

24 January 2021



## **JOHN 2:1-11**

### **A REFLECTION FOR SUNDAY 24 JANUARY 2021 FROM JOHN BOURNE**

It is now a month since Christmas, during which time the church has remembered the early life of Jesus. How he was visited by shepherds and kings, dedicated in the temple, baptised by John the Baptist and chose his first disciples.

This week, John's Gospel takes us to a quite unexpected place.

John says nothing about Jesus going to the temple to pray or into the wilderness to be tempted. Nor does he record any life-changing theology. John simply tells that Jesus and his family went to a wedding in Cana.

Cana was a small village in the hills of Galilee, a place where life was very ordinary. People eked-out a subsistence lifestyle far away from the towns and cities of power and influence. We should never forget that Jesus and his disciples shared a humble background. I also find it quite reassuring that Jesus began his ministry 'partying it up' with ordinary people.

Weddings are a central happening in most world communities. They are a ceremony that recognises and supports a human relationship, considered fundamental to the stability of a community. Throughout the bible, marriage and the wedding ceremony are treated with high regard.

A wedding of Jesus' time was quite an elaborate affair. Firstly, it was very public. It was also a dressing up occasion with special garments for the bride, groom and bridesmaids. Friends and relatives went in a procession around the village before attending the marriage blessing and feast. There was an intolerable amount of parental control and festivities could go on for days or even weeks.

It was to such a wedding that Jesus and his family went. At the point where John's Gospel takes up the story, the festivities were underway, and the feast was in full swing.

Horror of all horrors, the party ran out of wine. This was bad for the celebration, but the consequences were far more serious than that. Galilean water was unsafe to drink unless taken straight from a well, a spring or collected from falling rain. The fermentation process of wine made it safe and its presence was essential at a drawn-out wedding celebration.

Into this mini crisis steps Jesus' mother. Following the events of Christmas, the Bible tells us little about Mary, but here, at the wedding, Mum is in charge. She tells her son to do something.

Jesus ordered the servants to fill the available jars with water and to pour some for the master of ceremonies; as they do so, the water turns to wine. We are told that the best wine was kept till last and everybody has a great celebration.

Read the story as you like but do not lose sight of its meaning.

Jesus began his ministry at a wedding where he participated in a family's festivities; he shared their hopes and recognised their common concerns. Jesus was the son of God who brought change to the lives of ordinary people.

Take this miracle out of context, examine it on its own and you may conclude such an occurrence impossible. This may be missing the point.

This miracle is not an isolated event, it is one of the signs and wonders, mentioned in John's gospel, that give meaning to the ministry of Jesus.

John tells us that Jesus made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. At the wedding he gave drink to the thirsty, elsewhere food to the hungry. Jesus last miracle was to raise Lazarus and bring life to the helpless.

In these miracles we see the fulness of Christ as he meets ordinary people. We see the glory of Jesus and the development of his disciples' faith. Let us not forget the most important miracle of all, the miracle of the cross that brings salvation to the world.

Here, in this early account of Jesus' ministry, the ground rules are laid down. God became man, He shared with man, He cared for man and provided for man.

By the end of the Gospel, God has saved man.

The entirety of the Good News about Jesus can be explained in just a few miracles, the first of which took place at a wedding in Cana.

