

The Goodness Greatness of Jesus

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Now, I don't know about you, but I'm a huge fan of weddings. Love what they symbolize. Love what they produce. The flowers, the food, the getting dressed up. Huge fan. Love them. Now, as a pastor, I have the best seat in the house, right? Right? I see the groom's eyes light up the way that no one else does when he sees his bride for the first time. I see the excitement firsthand. I see the tears of joy of the parents right there in front of me. Now, at a wedding, there are three people who are absolutely essential. There's no way the wedding is happening without them. The three people are the bride and the groom and me. The pastor. As long as the three of us are there, that wedding can happen.

But there is a fourth person there and, if that person's not there, there's no wedding as well. Do you know who that person is? It's not the bride's mother. It's not her. The fourth person is God, right? When the husband and wife proclaim their vows, he does something invisibly in that moment. In that split second the covenant is made. When the covenant is made, God transforms husband and wife... I'm sorry... bride and groom into husband and wife. Unites them both. Makes them one invisibly for life. God created marriage. This lifelong commitment of one man to one woman. God created it to be the best, the most life giving, soul satisfying, joy filling sanctifying human experience in this life.

Now, every wedding that has ever happened has had God on the guest list without most people there knowing it. This wedding that we just read about is the only wedding I know of where God is actually on the guest list. Look at verse two. Jesus what? Was invited. He didn't crash this party. He's there. What John has been telling us is that, with Jesus there, that means the son of God is there. And that means that God attended this wedding. What God is, Jesus is because God is his father and he is God's son. He is God and he is going to prove that fact at this wedding. In this historical event that we just read about, we will witness the goodness and greatness of God. Verse 11 says that this event manifested his glory. It made a clear statement about who Jesus really is. In that statement, we see God's goodness and his greatness. And it's not just the historical account. Isn't that interesting? You changed water into wine. It's the first miracle that he performed. No, the truths in this text are meant to help you and help me trust in God's goodness and trust in his greatness in our lives.

Now, the events in chapter two really kick off the public ministry of Jesus. Kick it into high gear. In the book of John, Jesus' public ministry, you need to know, goes from chapter two to chapter 12. That stretch of 11 chapters is this Jesus' public ministry. Then, in chapter 13 all the way to the end of chapter 17, there are these chapters about Jesus' private ministry to his disciples. And then from chapter 18 to the end, there is his passion. Jesus' death and resurrection. So this helps us understand where we are historically as we drop into the text. It also helps us understand where we're at when it comes to the book of John. This is the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

And there's now one more thing I want you to know. Turn to chapter four. John chapter four, verse 46. John 4:46. Just a couple pages to the right. I want you to notice what this verse says. John 4:46. "So he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine." What you have here is this kind of section that goes from chapter two to the end of chapter four, where

there are two miracles. There's the miracle at Cana, which we'll see in a minute, with the water into wine, but there's this one here. Jesus healing an official's son. And what you learn when you examine this little, short section of Jesus' public ministry is that this short section... two, three, and four... is when everybody believes. Jesus preaches. People believe. They believe all over the place. It's not until chapter five that the hostility begins. And the hostility will continue all the way to the end of the book when he's murdered.

So, now that we've got the big picture historically and where we're at in the book of John, let's look at the marriage. Verse one. John chapter two, verse one. "On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples." On the third day. You're reading that like, "Third day? What's that all about?" It can be kind of confusing if we forget where we've been so far in John. On the third day. Since when? Well, this phrase is a Jewish way of saying the day after tomorrow. And it's counted from the last day mentioned, which begins in verse 33. So this wedding, in other words, happened two days after Jesus met with Philip and Nathanael.

Now, as you think about this scene here... Okay, Jesus walks from... From that day, he's walking to Cana in Galilee from wherever John the Baptist was baptizing people and around him, he's got Andrew, John, Peter, Phillip, and Nathaniel. And they walk to the city of Cana. Now, don't think big city like Gilbert. Think a city the size of the amount of people sitting in this section right here. About 20, 40 people at most lived in the city of Cana, scholars estimate. So this is a very small town. Everybody knows each other. And in the ruins today... This is an actual town. This is history, not fantasy. This city, the ruins of it, have never been excavated and they're about eight to nine miles north of Nazareth where Jesus grew up.

So when you think about that... And then it seems reasonable to consider Mary's role at this wedding. She seems to be kind of in charge a little bit. And also that Jesus and his disciples were actually invited to this wedding. And when you consider verse 12, who else is at this wedding? It's not just Jesus, his disciples, and Mary, but what is the text in verse 12? His siblings were also there. Jesus' siblings. His brothers were there. All of that speaks to the idea that is the wedding of maybe family members or close friends. In fact, chapter 21, verse two says Nathaniel was from Cana, so this could be a close family member or a close friend of his specifically.

Now, let me tell you about first century Jewish weddings because they're a little bit different than ours. They were a big deal. This would be the biggest party that you would ever be invited to in your life. The festivities started about a year earlier when the couple got engaged, which was more serious than our engagements because to break your engagement in the first century of Jewish culture would mean legal divorce proceedings would have to take place. So an engagement means that you're married and you're just waiting for the wedding. During that year, this is what the groom is doing. He's building a house for them to live in. Thank God that's not part of our culture. Building a house and he's saving up for the wedding feast. Because it was the groom's responsibility to pay for the wedding. And all the fathers in the room with daughters say what? Like, amen. Amen. But what the groom is doing is he's demonstrating to her family, especially to her father, that he can take care of her.

So the wedding would begin when the groom and his friends would leave where they are and go to the bride's house, grab her and her friends, and then bring her to the feast. To the wedding. But in that transition, they would take them all throughout the town and they'd be winding around so that everybody in the town and maybe people could be coming from other parts in the surrounding area to celebrate them and to bless them. And typically it happened at night so

there'd be torches and they'd be walking through the town with all this light and all this life. It was just an incredible thing to witness. They get to the reception, what we would call the reception, and that could last in Jewish culture up to a week. So you've got the families, extended families, the whole town. Many in the surrounding area would be invited. Even people that don't like the bride and groom. They're invited and they're expected to be there and bring a gift because you just go to the wedding. You do that. So if seven days... People aren't staying there the whole time. People are coming and they're going each day. As people are coming and going each day, what do you need? You need a ton of food and a ton of drink. Everybody's there for the party.

Now, before we move to verse three, let's contemplate the gravity of just this idea that the son of God shows up at a real wedding with point #1) Recognize the honor Jesus has for marriage.

Recognize the honor Jesus has for marriage. That Jesus chose a wedding to do his first miracle in. That's not something we should gloss over. He didn't go to a funeral. He didn't do this at somebody's job. He didn't do this at some other celebration. He does this at a wedding and that is not just a happy coincidence. His presence there means marriage is something that he approves of and not only approves of, but he makes marriage holy by his presence.

Let's think about the first marriage. You know where the first marriage is in the Bible? It's in Genesis chapter two. Adam and Eve, right? But think about that for a second. What does that tell us? If the first marriage is in Genesis chapter two and the fall into sin happens when? Genesis chapter three. That means marriage is part of God's very good creation. He gave marriage not in response to sin. He gave marriage before sin tainted the world. So this is to be considered the highest and best of all human relationships. That's why Hebrews 13:4 says marriage, quote, should be held in honor among all. All Christians, especially, but really all people everywhere should honor marriage. Why? God created it. It's very good in and of itself and because of that alone, marriage should be honored as God's gift to the world. God places so much honor on marriage that to get divorced for any reason other than physical adultery or physical abandonment is sin. He places so much honor on it that its meaning transcends the physical. It's not just two people coming together saying, "We're going to make this covenant to be together for all our lives." No, that is a picture of what? Ephesians five. It is a picture of Jesus' love for the church and the church's submission to him as her Lord.

Now, marriage is not a sacrament like the Roman Catholic church teaches. From this text, by the way. It doesn't give any grace for people's salvation, but marriage is sacred. It's sacred because God is a guest at every wedding joining husband and wife. Marriage is a gift of God's common grace. The grace given to all people, all places at all times. Which means that it should never be treated with disrespect or downplayed as what? It's just a piece of paper. It's not just a piece of paper. It's holy and sacred. It should be honored. When marriage is not honored, a couple, a group of people, a culture, a civilization, is on the road to deterioration and even destruction.

Now, listen. I know that even bringing up marriage is like pastor suicide. Preacher suicide. Because it can cause intense grief for some people. I mean, you heard me proclaim God's view of what marriage is and why it should be honored and that's hard to accept for many because maybe their experience doesn't match that. Of course, pastors understand that. We've walked with, we continue to walk with, many in that boat. As do all the pastors here. As do all pastors everywhere, really? But getting your marriage back on track may start with just simply elevating or maybe re-elevating marriage to the place of honor that Jesus shows us this in this text.

It starts maybe with confessing to the Lord that you haven't seen your marriage with the honor that you should. Maybe it's been hard or maybe it's been unfulfilling or maybe it's been tumultuous. Maybe now today... After hearing of the honor that Jesus has for marriage, maybe it's time to bring your heart in line with what God says about marriage. Listen, I had to do that before I got married. I was 34 years old before I got married and I was happily single. I was like, "I get to serve the Lord with all my time. This is wonderful." I didn't want to get married until I got to know my wife. It's like, "Oh, I got to change my mind on this." But deep in my heart, there was a lot of dishonor in my mind attached to marriage that I needed God's word to come and wash out of my life.

Listen, Jesus cares deeply about marriage and he cares deeply about the people who are in the marriage. He cares that we give marriage the honor it should have in our hearts and that we live out that honor in our daily lives if we're married and with the people that we are married to. And if we're not married, this is the view of marriage that he wants us to have. No matter what our experience has been, he wants us to have the same view that he did. Now, is that easy? No. At least not if you've gotten in ruts of rebellion on this issue. But can God do a miracle in your heart? Can God do a miracle in your marriage? Well, he did want on this marriage. I think he could do it in yours too.

Before we get to the miracle, let's look at the massive mistake. Verse three. When the wine ran out. Whoops! See, now in first century culture, this is not just a social humiliation. This would actually leave the groom open to a lawsuit by the bride's family. Why? Because he was legally obligated to have a feast that met a standard, which the minimum was like a week of food and festivities. And think about it. You're the groom. You've spent a year trying to show, especially your future father-in-law, that you could care for his daughter only to fail at the wedding. That's not good. Maybe this proves that he's too poor or too lazy or too careless to really care for her. Maybe it shows that the father of the bride... Think of that shame on the father of the bride. Everyone would see that and then would look where? After looking at the bride, would look at the father of the bride and go like, "You gave your daughter to that knucklehead? What is wrong with you?"

So there's a lot of embarrassment and humiliation going on in this text right now. This was a desperate dilemma. And for some reason, Mary knows all about it. She tells Jesus about the groom's mistake in the hopes that Jesus would help. Verse three. "When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'" See, with Joseph being dead by this time, Mary has gone to her firstborn Jesus for help probably hundreds of times. Now, Jesus had never done a miracle before this. That's what verse 11 says. However, he's always had the perfect response to every dilemma that she has ever had. I mean, after all, Luke chapter one says that angels accompanied his conception and his birth. She gives birth to him while she's still a virgin and her family member Elizabeth does identify the baby in her womb as the Lord. So she knows Jesus is the Messiah. She knows that he's special.

But think about it. For three decades, he's been living in her home as his son, as a carpenter, building tables and chairs. Again, for the better part of three decades. But every knot he untied for her and he did it with the utmost of knowledge and wisdom, so surely, in this moment, Mary thinks he's going to be able to fix this mistake and rescue the groom. She may not know how he's going to do it, but she knows that whatever he's going to do, it's going to work. He's done it hundreds of times before so let's try it again. And so you expect verse four to say, and Jesus said, "Absolutely, Mom. Whatever you want." But what is it... We read and it's like, wait, that doesn't

seem to match a simple request. Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour is not yet come." Kind of sounds strange. Why would he talk like that? Well, in general, this verse shows Jesus creating a distance between himself and his mom. The point of verse four is, as his public ministry begins, things have changed and now he's devoted to fulfilling God's will alone. Not just hers.

Three aspects of verse four tell us that there's a distance being created. The first is that word woman, which sounds harsh. Sounds like a guy with a dirty tank top on saying, "Woman, get me a beer." When we see that word, that's what we think. We put tone into Jesus' words, but this word is a term of respect and affection. It's like the word ma'am used by kids for their mom in the south. Jesus actually calls Mary woman in John 19:26. As he's dying on the cross and he passes the care of his mother to John, the author of this book, he says, "Woman, behold, your son." He's like, "Here. I'm passing... Your son is the one next to you. I'm passing my son-ship care over your life to John as I'm dying." He uses the word woman in that context too. So there is love and there is affection and there is respect, but Jesus is also pulling away from the parental aspect of relationship with Mary while still at the same time remaining loving and respectful.

Second, the distance is seen in the question. What does this have to do with me? This is a respectful rebuke, but it's still a rebuke. And I think he's rebuking her because I think what's going on here, although the text doesn't say, is that I think she's trying to have kind of an inside track with him as his mom. Now, he continues to honor her no doubt, but he's saying that my submission to you as your son... which Luke 2:51 says that he submitted himself to his parents. That that submission to her as her son must now come to an end. He's saying, "I will act, but under the father's authority, not yours." That's because, third, his life is now under a divine timetable that was centered, you see at the end of verse four, on this concept of the hour. And the hour is the hour when Jesus would die and rise again. He's saying everything is inflexibly moving towards that goal and I'm only going to act in accordance with that hour. So he's saying, "I will act, but according to God's timing and God's will and not yours anymore. If God wills it, I will do it." Which is why she interprets his words differently than we do.

See, we interpret verse four as he's rejecting her request, right? But we read verse five and she has the opposite reaction. "In faith," verse five, "his mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'" Though lightly rebuked, maybe she's pulling on family ties, Mary leaves the matter in Jesus' hands to take care of it, which he does. Verse six. "Now there were six stone jars there for the Jewish rights of purification, each holding 20 or 30 gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim." So as Jesus is speaking the words in verse four, you have to read those words with the utmost of grace and mercy and love exuding from him so that she leaves that saying, "I'm going to trust that he's going to do what's best in response to the groom's mistake. I don't know. I don't know when. But he's going to do something." And her faith in him is honored.

Now, those six stone jars would hold between 100 and 200 gallons. For us, that's about three to four bathtubs full. That's a lot of water. Guests would wash their hands before and after the festivities each time they came and each time they left the party. Lots of guests would mean lots of washing, which would mean lots of water. And I want you to think about it. Verse six is not there for that reason. Verse six is there to show us what? How big this miracle was. And it shows how many people would be served by the miracle. And it proves the authenticity of the miracle. Why? Because if it was just one jar, they could be like, "Oh, yeah, look what they found in the

closet. Oh, great." It'd be easy to explain and explain away. How did this happen? I don't know, but they found... Hey, that's great. One jar. But 200 gallons? Hard to explain that away.

And then notice verse seven. Each jar was, quote, filled to the brim. Now, that is a detail an eyewitness would know, yes, but it is a detail that says nothing was added after the fact. These pots only had water in them as the servants could attest to. And they were brought right to the brim. So it's not like Jesus is sitting there. "Okay, fill it to the brim. Okay, perfect. Hey, look! A pterodactyl." Put a bunch of wine in there as everyone's looking away and he fills it all. "Hey, look at that! Awesome. Hey, look at all that wine." No, this is to prove there is no deception being smuggled in here. There's no trickery. There's no fraud. All of this is screaming this is a real miracle.

Now, before we move on to the miracle, let's pause and think about what just took place in the story with point #2) Rely on Jesus for compassionate care. ***Rely on Jesus for compassionate care.*** It may seem like kind of a small thing to us. They ran out of wine. Get some other drinks. What's the big deal. But this was a massively big deal. Especially for the groom. I want you to think about how Jesus responded here. It's not, "Stupid. What's wrong with you? I mean, you had a year to plan for this and you couldn't even get this right? What is wrong with you?" Jesus doesn't do that. Because Jesus is a God of compassion. Jesus as seen here is eager to rescue people from pain, trouble, or danger. His compassion isn't just emotional either. Like, "Man, I really wish that you could... I really wish I could do something about this." His compassion moves into help and fix the problem. We see here what James 5:11 says. That the Lord is compassionate. Yes, there's no salvation, no rescue from sin, death, and hell unless God is compassionate, but listen. There's no miracle in Cana if he isn't compassionate.

See, the Catholic church uses John chapter two to try to prove that Mary is the mediator that we need between humanity and Jesus and that we really need her because he cannot refuse his mother in a text where he distances himself from her authority instead to submit to the father's authority over him. She must now approach him, in other words, like we all do. As savior and Lord, which she does by the way, when she trusts him and tells the servants, "Do whatever he says." The idea there is that he is my Lord and should be yours too, so do whatever he says. She a holy and blessed woman, yes, but she is not the mediator that Jesus cannot refuse. In fact, Mary has never even heard one prayer prayed to her. Not one. And she would be horrified at what has been done to her since her death. She is not more compassionate than Jesus. That's the idea that they want to get from this text. That he is uncompassionate, but because of Mary, he responds in compassion. She's really the compassionate. That is blasphemous to get that from this text.

Now, why do I bring up Catholic teaching on this text? Because there are twice as many Catholics in the East Valley as there are Mormons. Twice as many. Which means that we've got to be equipped to know how to share the gospel with our Catholic friends and neighbors. The compassion in this text is not Mary, who is never even brought forward in the text of focus. She's not even named. Her existence in this text isn't even independent. She's always connected to him, right? She is merely what? The mother of Jesus or his mother, but never Mary. That is because the compassion, the focus in this text, is in Jesus. Even when he distances himself from her request, he responds because it's the father's will. He responds because this miracle will show that he is a God of compassion. Not just a God of compassion for sinners, but even for boneheaded mistakes like not having enough wine for your wedding. He's compassionate there too.

So we turn to Jesus, not Mary, in our times of need. Just like she did, by the way. And like Mary, we trust him to respond at the exact right time in the exact right way because he's compassionate. And because if he cares about wine at a wedding, then he cares about us too. He cares about our needs. He cares about our marriages. He cares about our children and our family and our friends and our jobs and our schools and our futures. He really does care. And the question is, do you believe that? Not just, do you have that in your head? Like, Jesus is compassionate. Yes. Check. But do you really believe that deep in your soul so that when moments come in your life when you need to trust that he's compassionate, you don't picture him, like I said before, of him looking at the groom, going, "Stupid. What's wrong with you? You should have thought about..." If you picture him like that in your life, then you've got the wrong guy.

Let this text rewire those ideas in your head to see him as the compassionate God who cares about little things like wine at a wedding. Do you believe that when the time comes to trust him with things like your marriage or your children or your job or your friends, you can actually do that? Do you have the faith to trust Jesus? Or when you don't understand his ways in your life, do you trust that he compassionately cares? Not just in general, but compassionately cares about you personally. It's easy to just get lost in the details of the familiarity but let Jesus meeting the need for more wine at a wedding tell you that he not only can meet your needs, but he will when he thinks is best, how he thinks is best, and he will do that because he is compassionate. And because he's compassionate, he cares.

Now from the marriage to the mistake, let's look at the miracle. Verse eight. "And he said to them, the servants, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.' So they took it and the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine and did not know where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. The master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine, but you have kept the good wine until now.'" The master of the feast is like the head waiter. He's the staff supervisor. So he's in charge of the servants there and he's probably making sure the food and the drinks are of good quality. Well, he certainly testifies to the quality of the wine, right? He says it's the good stuff. But if you really think about it, it wasn't only the best wine he'd ever tasted or the best wine anyone there had ever tasted. It was really the best wine the world had ever tasted. I mean, this is wine like from the grapes of Eden. Because this was wine created by the son of God himself.

And notice verse eight. Jesus says to the servants, "Draw some out." The implication is draw out some water. And then verse nine makes it clear. Notice the servants are those who, quote, had drawn the water presumably out of the stone jar. So I want you to picture that in your mind, okay? Jesus has filled.... The servants know run out of wine. Okay. Mary says, "Do whatever he wants." Okay. He says, "Hey, fill all these jars up with water." Okay. "Now, put your little spoon in there and take some out and go take it to the head waiter." If you're one of the servants, what are you doing? Like, "Huh? What? Okay." And notice, verse eight, they don't question. It just says, "So they took it." There's this sense like they trust this guy. For some reason, they trust him. But notice. In verse nine, it says they've drawn out water, but by the time that master of the feast tastes it, what? It's wine. So it's something like... They take water out. Right? And they walk over to the guy. Right? They walk over to the guy and what happens? It's the best wine the guy's ever tasted.

Imagine being those servants. Like what just happened? Right? Think about the kind of trust they show. No one would be more surprised than them. Right? As far as they knew, they took water

out of there. But as soon as he tastes it, they're like, whoa, what just happened? The groom is rescued from public humiliation. Possibly lifelong derision from his wife's family, especially the father-in-law. That's what I'd do. "Hey, remember your wedding? Remember that? Let's talk about that again. That was just so fun, wasn't it?" Every year at Christmas, I'd be bringing that up. Saved from a potential lawsuit. The party just goes on. And all of that happens with the majority of the people in attendance not having a clue about what Jesus did. They thought they just kept the best wine well into the feast when people had had a ton of wine and maybe some of them were intoxicated. They're just like, "Hey, this is really good stuff!" And the party just goes on.

Verse 10 though, if you think about it, is a statement by an independent witness to the miracle. Here is the master of the feast who doesn't know we've run out of water, who doesn't know Jesus said fill all those things up, doesn't know that, "Hey, take that out and take it to me." He doesn't know any of that. He's an independent corroborator that says this is a real miracle. And how do you know? Because who does he give credit to? The groom. Not Jesus. This miracle is so low-key. No attention before or after. Jesus doesn't pray. He doesn't touch the jars. He doesn't wave his hand over them and say some magic word. He just does it. The party goes on without almost all the people having any idea about what happened. Except verse 11. "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him."

See, these guys knew enough to follow Jesus and had various levels of trust in him, at least enough trust to follow him., but this event was special. They saw this and went, "I'm going to put my trust in this guy." And before leaving to head down to Capernaum in verse 12, the disciples were eyewitnesses. They were eyewitnesses to the truth, point #3, because they realized Jesus is the son of God. **Realize Jesus is the son of God.** This miracle proved for them and anybody else with eyes to see that Jesus is the son of God because Jesus does what only God can do. One estimate I read suggests Jesus made as many as 2400 servings of wine. And he did it like that. He didn't speak. He didn't pray. He just did it.

But if you think about it, it's not really unlike what God does all the time. If you think about it. God creates a seed. That seed is watered and becomes a vine from which a grape emerges. The grape ripens after a period of time and then it's picked by a vine dresser who bundles it with thousands of more ripe grapes. And then those grapes are crushed to extract the juice and the juice is collected and becomes wine after various levels of fermentation and alcohol content. And what did Jesus do? He just merely sped that up. Sped up the process without the use of grapes or dirt or rain or air sunshine or vine dressers or wineries. He just did what God has been doing and what vine dressers and wineries have been doing for centuries and he does it in less than a second because he is God.

One author said the water recognized its creator and it blushed. But that's what happens when the Word becomes flesh. When God becomes a human being just as human as we are yet without sin while still remaining truly and utterly God. This is what it means. That this one would dwell among us. We cannot help, like his disciples, to see his glory. To have that be manifested as the one and only son of God has. The hour had come for his goodness and greatness to begin to be seen. And that's what John wants you and that's what John wants me to get at from this miracle or, in the words of verse 11, this sign.

This word is less focused on the impossibility and it's less focused on the power that took place. This, like all signs, is meant to point to something beyond itself. Just like every sign that we see points to something beyond itself. The idea here is that the only person that could do this miracle

we just read about is God. So, like the event, the focus should not be the miracle, which is what we do, right? Oh, he turned water into wine. Water into wine. No, that is meant to push beyond that as the sign that preaches the message Jesus is the son of God. What happens in the physical, in other words, proclaims a truth that people cannot see physically. That he is God in the flesh.

And if he is God, which he proves by this miracle... If he is the son of God, if he can do these things, then you should believe in him. That would be the only right response. If he really did this, if this is history and not fantasy... and by the way, Cana is not like Middle Earth or Narnia. It's an actual place you can go to and sit there and be in that real place. If he really can do that, we are not meant to just sit there and admire it. We are meant to give him our allegiance. We're to bow before him and say, "You are God. You are King. You are in charge of me. I give you my life. I trust in you. No one else and no other organization, but I trust in you. I trust in you alone."

Think about the guests at the party. They benefit from all of his blessings and they have no idea who he really is. We don't want that to be true of us. If you think about the event, it's kind of ironic, isn't it? The groom is responsible for the wine. He supplies some of it. But when his supply runs out, Jesus makes more. The irony in the text is that Jesus acts like the groom. He supplies the wine in abundance. He gave what the groom lacked. And when the hour does come, when he dies and is raised again, that also is a sign. It is incredibly important, his death and resurrection, but it is also a sign of a greater day ahead for all who will trust in him.

Amos chapter nine talks about life in the kingdom when Jesus is King. And it says, quote, the mountain shall drip sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it. So don't picture a little trickle. This is waterfalls of wine coming off the mountains around Jerusalem. And he says, "And I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and they plant vineyards and drink their wine and they shall make gardens and eat their fruit." In other words, when Jesus returns and establishes his kingdom on earth, wine will be in super abundance. But throughout the Bible, wine is also a picture of what? It's a picture of joy of happiness and celebration. The kingdom that Jesus establishes... Yes, it's a kingdom of truth and righteousness and justice, but do not miss that. It is also a kingdom marked by joy. This miracle becomes a foretaste of the wedding supper of the lamb and then the kingdom of the true bridegroom when he establishes that kingdom. A kingdom, again, marked by joy. On that day, the glory that Jesus has, the glory that is still concealed to this day, will be on full display and, when people see who Jesus really is, that the taste of that kingdom will be joy.

Jesus at a real-life wedding, in other words, didn't bring suspicion, boredom or gloom. He's not sitting there with his posse and they're all just sitting there as everyone's dancing and having fun, going, "Sinner, sinner, sinner, sinner. Wicked, wicked. Sinner, sinner. I'm not going to get involved in any... I'm just going to sit here and you guys are all awful." No, think about it. He's not sitting there policing the party. He makes sure not only that groom wasn't humiliated for his mistake, but Jesus made sure the joy and celebration of that wedding would continue. Jesus in real life brings people joy. If the Jesus that you think about in your head or the Jesus that you serve doesn't make you a joyful, happy person, you need to linger long and think really hard about his goodness and greatness when he attended a real-life wedding. What this text says is, yes, he is the son of God, but Jesus is the God of joy and his people should be people of joy. Again, not just because of what he did when he died and rose again on our behalf. We should be people of joy because of what he's planned for us in the future. Which this wedding 2000 years ago was a foretaste of.

Let's pray. Jesus, the truths in this text, like I said earlier, it's easy for us to miss because we're so familiar with this. If we really take these truths to heart, it really can change our lives. Everyone comes here and watches online at a different place with you, so my prayer is that whatever this text was meant to produce and work and change and magnify in our lives, I pray that we wouldn't resist it. I pray that we would follow the leadership of your spirit in our lives and we would change and become more like you. More like you, the God of joy. There is a day coming, Jesus, when our faith will be sight. And on that day, your arms are not going to be crossed, looking at us with suspicion, looking at us with disappointment. You made up for all of that and then some by infinity with your righteousness. We'll be welcomed into a kingdom marked by joy because of sins forgiven and because eye has not seen or has ear heard the absolutely unbelievable things that you have planned for those who love you. We look forward to that day as we recognize the glimpse of that in this wedding at Cana 2000 years ago. It's in your name I pray, Amen.