

Date: _____

Biblical Passage

John 2:1-11

Memory Verse

Philippians 4:19

Biblical Truth

Jesus' miracles revealed His divine authority and glory.

Context

After calling His disciples, Jesus attended a wedding in Cana. The wedding guests included Jesus' mother, other family and friends, and His disciples. While at the wedding, Jesus performed His first recorded miracle and revealed Himself for the first time as the Messiah. Though John included fewer miraculous signs than the other Gospels, he did mention several. Changing water into wine is the first of seven miracles described in John 1-11.

Investigation

John the apostle wrote this Gospel between A.D. 85 and 90. It was probably intended for a Gentile church outside Palestine. John 20:30-31 states John's reason for writing his Gospel: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

While at a wedding celebration at Cana in Galilee, Jesus' mother remarked to Him that the hosts had run out of wine. After reminding her that His time had not yet come, Jesus miraculously caused the water in six stone jars to become fine wine. In doing so He revealed His glory to His disciples.

Importance

This passage teaches that Jesus is God and Savior and is important because it shows the authority and glory of Jesus' divine nature: "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him" (John 2:11). By miraculously turning water into wine, Jesus demonstrated both His concern for others and His ability to meet any need at any time. Because of who He is, Jesus holds complete authority as Lord and Christ. Not only is He fully able to meet all the needs of His followers, but He wants to meet them. It is essential that Christians acknowledge Christ as Provider and trust

Him to meet their needs. By doing so, believers discover not only His divine authority but His glory as well.

Other key truths addressed in this lesson include People are God's Treasure and God Is.

Interpretation

John 2:1-2 In these verses John offered clues as to the time and setting of this narrative. The wedding occurred on the "third day," which most likely refers to three days after Jesus' encounter with Philip and Nathanael. By this time Jesus may have had five or six disciples following Him: Nathanael (also known as Bartholomew), Andrew, Peter, Philip, John, and maybe James. He could have already chosen all 12, even though all of them have not been mentioned at this point in the Gospel.

Little is known about the city of Cana in the region of Galilee. John is the only New Testament writer to mention this city. Many scholars believe it was located about nine miles north of Nazareth around the area currently known as Khirbet Kana.

Jesus, His disciples, and His mother were all at the wedding. This suggests that the wedding may have been for a family member or a close friend of Jesus' family. It could have been that Mary was assisting with details of the wedding celebration, which might explain her statement in verse 5.

A first-century Jewish wedding involved an extensive celebration. After the betrothal period, the groom would be accompanied by a group of people to the bride's house, where the marriage ceremony would be held. Then everyone would return to the groom's house for the celebration, which could go on for a week. The groom's family generally assumed the role of hosts for the festivities and bore most of the financial responsibility for the social event.

John 2:3 During the first century, wine was a common everyday beverage, typically made from fermented grape juice and mixed with water. It was considered an essential part of every Jewish wedding celebration. To run out of wine at a wedding was unthinkable and could result in embarrassment for the groom and his family.

At this particular wedding the wine ran out before the celebration was over. 'This could have been because too many guests showed up or simply because inadequate preparation. Mary approached Jesus and informed Him of the situation. Why Mary approached Jesus is not clear. Though she knew Jesus was unique among men, it seems unlikely that she hoped He would miraculously provide the wine needed for the celebration. Still, she knew of His concern for meeting people's needs. She may have approached Him with the potentially embarrassing problem because she had faith in His ability to deal with it resourcefully.

John 2:4 Though the word "dear" does not appear in the Greek text, translators often include it in English translations because Jesus using the word woman alone to

address His mother sounds unkind and disrespectful. No disrespect was intended; nor was any taken.

Though Jesus' statement was courteous, it was a mild rebuke. While she was still His mother, He was more than her Son—He was her Lord as well. His ministry would be dictated by the will of His Heavenly Father.

John 2:5-8 Mary apparently believed that Jesus would take care of the situation. She knew He would do what was right, thus she directed the servants to follow Jesus' instructions. Her words to the servants suggest that she had some responsibility in the wedding celebration.

The jars that were near the area where Jesus and Mary were talking held water not for drinking but for ceremonial washing. The jars were hewn out of stone; they were more durable than the clay pots or jars often used to hold water. Because they were made from stone, they maintained their purity in accordance with Mosaic Law (Leviticus 11:36). These stone jars were large, perhaps the size of modern trash cans. They were different sizes, holding from 20 to 30 gallons of water each.

The Jews (especially Pharisees) usually used the water in the jars in their ritual purification before and after eating and also after returning from the market, where they may have had contact with unclean Gentiles (non-Jews). As part of their tradition they also symbolically purified the plates, cups, and pots they used in cooking and eating, Mark elaborates on this practice that was a part of "the tradition of the elders." He explained that the Jewish leaders had added to God's Law and made life miserable for the majority of Jews (Mark 7:3-4). Jesus later spoke words of rebuke to the Jewish leaders who thought that their traditions and rituals made them right with God (Matthew 23:25-26, Mark 7:6-23).

Jesus instructed the servants to fill the jars with water. The servants followed His instructions and filled the jars "to the brim," probably drawing water from a nearby well and carrying it to the jars. Next, Jesus told the servants to withdraw some of the liquid (perhaps in a small pitcher or cup) and take it to the "master of the banquet." This position might be similar to that of a headwaiter in a fancy restaurant or a butler in a wealthy family. He might even have been a master of ceremonies. Often when new food or drink was brought out, it was first taken to the master, perhaps for his approval, before being given to the other guests.

John 2:9-10 The servants did as Jesus instructed. John noted simply, that "the water... had been turned into wine." This happened without any fanfare and probably with only the servants later realizing what had happened. The servants knew they had put water in the jars and may have reluctantly taken the cup or pitcher to the master, almost anticipating his reaction. They may have expected him to spit out the water and rebuke them for tricking him. Regardless of their thoughts or hesitations, they went to him. The master tasted the liquid the servants brought to

him, which now was wine. He did not know its origin. Apparently he was unaware the wine for the celebration had run out.

It must have been a common practice to offer guests the best wine first in order to impress them. Later, they would be served a lesser quality wine after celebrating for some time and having "had too much to drink." The lesser quality wine could have been watered down, or it may have been newly fermented, in which case it would not be as good as wine that had aged. Yet on this occasion the master believed that the bridegroom and his family had gone against tradition and waited until the end of the celebration to bring out the best wine.

How did this miracle happen? Obviously no one—except God-knows. But just as a person does not have to understand the process of bypass surgery to benefit from the procedure, neither did the servants have to understand what had happened in order to experience this miracle.

John 2:11 This event was “the first of Jesus’ miraculous signs.” Certainly the servants knew what had occurred and probably spread the word about it. As a result of this miracle, Jesus “revealed his glory.” John mentioned this glory in the beginning of his Gospel (John 1:14). It was an indication of Jesus’ character, identity, power, and authority.

Apparently the disciples witnessed this miracle because they “put their faith in him” as a consequence. We know that they already believed He was the Messiah (John 1:35-51). This phrase must mean that they trusted Him enough to follow Him.

Implications

Adults are constantly under pressure to meet the needs of others along with their own needs. Matters of health, finance, and time concern them. This constant pressure creates stressful lives. Thankfully Jesus is God and Savior, He is God; He has authority and power over all created things, including water. He is Savior’ He not only supplied what was needed for eternal salvation, but He rescues from everyday stresses and often peace in all situations. Just as listen to Mary, He will listen to the petitions of each learner. Just as Jesus provided for his mother Mary, He can provide what is best for everyone.

Divine provision should result in acknowledgement of Jesus and faith in Him. Despite past experiences of having needs met, sometimes even in amazing ways, adults sometimes worry. Worry is a clue that trust in God is wavering. Even mature Christians sometimes question whether God will be able to meet their needs. Like the disciples at the Cana wedding who witnessed Jesus’ miracle, learners will get a clearer picture of who Jesus is and of His amazing power. Seeing Jesus more clearly will result in a deeper understanding of His power and authority over all things as well as His saving ability.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is it significant that the servants gave credit to Jesus for this miracle? What do this example say to you?
- Whom do you look to for help?
- Whom or what do you give credit to when needs are met?
- How did Jesus show both His power and authority through this miracle? How did He show His care for people?

FREE THOUGHT

"Every thing that a man leans upon but God will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. He who leans only upon Christ lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life." —Thomas Brooks