

Good morning! What a lovely way to start the day... A party!

And I love a party, with lots of red wine!! As does Terry and Carol, and many of us..

Well, you may say, that's great!! But what about now?

We are missing them at the moment. The restrictions have really altered our way of getting together to celebrate certain milestones in our lives. There are ways. And many of us have done the virtual, zoom thing with friends and family. But it's not the same.

So I am sorry that I am reminding you of things we cannot do at the present time.

But I am also excited. Because, this will change. I am looking forward to the parties to come. How much sweeter they will be..

Let's get back to the scripture.

Firstly we can deduce that this is just days after Jesus has called together his disciples. They are just getting to know their charismatic new leader/teacher/rabbi/Lord.

They will have travelled on foot the few miles north-east of Nazareth to Cana. A dusty road, heading to the Lake of Galilee. Flat roofed houses, with gardens and orchards, which apparently, produced the best pomegranates in Palestine.

It is thought Nathaneal lived there, and that is probably where they stayed.

And we can assume that Mary, Jesus' mother, was an important guest as she was already there and clearly involved as she knows the wine has run out. Something that would not have been broadcast! Breaking the unwritten law of hospitality.. This was more than embarrassing....

A 'dis aaaster darling!!!!'

A wedding was not a day-long event. Jewish tradition meant it would last up to week. The whole town was invited and so it took careful planning to organise the feasting and celebrations.

We can now understand a little more the increased sense of social disaster that the couple and their parents would have felt when they ran out of wine. Jesus was about to respond to a heartfelt need.

Mary tells Jesus. Hoping he would somehow solve this major problem and find some wine.

He doesn't seem ready, does he? But Mary asks him because she knows how capable he is to fix this problem. She has probably become used to asking for her sons' help, as tradition says she is a widow.

His response, in many of our translations sounds rude, doesn't it?

But in the Greek, 'woman' is a word of respect. In the Passion translation it reads like this....

V4 " Jesus replied, 'My dear one, don't you understand that if I do this, it won't change anything for you, but it will change everything for me! My hour of unveiling my power has not yet come.'

His first public miracle. It will dramatically change his ministry from this moment on, when people see the power He possesses.

He knew the timer was about to start. The clock would start ticking.

In this story, Mary is a wonderful example of bringing cares and concerns to Jesus.

She asks. Are we clear in our requests?

She trusts. Are we asking really believing God cares about us?

There is obedience, from the servants she sends to Jesus. They follow His instructions, which must have sounded bonkers....

I entertained myself a lot, imagining the servants running between the well and the huge stone jars, which would have held 20 - 30 gallons of water, each.

They were used for ceremonial washing. Everything the people touched in their everyday lives was unclean, and so before eating, hands had to be washed using the water from these jars.

This was not a quick fix. It must have taken some time to fill the 6 jars to the brim. Those poor servants must have been exhausted carrying smaller jars of water, backwards and forwards from the well to the huge jars. But they obeyed.

I find it interesting that we have no idea what Jesus did.. No details.

Did he pray over the jars when they were full? Did he touch them? Did he bless them?

We do know He answered the need and sorted it!

He saved the reputation of the bridegroom and his family. He turned water into wine. The best wine.

This shows us that our God is a God of abundance, extravagance.

This wasn't a reward for good behaviour or deeds done.

This is powerful and generous, loving and caring. Showing us Gods' interest and care for all the details of our lives, including domestic. Everything. He delights in our Joy, our pleasure.

This was Jesus' first miraculous sign. He had revealed himself.

The disciples saw this evidence of love and power, that he had every right to be called Messiah, they began to put their faith in him.

Here are a few points I am taking from studying this passage:-

1. Jesus cares about our joyful situations, not just the sad.

Let's not forget that Jewish people have 7 main celebrations a year. God loves a party. God loves our joy.

2. God wants to help us. To answer our prayers. To fulfil our needs.

And he does, sometimes. And sometimes we do not get an answer. Sometimes it feels like he doesn't care. That is hard. Painful and stretches our faith. This is such a huge subject. For which I thoroughly recommend the book by Pete Greig, 'God on mute'. Please take a look at it if you are struggling with unanswered prayer.

We need to remember to bring our requests to Him and to trust Him. Trust and obey, like the old song I learnt in Sunday school.

And finally, absolutely Nothing Is Impossible with God. Sometimes it's just in His time and in His way.

This passage is a joyful story. Let's hold onto that and not give up hope. The best is yet to come.

