

When the wine runs out!

John 2:1-12

Scripture reading:

Prayer: please join me in prayer...

Sermon introduction:

Weddings are a big deal. Why? They are large gatherings, they are serious gatherings, they are joyful gatherings, they are often religious gatherings, and they only happen once! They are meant to be the best day of one's life.

Because they are such a big deal, we hope and pray that nothing goes wrong. But things often go wrong!

I have seen brides' trip over veils.

I heard a minister preach for over an hour, at a wedding!!! We all wondered when he was going to quit.

At another wedding one of the bridesmaids locked her knees and passed out.

At another wedding the young ring bearer was so nervous that he cried all the way down the aisle.

At another wedding the minister had a coughing fit. He had to chug the communion wine to keep going.

In one sense, these are all minor issues. They are not showstoppers. They are not catastrophic. But something catastrophic happened at a wedding 2000 years ago in a little Jewish village called Cana.

Thankfully Jesus was invited to the wedding. Since Jesus was present, he was able to save the day. In doing so, he performed his first public miracle. This miracle gave his disciples a small glimpse of his glory.

When the disciples saw his glory, they believed. This raises one of the most important questions in life—have you ever seen his glory and have you believed?

Three points this morning...

The story!

The glory!

Taking inventory!

First, the story

What was the context of the story? A wedding!

John 2:1–2 (ESV) — 1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. **2** Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples.

Jesus and five of his disciples were invited to a wedding at Cana, not far from Nazareth. More than likely this was a close family friend or relative of Jesus' family. Since Jesus loved life, loved people, and loved parties, he said yes. Is this how you think of Jesus???

In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

It is safe to say that none of us have ever experienced anything like a 1st century Jewish wedding. They lasted up to six days.

They included speeches, poetry, feasting, drinking, and dancing. Weddings provided a fantastic break from the cold hard realities of manual labor in a subsistence culture.

One's wedding day, was the happiest day of one's lives. Unless a crisis emerged!!!

What was the crisis of this story! The wine ran out!

John 2:3–5 (ESV) — 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” **4** And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” **5** His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

So, the wine ran out, what is the big deal? Can't they just serve some sparkling cider or some of that punch with the ice cream in it? The wine shortage was a huge deal. Why?

A wine shortage indicated that the host was embarrassingly poor.

In addition, in a shame culture, unlike ours, the last thing you ever wanted to do was bring shame on yourself or your family. A wine shortage would have shamed one's family.

Furthermore, this was such a big deal, that it was possible for the relatives of the bride or groom to sue the groom if he did not provide enough wine for the party.

They served pasta and chicken at my wedding. If we would have run out of chicken, I don't think that anyone would have taken legal action against my in-laws. Instead, people would have shrugged their shoulders and asked for more pasta.

Finally, wine is a symbol of joy in the Bible. The rabbis said, “Without wine there is no joy.” To run out of wine was like saying, “I don't care about anyone's happiness.”

How does Christ initially respond to this crisis?

John 2:3–5 (ESV) — 3 When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” **4** And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” **5** His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”

Marry begs her son for help.

Christ's response sounds harsh! (“**Woman, what does this have to do with me?**””) But it is not. In Jesus' time, “Woman” was a title of respect. It was like saying “Ma'am” or “Madam.”

This wasn't like a New York cabbie saying, “Where to, Lady?”

Then Jesus says to her “my hour has not yet come.” In John's gospel “my hour” refers very specifically to the death and resurrection of Christ. (7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1).

Christ is saying, “I know you want me to solve this immediate problem. But If I solve this problem, it will reveal my glory. My plan is to display my glory in something far grander. I will display my glory in my death and resurrection.”

Yet, Jesus decides to help. Why? He loves people and he loves meeting practical needs.

Which brings us to....

The climax of the story!

John 2:6–10 (ESV) — **6** Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. **7** Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. **8** And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. **9** When 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 **10** 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.”

Christ intervenes by transforming roughly 180 gallons of water into fine wine.

Side note...

This was wine, not grape juice. Serving grape juice at a wedding was unheard of. Furthermore, when Paul says in Ephesians 5:18 “do not get drunk on wine” he uses the same Greek word for wine used by John in this passage. In addition, the comments made by the master of the feast in verse 9 clearly indicate this was not watered-down wine. Finally, I’m not aware of any scholars who think this was watered down wine or grape juice.

What is the point? The Bible nowhere prohibits the consumption of alcohol. If it did, Christ was encouraging sin. If anything, Christ’s behavior encourages the responsible consumption of wine, for the glory of God. At the same time, the Bible explicitly forbid drunkenness.

I want to camp out on verses 6-10 a little longer.

It is important to note, that Jesus did not create mediocre wine, he created fantastic wine. This was not three buck Chuck from Trader’s Joes or the wine you buy in a box at Costco. This was award winning vintage. This was \$100 a bottle wine!!!

Furthermore, Jesus created a super abundance of wine. Most scholars agree that 180 gallons of wine was far more than necessary for a wedding feast. Why did he create so much? He probably intended for the bride and groom to sell the excess wine for profit? Why? Jesus loves to surprise and delight his friends.

Jesus Christ is not stingy. He is eager to go above and beyond our expectations.

Philippians 4:19 (ESV) — **19** And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

God is good!!! He is way more loving, kind, and eager to bless than we can imagine.

That is the story! But what do we learn from this story? This brings us to the second point.

First, the story!

Second, the glory!

John 2:11–12 (ESV) — 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. **12** After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother and his brothers and his disciples, and they stayed there for a few days.

V. 11 is the key verse in this story. According to verse 11, this was the first sign that Jesus performed. He will perform many others. Each sign is designed to help us believe that Jesus is the Christ.

John 20:30–31 (ESV) — 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

What is a sign? A sign is something that points beyond itself to something greater.

What does this sign point us to? It points us to the glory of God. But what aspect of the glory of God. We see at least three aspects of God's glory in this story.

We see God's glory in Christ's divinity!

Christ supernatural ability to turn water into wine, points to the fact that he is no mere mortal. He is the divine son of God. Only the son of God has the power to transform water into wine. Later in John's gospel, he walks on water.

This is just one sign! We have so many others! (the Resurrection, fulfilled prophecy, transformed lives, creation, etc...)

If he is God, he must be worshipped!
If he is God, he must be trusted!
If he is God, he must be followed!

We see God's glory in Christ's divinity! In addition...

We see God's glory in Christ's generosity!

When the wine ran out, the joy ceased!

In this life, the wine will run out. The world's joys always fade. Satan tries to convince us that the world's pleasures will satisfy, and they will for a season. But then the pleasure melts away like an ice cube on a concrete patio in the middle of July.

Sure, there are different types of wines.
The wine of illicit pleasure.
The wine of drugs.
The wine of wealth.
The wine of health.
The wine of success.
The wine of friendship.

Eventually all the wine will run out, leaving you empty and joyless. It may happen in the teenage years, the college years, mid-life, or at the end of life. Ultimately, everyone runs out of wine apart from Christ.

Your spouse will fail you.
Your kids will fail you.

Your job will fail you.
Your friends will fail you.

The wine of the gospel will never fail you.

Illustration: (look at illustrations doc)

“From the time of his boyhood in Oak Park, Illinois, to his teenage summers in northern Michigan, Ernest Hemingway went after everything life could give him. He became a reporter with the Kansas City Star, served as an ambulance driver in World War I, spent years in Europe, and was intimately involved in the Spanish Civil War. His famous friendships ran all the way from the bullfighter Monolete to the novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald. In whatever he did—sports, warfare, romance—he went for all of it. And, of course, he was brilliant. His great stories—especially the greatest of all, *The Old Man and the Sea*—show his unique genius. He is a man who did it all... Hemingway went after the wine of life, but there came a time when the wine gave out.”
(K. Hughes)

On a beautiful sunny Sunday morning, while in his mansion, Ernest put a double-barreled shotgun to his head and pulled the trigger!

Jim Carey said,

“I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it’s not the answer.”

Tom Brady said,

“Why do I have three Super Bowl rings, and still think there’s something greater out there for me?... I mean this can’t be what it’s all cracked up to be.”

Anthony Hopkins said,

“You know, I meet young people, and they want to act and they want to be famous, and I tell them, when you get to the top of the tree, there’s nothing up there. Most of this is nonsense, most of this is a lie.”

What will you do when the wine runs out? When the wine runs out, you must look to Jesus Christ. He saved the wedding at Cana, and he can save your life. He loves to be generous lavish us with his favor.

He generously gave the wedding party the best wine.
He generously gave the wedding party and abundance of wine.

Why? Jesus is generous. He loves to give us an abundance of joy!!!

He loves to give us the wine of the gospel. And it is free of charge!!!

Isaiah 55:1–2 (ESV) — **1** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. **2** Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Jesus is the source of all Joy!!! The joy of knowing the living God, will never fade.

Yes, Jesus knew deep sorrow, but overall, his life was characterized by joy! We, too, will have many sorrows. But Jesus loves to dispense joy with extravagant generosity!!!

*We see God's glory in Christ's divinity.
We see God's glory in Christ's generosity.*

We saw God's glory in Christ's marriage.

This story points us to another wedding. In fact, every wedding in the Bible is meant to be a picture of the ultimate wedding. God created weddings in marriage to reflect his relationship with his people.

In the Old Covenant God is said to be married to Israel.

In the New covenant, we see Christ described as the great bride groom.

Later in the gospel of John, John the Baptist says-

John 3:29–30 (ESV) — 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. **30** He must increase, but I must decrease."

Luke 5:33–35 (ESV) — 33 And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." **34** And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? **35** The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days."

Revelation 19:9 (ESV) — 9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

At this feast the wine will flow freely! The prophet Isa. describes this great end times wedding feast with these words...

Isaiah 25:6–8 (ESV) — 6 On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. **7** And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. **8** He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

At this great wedding feast, Jesus is the groom. He is the one getting married. Who is he getting married to? The church of Jesus Christ.

But why in the world would he marry the church, when she is so unworthy???

Ephesians 5:25–27 (ESV) — 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, **26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Then he clothes us with the wedding garments of his own righteousness (Isa. 61:10).

Isaiah 61:10 (ESV) — 10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Application:

Maybe you don't like weddings...

Maybe it seems a little weird that you are going to marry Jesus Christ. I don't think this is a literal wedding. But marriages are the closest human relationships we have. And weddings are the most joyful experiences of our lives.

Our relationship with God is the closest relationship we can have; therefore it is compared to a marriage. Furthermore, our relationship with God is meant to be a source of great joy, like the joy we experience at a grand wedding feast.

Do you have this relationship?
Do you know this joy?

How does this apply? This brings us to the last point...

The story!
The glory!

Third, taking inventory!

This story in John 2 encourages all of us to take an inventory of our lives. Let me ask you a few questions.

Has the wine run out in your life?

If son, what wine have you been drinking?
Has it let you down, yet?
God will often let us hit rock bottom to convince us that only he can satisfy!

We must repent of looking to the wrong things to satisfy us. The Bible calls this idolatry. An idol is anything we love more than God.

When God convicts us of idolatry we must repent and ask God to change us.

Do you know the joy of relationship with God?

This is meant to be the greatest joy we experience. Like the joy of a wedding!!!
We cultivate this relationship through the ordinary means of grace.

Will you be present at the great marriage supper of the lamb?

Who gets to be there? Only those who trust that Jesus is the son of God. Our text says that Jesus saw Christ's glory and believed. Have you seen his glory, and do you believe? We don't have to do certain things; we have to believe certain things.

If you don't see his glory, ask God to help you see his glory. Once we see his glory our lives will be eternally transformed.

Let's pray...