

In the first chapter of John, we saw that Jesus is light and life. There is a subtle mockery of belief in the Bible going on in our culture, especially in entertainment and education. I've noticed in this debate over homosexual marriage in California that no one dares to say they do not condone it because the Bible does not condone it. They don't because they know the ridicule they would receive. Sin is sin, and adultery and homosexuality are equally sinful. (Exodus 20:14, Romans 1:26-27) We hate the sin because it is destructive to the sinner whom we love. As our society becomes increasingly secular, even the word "sin" is being ignored. However, it's not up to man to decide what is right and wrong; it is up to God! (Psalm 19:7-8)

Ravi Zacharias gives excellent advice as to how to answer those who would ask you why you are opposed to gay marriage or any other moral issue. First, ask why one can legitimately be opposed to anything. Then you can find some common ground for discussion. Jewish people base their standard on the Torah, for the Muslims it is the Koran, but for the Christian it is the person of Jesus Christ who declared that He is truth. He not only reveals truth (John 1:14), but also embodies it. (John 14:6) The secular person might base his or her opinion on their feelings, but we answer to a higher source. Should not the One that made us determine what is good and what is evil based upon His very nature? The fact that Jesus is light and life should direct us to His words to base our opinion on Divine revelation instead of the ever-changing whims of man.

John went on to describe the first disciples of Jesus. On the first day, he and Andrew followed Jesus and brought Peter along. On the second day they went to Galilee and found Philip and Nathaniel. ¹ *On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,* ² *and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.* "On the third day" may mean three days from the last event written, the call of Philip and Nathanael. If that is the case, that was a lot of walking during those five days, up the Jordan, to the northern shores of Galilee and over to Cana. I would imagine that there was a lot of time to get to know Jesus, and for Jesus to become familiar with five followers.

There is another way to interpret "on the third day". The third day in Genesis was twice pronounced "good" (Genesis 1:10-12), and so Jewish tradition, even now, encourages weddings on Tuesday, the third day. The idea is that the marriage will be doubly blessed. We can't be sure if this passage is saying that this is John's fifth day with Jesus, or if he is just pointing out that it was a Tuesday, the day marriages are sealed.

Weddings in Israel were joyous occasions. It was a time to take off from the business of life and celebrate God's goodness. The host would provide food and wine for a weeklong celebration. The whole town was usually invited as well as distant relatives. One could never know exactly how many would show up. The invitation to Jesus and His disciples didn't come in the form of a formal card like

Commented [notes1]: 14 "You shall not commit adultery.
Ex 20:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes2]: 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.
Romans 1:26-27 (NIV)

Commented [notes3]: 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
Psalms 19:7-8 (NIV)

Commented [notes4]: 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
John 14:6 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.
Gen 1:10-12 (NIV)

we would think of today, instead it was more likely that fact that Mary was in some way related to the bride or groom (some think it was Jesus' sister) and so Jesus would be also. The followers of a rabbi would naturally be invited if the rabbi was invited. Just hearing the name of the couple would be the invitation.

³ *When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."* This may have been four or five days into the celebration. I wonder what it was like to party with Jesus, joy and humor without crudeness or excess. Come to think of it, we will find out at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:7)

It sounds like more people showed up than the host had expected. That is really a compliment, but it is also a dilemma. The wine ran out and it would be a great humiliation if something couldn't be done. Apparently Mary is in some kind of position of authority in this situation and responsible to see that the problem was resolved. Why did she go to Jesus? He hadn't done any miracles yet. Was it the fact that He now had disciples? What did she think He would do? Was it the announcement of the angel and the other special conditions surrounding His birth that made her think He could do something about the problem? (Luke 1:32) Or perhaps it was things He confided in her as He grew up.

⁴ *"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."* "I love you Mom, but why are you asking me? It's not our concern. Don't push me into something I'm not ready to do." Jesus seemed to be aware that there was an appointed time for Him to begin His ministry and that that wasn't necessarily the time for Him to do the miraculous. He was waiting on His Father. Later in John's gospel we'll read that Jesus only does what He sees the Father doing. (John 5:19) He was dependent on the Father's instructions.

⁵ *She went ahead anyway, telling the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it."* Did I miss something? He seemed to tell Mary that it wasn't time for Him to do miracles, but then she told the servants to follow His instructions. She must have been an incredible woman of faith. Did she pray and then turn to Jesus as the only possible solution to that prayer? I don't know, but she sure seemed to be confident in Jesus' ability to solve the problem. (Romans 10:17) *"Whatever He tells you, do it."* That's pretty good advice in every situation. That's how I often respond to people who come to me for advice.

I think she is really an example to us in this. She is very concerned about her loved ones and their situation. She took it to Jesus, and even though she didn't seem to get a favorable response, she left it there in His hands. Perhaps you are in a situation today, in which you need to do the same.

⁶ *Six stoneware water pots were there, used by the Jews for ritual washings. Each held twenty to thirty gallons.* In the Old Testament, there were instructions for the purification of various items. At the time, the people didn't understand that water and fire can cleanse from germs and bacteria that can cause illness. (Numbers 31:23) Stone pots could not be defiled, so they were common in Jewish communities. Today, when archeologists uncover an ancient city, they use

Commented [notes7]: 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Rev 19:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, Luke 1:32 (NIV)

Commented [notes9]: 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 23 and anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing. And whatever cannot withstand fire must be put through that water. Num 31:23 (NIV)

the presence of stone pots to calculate how much of the city was Jewish. The purification rites included running water over the hands before eating. These stone jars held the water for that purpose. Altogether they held 120 to 180 gallons of water.

⁷ *Jesus ordered the servants, "Fill the pots with water." And they filled them to the brim.* What happened? I thought Jesus said it wasn't time. Did Mary's faith move the Father to prompt Jesus to act now? We'll have to wait to heaven to find out exactly what transpired, but looking at Jesus' dependence on the Holy Spirit to direct Him, He must have been so led shortly after He told His mother it wasn't time. (John 5:30)

This is the mystery of following the Spirit of God. In the next chapter, Jesus will tell Nicodemus a life led by the Spirit is like the wind. You don't know where it came from or where it's going. We just see the effects on the world around us and marvel that God has been at work in an unseen way. (John 3:8) This passage and several others lead me to believe that Jesus set aside His omniscience to become man. (Matthew 24:36) Until the moment the Spirit of God directed Him as to what to do, He didn't know what was about to take place. He has a general understanding from Scripture, and daily revelation by the Holy Spirit, just as you and I can have. He was showing us how to walk in the Spirit without the attributes unique to God like omniscience and omnipresence.

He ordered the pots to be filled. ⁸ *"Now fill your pitchers and take them to the host," Jesus said, and they did.* No "abracadabra", not even an audible prayer, just faith in the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn't even say, "Give me a sip, I want to make sure this worked." No! He had faith that when you obey, God does the rest. He did as He was instructed and knew God would work miraculously. If I tell my grandson, "Put your shoes on and we'll go for a walk." He expects to go for a walk once he obeys. He doesn't expect me to change my mind. Jesus trusted the word of His Father.

What is amazing to me is not so much the miracle, but Jesus' ability to hear. If you believe God became a man, this miracle is a small thing. The bigger miracle to me is that Jesus is all man and yet has such a clear discernment of the voice of the Holy Spirit. (Isaiah 50:5) He had 30 years to develop His spiritual ear. He saw over and over that what He heard would come to pass. I don't think He was surprised at all. He expected it, because He heard it. I want to hear like that! One of greatest needs after salvation is an ear that is open to the Spirit. (John 10:27)

The servants, following Mary's instruction to "do whatever He tells you", fill their pitchers from the jars they just previously filled with water. Were they wondering what kind of crazy thing this was, or did they smell the odor of the wine and realize they had just seen a miracle? One Sunday the deaconess of the month forgot to get fresh grape juice for communion. The ushers distributed the cups and my sensitive nose smelled wine. I was trying to focus on communion but kept smelling wine. Then it dawned on me the juice had fermented. Right after Pastor Ed had everyone drink the cup, I heard muffled voices throughout the

Commented [notes12]: 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.
John 5:30 (NIV)

Commented [notes13]: 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."
John 3:8 (NIV)

Commented [notes14]: 36 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."
Matt 24:36 (NIV)

Commented [notes15]: 5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back.
Isaiah 50:5 (NIV)

Commented [notes16]: 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.
John 10:27 (NIV)

congregation. I think it was the first and last time we had real wine for communion at Wayside. I bring that up just to say I think the servants must have smelled it and realized what had happened and been in absolute awe.

⁹ *When the host tasted the water that had become wine (he didn't know what had just happened but the servants, of course, knew), he called out to the bridegroom, The host was clueless as to what had just happened so yelled across the table to the bridegroom his congratulations on the great wine.*

¹⁰ *"Everybody I know begins with their finest wines and after the guests have had their fill brings in the cheap stuff. But you've saved the best till now!"* After God made all created things, the Scripture records that He saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:31) You can bet that if God makes wine, it's the good stuff. No wedding ever had finer wine served. There are a lot of little wine shops in Cana today, but none of them come close to selling anything as good as what Jesus made.

¹¹ *This act in Cana of Galilee was the first sign Jesus gave, the first glimpse of his glory. And his disciples believed in him.* John the Beloved used seven signs in His gospel to show that Jesus was the Messiah. How did this miracle act as a sign? It wasn't too long ago that we studied the prophecy of Jacob to his son Judah. If you recall, there was a passage in which Jacob predicted in poetic form that a descendent of Judah would tie his donkey to the choicest vine and wash his clothes in the blood of grapes. (Genesis 49:11) This was predicting that the Messiah's kingdom would have such abundance that wine would be as common as water. Jesus' first sign was telling those waiting on the Kingdom of the Messiah that they need wait no longer. Abundance had come, spiritual abundance, abundance of joy, and abundance of revelation. (John 10:10)

The prophets gave revelations from God, but at Jesus' feet you could hear and see the Kingdom of God made manifest. They were already seeing those angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. (John 1:51)

The passage calls Jesus' act a glimpse of His glory. Keeping with my definition of glory as the heart of God revealed, we see God intervening in an ordinary wedding. Does God care about our wedding ceremonies? Absolutely! He cared about Mary who had faith that God can act when man has miscalculated. The heart of God was expressed by Jesus at the leading of the Holy Spirit. It was a selfless act of caring love (agape). Do you sometimes glimpse glory in your brothers and sisters in Christ when they selflessly give of themselves at the leading of the Spirit of God and the needs of man are met? I think we glimpse it a lot more than we realize. (Galatians 5:22)

The disciples saw this first sign and put their faith in Him. Those last five days they had learned a little about Him, but now they saw His heart. Now they can relate Him to the prophecies. Now they can place their faith in Him.

Commented [notes17]: Genesis 1:31 (NIV)
31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

Commented [notes18]: 11 He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. Gen 49:11 (NIV)

Commented [notes19]: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: 51 He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." John 1:51 (NIV)

Commented [notes21]: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, Gal 5:22 (NIV)

There may be more to this first miracle, if we look at the symbolism from an Old Testament perspective. *Let's try to think like Hebrews with their picture analogies. Here is my interpretation of (another reason) why the Holy Spirit chose this as the first of miracles. The number six represents man. The prophets speak of our hearts being like stone. (Ezekiel 11:19) Our hearts are like these stone vessels (each about the weight of man). Wine is representative of a fruit of the Spirit, joy. (Psalm 104:15) You and I are mostly made up of water... Jesus comes to us and sees there is a great need in our lives. Ordinary water is not the life He has planned for us. He transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary. We are served up to the world, and they find it the best wine they have ever drunk, the Words of the Holy Spirit, the joy of the Lord. Notice Jesus said to fill them. He wants us filled all the way up with the joy of the Lord. Are you ready to be served to the world? Does it give you a different perspective on how the world should react to the Spirit in you? From Israel Devotions – www.bible-sermons.org*

Commented [notes22]: 19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.
Ezek 11:19 (NIV)

Commented [notes23]: Psalms 104:15 (NIV)
15 wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

The world needs to see Christians that overflow with joy, not long faced, works burdened, religiosity. (John 15:11) They need to see a transformed people that are extraordinary because they aren't focused on themselves, people that can celebrate like Jesus, with joy and humor but without the need for excess. The world needs people that are joyfully willing to be served up so that people can get a glimpse of the glory of Jesus. So how about it stone vessels, will you let your water be changed to wine? Will you trade your sorrows and pain for the joy of the Lord, and then let yourself be served up? (Nehemiah 8:10)

Commented [notes24]: 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
John 15:11 (NIV)

Part of the reason the world is so depressed and discouraged is that people aren't getting what they want. Old joys cease to satisfy. It's a serve and please me mindset. Christians are supposed to have left that attitude behind and become joyful servants of the living God. (Matthew 20:28) That is where true joy is possible. That is where the Lord pours into our hearts His Spirit whose fruit is joy; because that's the vessel He designed us to be. He wants us to be like Him, and He is anointed with joy greater than any of us. (Hebrews 1:9)

Commented [notes25]: 10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."
Neh 8:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes26]: 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Matt 20:28 (NIV)

We've left the old hand washing religious rituals behind. We are no longer seeking to fill our souls with perfect works or the joys of the world. Our souls are full of good wine and the ordinary has become extraordinary. The simple joys are deeper and richer as we share them with our Savior. The best has come last in our life. We thought the wine of this world was fine for a time, but it ran out. The best has come last and in abundance. Jesus even shares His own joy with us, joys the world cannot comprehend. Here is what He said shortly before the cross. ¹¹ *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.* John 15:11 (NIV) That is a full jar of good wine! The best!

Commented [notes27]: 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."
Heb 1:9 (NIV)

If that isn't you, you need to give your life to Jesus. You say you already have? Are you living to serve or be served? Renew your mind with God's truth. Do you realize that God works everything together for your God? The all knowing, all-powerful God plans to prosper you, and to give you a hope and a future. You've found your purpose. Heaven awaits us. Receive Jesus' joy and focus on Him.