremony, that we are now cleansed and transformed (New creation 2 Corinthians 5:17). As our Bridegroom; Jesus has sets us free from guilt and shame; and brings us into the fullness of joy through our eternal union with Him—which has begun now, will be celebrated at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and will be experienced forever more in the New Creation.
2. Epiphany: Jesus is the Sovereign King who draws and unites all nations to himself; the Savior of his people who will empower them with his Holy Spirit; and the one who through his death will usher his people into the fullness of Joy by uniting himself to them forever.

Bibliography

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