

## **Slide** Children's Moment

**Theme:** Water Into Wine

**Scripture:** “This beginning of *His* signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” (John 2:11 NASB)



I try to find the time to read the newspaper. It is a good way to keep up on what is happening in our community. Have you ever thought about being a newspaper reporter when you grow up? It would be great. Just think if you were a sports reporter you would get to go to all of the sporting events. Not only that, you would get to go to sporting events for free and the newspaper would pay you while you are there. If you were a news reporter you would travel around town and see what was going on and then write news stories about what you saw.

I thought it would be fun to take the Bible story for today and rewrite it as if I were a reporter writing for the newspaper ***The Galilean Times***. The story comes from the Gospel of John. The word “gospel” means “good news”, so I would write a good news story. I would begin with a great headline, “Water Turned Into Wine!”

Here is how I would write the story. On Wednesday, a woman named Mary was in Cana to attend a large wedding. In attendance with her was her son, Jesus, and 5 or 6 of his friends. Guests were having a wonderful time in celebration until suddenly the wedding feast ran out of wine. The celebration was headed for disaster and the reputation of the groom would certainly be ruined. With disaster looming, Mary casually asked her son, Jesus if he might do sometime. At first Jesus said this poor groom’s problem had nothing to do with him. But since it

was his mother who asked, Jesus took pity on the ill prepared groom, not wanting to see him start his marriage in this bad way.

Eyewitnesses said, Jesus told the waiters to fill the stone jars sitting empty near by with water. When that was done he told one waiter to take a glassful to the headwaiter responsible for serving the wine and have him taste it. The headwaiter was amazed that this wine was the best he had ever tasted. He was about to ask where this wine had suddenly come from when the people began asking for more wine and the headwaiter was heard to say, "Thank God, we have this good wine to serve." He did not know how right he was when he said this.

The wedding guests reported to have been delighted that the celebration was able to continue and with the best wine they had ever tasted. The wedding celebration and the reputation of the groom were both saved by Mary's son. The question that everyone wanted to know was, "Who is this Jesus?" The next day a small number of people, including this reporter, decided to follow him as he left Cana to try and find out who this man was.

Well, what did you think of the story? It is a true story that took place over 2000 years ago. The really great thing about this story is Jesus did not stop with one miracle, but did many more miracles, which helped people to come to know that He was God. In fact, Jesus is still doing miracles today. The greatest of miracles we see today is that Jesus changes people's hearts and then lives inside them. Jesus can do a miracle in you – you just have to ask, like Mary asked for Jesus to help – you have to ask Jesus into your heart.

Let me pray – Jesus we ask for You to do a miracle in us. Please come into our hearts and live in us, that we may know You and Your joy. Amen

**Slide** First Miracle

Open in Prayer

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The Gospel of John records Jesus performing 8 miraculous signs. Jesus certainly performed many more miracles, but John chose these 8 to prove Jesus' deity and give us view of Jesus' personality. **Slide** Jesus launches His ministry publicly at this wedding celebration in Cana. The name Cana means "place of reeds." Before we delve into this passage I want to first look at the Book of Romans. In chapter 14, were we are taught that we have freedom in Christ, but we should not do anything to cause someone to stumble, we are to serve others and not to let the world dictate to us what is right. **Slide** Reading beginning in verse 16, "Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; <sup>17</sup> for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men." In our present day many Christians work hard at being righteous in the way they live and this is a good thing. **Blank** Many achieve peace as they grow closer to Christ and this too is a good thing. But, to be honest as I observe Christians and churches I often see a lack of joy. I am not talking about the happiness the world seeks which is self-seeking pleasure and often at the expense of others. I am talking about good Christian folk who have a good understanding of doctrine and their salvation is secure. But many lack the supernatural joy and even exuberance that is a mark of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ living in them. Paul tells us in Galatians that joy is a fruit of the Spirit. In Psalm 16, King

David wrote a poem, saying, **Slide** “You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.” (Psalm 16:11 NASB) Again King David wrote with passion in Psalm 32, **Slide** “Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.” (Psalm 32:11 NASB) Then our Lord Jesus said, **Slide** “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.” (John 15:11 NASB) God is telling us in these scriptures that to be His child and to have a relationship with God through Christ and to be indwelt by the Spirit means our lives should be characterized by joy. I believe our passage of study today not only shows the deity of Jesus, but also shows that joy and laughter are part of being a Christian. **Blank**

As we begin by exploring the scene of the wedding there are several things to be aware of. Let me begin at the beginning, verses 1 and 2 reads, “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.” The phrase “On the third day” gives us the time frame of the wedding for it refers back to the calling of Philip and Nathanael and this tells us it is now the seventh day of the first week of Jesus’ ministry and this last day of this first week marks His public revealing and the beginning of His public ministry. The opening verses of chapter 2 are the introduction of the main body of the Gospel of John, chapters 2 to 11 that are referred to as the “Book of Christ’s Signs.” Jewish tradition indicates that at this time weddings were usually held on Wednesdays and if this is the case then Andrew and John followed Jesus on the Sabbath and this explains why that day in chapter 1 was marked by inactivity. No one knows for certain why Jesus was at this wedding. But, since both He and His mother were there it would indicate

that they might have been related and since Mary spoke directly to those serving this might also indicate she was known and had some status. Also the fact that Joseph is not mentioned would most likely indicate that by this time He has died. Whatever the case, both Jesus and His mother, Mary, were welcome and part of the celebration. Verse 1 also says “His disciples were invited” meaning either the disciples were also known to the wedding couple’s families or were welcome because they were with Jesus. Jesus’ younger brothers and sisters are there for a wedding was a family celebration.

As I said earlier I see Christians who take the attitude that Christianity is a serious business; indeed salvation is serious and the glory of Christ is serious, but this certainly does not prohibit one from having a good time and celebrating with the Lord and with family and friends. We do not see evidence in the scriptures of Jesus condemning those who celebrated the good things God provides – a husband or a wife, good food and drink, and family and friends. Jesus joined in these wholesome celebrations and it is partly because of this that people were willing to listen to Him. Here we find Jesus is at the marriage of a couple, with family and friends and He would be enjoying the celebration. Jesus’ attending the wedding and blessing it with His first miracle also reinforces the value and importance that marriage has for God.

We are quickly told in verse 3 that the wine has run out. This does not mean that everyone was drunk. In fact, I serious doubt Jesus would have made more wine if this were the case since the scriptures condemn drunkenness. We are given some clues as to how large the number of guests was by what Jesus does. It would not have been uncommon for the entire area of the village where the family resided to be invited, plus family and friends. Many scholars believe the

greater Cana area had about 8,000 people, but neighborhoods or conclaves would consist of several hundred. People did not travel like we do today and relatives would be largely confined to neighboring areas or the villages of Cana. We may understand the number of people was large by the volume of wine made by Jesus. But before we look at this we will first look at the interaction between Jesus' mother Mary and Himself and the servers.

Mary looks at the Son and says simply, the wedding celebration has run out of wine in verse 3. Jesus' response does not indicate any kind of correction of his mother. Verse 4 reads, "And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.'" The word "Woman" is equivalent *madam* or *senora* it is a title to address a woman who is married or of an older age. We know Jesus addressing His mother as "Woman" cannot be meant to put Mary in her place for it is exactly the same word Jesus uses at His crucifixion found in John chapter 19, **Slide** "When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold, your son!' " (John 19:26 NASB) **Blank** So, my paraphrase of verse 2 of chapter 2 is as follows, "Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come." When Jesus asks, "Woman, what does that have to do with us?" He is asking what does the problem of the wedding have to do with Him and His disciples. Mary most likely sensed the change in her Son since she last saw Him in Nazareth. She also would not have failed to notice changes. Since He had left Nazareth Jesus had spent 40 days of trial in the wilderness, been baptized by John the Baptist and now Jesus returns with 5 or 6 disciples. Mary may have thought now is the time for my Son to reveal who God the Father made Him. She lays her request on Him and tells the servants to do whatever Jesus instructs. By doing

this she also put herself under the headship of her Son, Jesus - both under His authority as the eldest son who has taken the headship of His deceased father, Joseph and she placed herself under His authority as her Lord and Savior. It is often a difficult transition for a mother to let go of a son, as he becomes a man and know that he must make his own decisions and he then has authority over his mother, be it is done with great respect. Now, let me go back to Mary, the fact that she instructs the servers to do what Jesus tells them would also indicate she had some position in the wedding party for her to have this authority. Whether out of respect for His mother or His not wanting the groom to be embarrassed and because it was indeed His time – Jesus, in verse 7 says, “Fill the waterpots with water.” So they filled them up to the brim.” Since at this point Jesus has not done a miracle or publicly claimed to be the long awaited Messiah, the fact that the servers obey without question mostly likely indicated that Jesus is known and also has some position within the wedding party. The filling of the waterpots that were for ceremonial cleansing or purification speaks of another point the Jesus makes, which we will get to at the end of this message. In verse 6 we see that these “six stone waterpots ... containing twenty or thirty gallons each” meant there would have been 120 to 180 gallons of water for guests to purify themselves had they been full. This may also be an indication of the number of people attending. However, the stone waterpots filled with water turned to wine now hold 120 to 180 gallons of wine or between 1920 and 2880 cups of wine. Since I do not believe it was Jesus’ intention for everyone to get drunk, as this would dishonor God, for we know the abuse of wine led Noah and Lot into trouble, as well as others in the scriptures. The wine made from water by Jesus was not just any wine; it was good wine, the very best wine. The next verses are consistent with what historians say was common among Jewish weddings of

serving the good wine first and bringing a lesser quality of wine out after. We read verses 9 and 10, “When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom, and said to him, ‘Every man serves the good wine first, and when *the people* have drunk freely, *then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.*’ ” The groom was probably surprised that what was headed for embarrassment when the wine ran out, sudden turned into a great blessing and complement from the headwaiter.

Wine is to be enjoyed for it was a gift of God Himself. The Apostle James says,

**Slide** “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

(James 1:17 NASB) Jesus said, **Slide** “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:11 NASB) Now all things can be used

for good or evil and the scriptures speak much on the wrong of drinking too much wine or strong drink. But, this does not mean wine is evil or wrong to drink for it is given by God, Psalm 104 says, **Slide** “He (God) causes the grass to grow for the

cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine which makes man’s heart glad, so that he may make *his* face glisten with oil, and food which sustains man’s heart.” (Psalm 104:14-15 NASB) The

prophet Isaiah writes of God’s blessings, **Slide** “The LORD (ADONAY) of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, *and* refined, aged wine.” (Isaiah 25:6 NASB)

When Isaiah spoke of God’s offer of mercy to those who believe he says, **Slide** “Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come,



buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” (Isaiah 55:1 NASB) **Blank** In the New Testament Paul writes to Timothy and tells him a little wine is good for the stomach. I am not, I repeat I am not, advocating the drinking of wine. But, I also want to make clear that drinking wine in moderation is not a sin. Now, as I started this talk of wine I said I do not believe Jesus intended people to get drunk and there had to be a lot of people at this wedding celebration by the volume of wine He made. Remember, they had already consumed the wine provided by the bridegroom.

Apostle John always sees spiritual meaning in every aspect of what Jesus does, as is right, for Jesus does not do anything by happenstance. I believe John wants us to see that apart from Jesus the joy of which this life has for mankind and the joy man pursues is limited, like the wedding feast, it is nothing more than a short-lived good time that all too soon will, like the wine, run out. The wine Jesus’ produces is the best as the Apostle James said, **Slide** “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” If you fear that someday you will find yourself empty of joy, or disappointed – fear not. **Blank** This cannot happen when your soul and heart is filled with Jesus. He will never pull away from you, although you may pull away from Him. Christ never fails, certainly if He can produce an abundance of wine, fish and bread to feed 5000, He is more than capable to meet your needs to an overflowing for you to pour out and give to others from the abundance He gives you. Jesus was speaking to the people about their need for being more than the “chosen people” they needed faith to nourish them. In John chapter 6 the people say to Jesus, **Slide** “Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He (GOD) GAVE THEM BREAD OUT OF HEAVEN TO

EAT.’ Jesus answers them saying, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him (Jesus), ‘Lord, always give us this bread.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.’ ” (John 6:31-35

NASB) **Blank** Jesus fills our souls with Himself as the bread of life and it is Jesus who not only sustains us through trials of this world, but gives us joy and peace in all circumstances and we never thirst. I know there are those here this morning that have endured difficult trails, but we have or will come out the other side and we can still experience the joy of Christ, we can pray for our enemies, we can forgive them and commit them to Christ. This brings me to my last point I want to make and have alluded to.

John concludes this short story of the wedding in verse 11 saying, “This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.” There is the literal miracle of turning the water to wine, but I believe there is the symbolic sign as well. Jesus brings to completion the religion of the Jews. He brings a relationship with God, not just rituals. This miracle Jesus performed called attention to the empty waterpots sitting in the household. Their purpose was for Jewish purifications, but they were empty. John says Jesus in chapter 1 is the answer to the spiritual blindness of the Jewish people and especially for the leadership. The empty waterpots and the lack of wine speak of the emptiness of the Jewish religion. What started out as God calling a people to Him and their worshipping Him in heart and spirit has become an empty religion of ritual and is in part the reason for the coming of Christ. Judaism existed as a religious system and no longer ministered to the hearts and souls of the people.

It had degenerated into a cold routine of rituals and completely destitute of joy in God. What was true of the Jewish religion is true of the Christian religion as well - if it becomes a system of rules and rituals and Christ is not at its very core.

Religion is mans attempt to develop a system of worship. Christ has come that through Him we have a relationship with God as He originally designed in the Garden of Eden. He wants to walk with us and talk with us in relationship for He is the Creator and we are His beloved creation. The Christian religion that becomes a system lacks joy, becomes judgmental, develops into a set of rules that hardens hearts and fails as a witness to the lost world, because it lacks the joy of relationship with Christ. It is Christ alone the quenches the hunger and thirst of people hearts to know why and who they are. It is Christ alone that places a song in your heart and on your lips – songs the scriptures say that even angels who are in the presences of God cannot sing. True and everlasting joy is found in Christ as one's Savior.

Here in this story of the wedding Jesus is revealed to have supernatural power and the people attending are amazed by His miracle. But, what do we read in verse 12, [“After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.”](#) After the wedding is over and Christ performed this miracle in the presence of hundreds of people – who leaves with Him? Only a few went with Jesus – His mother and brothers and His disciples. Even though hundreds witnessed Jesus, their spiritual eyes were blind. This is the way of the world, even the world today. Most people are spiritually blind to God, even though He makes Himself known all around them. Some things do not change, as Paul wrote in the first chapter of Romans, [Slide](#) [“For since the creation of the world His \(God’s\) invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what](#)

has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” (Romans 1:20-21 NASB) **Blank**

The message is clear, our Savior Jesus Christ is the miracle making, vow keeping, living God who gives spiritual life – life to be lived with great joy and celebration of God and the salvation He has given to us.