

When the Wine Runs Out: Jesus at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee

By [Dr. Sarda Singh](#)

The Gospel of John brings us to this scene with three small but significant words: “*on the third day*” (John 2:1). For those who hear and meditate on the word of God, this expression is certainly not incidental. The third day is the resurrection day, the day God defeated death and did the impossible by bringing life where there was none. It is a day of miracles. And so, it is entirely true that the beginning of Jesus’s signs—the first miracle recorded in the Scripture as the onset of his glory—should unfold on such a day.

An Invitation to the Wedding

A wedding is one of life’s most radiant occasions. It is a gathering of joy, a celebration of love and covenant, where two people pledge themselves to one another before God and their community. There is a presence of joy and laughter, merriment and feasting, music and dancing. It is a moment of immense pride for the families of the bride and bridegroom. No aspect of the wedding is ignored, and no guest is left without welcome.

It was to such an occasion, in the small town of Cana in Galilee, that Jesus and his disciples were invited. And with them was Mary, the mother of Jesus—her presence in the celebration signifying she was more than a casual guest. She may well have been involved in the preparations or perhaps been a close confidante of the family. Whatever her position in the feast, what is clear is this: she was caring and observing, and when a crisis arose, she knew precisely where to turn to.

The Crisis of Lack

In the midst of the celebration, a quiet crisis was disclosed: the wine had run out. In the culture of the day, this was not a small embarrassment, but hospitality to the guests invited to the wedding was a sacred obligation, and to fail them at such a gathering would bring dishonour upon the entire family. The merriment and rejoicing at the wedding feast could have been soured into shame in a single moment. The very persons gathered to celebrate could have become the spectators of a family’s humiliation.

Mary, watchful of the situation, went straight to Jesus. “*They have no wine*” (John 2: 3), she told him—simply and quietly, without any elaboration. This is the picture of faith at its best: bringing the problem before Jesus and casting it into his hands. She did not ask him what should be done about the situation, nor prescribed any solution to the problem. She simply laid the need at his feet.

Perhaps there are times in our own lives when the wine runs out—when hope fails, resources dwindle, and the joy we had awaited begins to drain away. In such moments, Mary’s instinct should be our solution: bring it to Jesus.

The Response of the Son of God

The reply of Jesus to his mother may appear, at first impression, unexpectedly abrupt: “*Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come*” (John 2: 4). Addressing one’s mother as a “woman” to the modern hearers sounds disrespectful and cold. But we must understand this statement of Jesus through the lens of who Jesus truly is. He is not merely a son; he is the eternal Son of God, and his actions are ruled not by human pressure or authority, but by the sovereign purpose and timing of his Father. He does not move to our demands—he moves in divine appointment.

And yet—observe what Mary does next. She does not plead or argue with him further. She simply turns to her servants and says, “*Do whatever he tells you*” (John 2:5). These words of Mary may be regarded as one of the most faith-filled words she spoke. She did not know what Jesus would do, when or how. But she solely chose to trust in him, to believe that he would act—and that whatever the Son of God says would be worth obeying.

The Obedience That Opened the Miracle

What follows is one of the most powerful illustrations of faith in the entire Gospel. For the Jewish rites of purification, six large stone water jars were kept nearby, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus commanded the servants to fill them with water, and they filled them to the brim. Not halfway. Not just adequate. To the very brim.

These servants fully obeyed the command of Jesus. They did not question, nor did they look at the water jars and asked, “But we need wine, not water.” They did not argue or reason their way out of obedience. In a situation that called for faith rather than doubt, they simply did what Jesus had asked. And their obedience became the means through which the miracle flowed.

Then followed the second instruction: “*Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast*” (John 2: 8). This was the more challenging command. The

master of the feast was the highest-ranking guest present at the wedding and the one responsible for overseeing the celebration. In the moment of wine crisis, bringing him a cup drawn from a water jar could have invited embarrassment, rebuke or worse. But the servants obeyed and carried out what they were told. And when the master of the feast tasted it, it was wine. Not just any simple wine but the finest wine he had ever tasted.

There is a message for us here that reaches beyond the wedding feast in Cana. When we face a crisis or a shortage, when resources are no longer sufficient, when tasks seem impossible, the invitation of Christ is the answer: bring what you have, do what he says, and trust him with the outcome.

The Best Wine, Saved for Last

The master of the feast was amazed. He called the bridegroom aside and said something notable: everyone serves the best wine first, and brings out the cheap wine when the guests' senses are dulled. "*But you have kept the good wine until now*" (John 2: 10). He tasted the best wine but did not know where this wine came from, nor did he have a clue that the Son of God was standing amidst the guests. He had tasted the unmistakable quality of what God had provided.

And comprehend *who* it was that made it. He is Elohim—the Creator God, "*the one who calls into existence things that do not exist*" (Rom. 4: 17). He who created the universe from nothing, who can raise a mighty army from a valley of dry bones, who can cause the very stones to cry out and bring children of Abraham into being—does this God need a single grape to make wine? Does he need seasons to pass or the careful work in the vineyard, and the number of years needed for fermentation in the cellar? The answer is magnificent: No. He is above all things and is not constrained by time, nature or any mechanical processes. He simply spoke the word, and the world came into being—and at the wedding in Cana, he simply turned the water into wine. The finest quality of wine anyone had ever tasted, formed in an instant, without grapes, without a vineyard, without years. This is the God we worship and believe in. He is not limited by what he has to work with. He is not limited by anything at all.

What looked like a moment of public shame or humiliation had been transformed, gently and splendidly, into a moment of great honour for the bridegroom. And this is the way of Jesus. He does not simply fix the problem, but he exceeds our every expectation. He does not merely restore what was lost and leave it there—he adds abundance to it.

The world's way is to offer its best early and leave behind its dregs later. But God's way is to preserve and save the best for those who trust in him. Those who walk with God faithfully through every season of waiting, of difficulty, of pain,

or of apparent lack, will uncover that what God has preserved for them is richer than anything they had planned for themselves.

Invite Him In

The crucial factor in this wedding event is also the simplest one: Jesus was present there. He had been invited to the wedding. And because he was present, a crisis was transformed into a miracle, humiliation was changed to honour, and an ordinary wedding organised at a small town in Galilee became the talk of the town and the stage for the first sign of his glory.

The word of God encourages us to have faith in the Son. Those who put their faith in Jesus will never be put to shame. This promise is meant not just for grand moments of heroic faith. It is also for a quiet crisis—the running out of wine, the running low on strength and courage, the moments and seconds when we are on the verge of shame and do not know where to turn to. Invite him in. Tell him the need. Do what he says.

For wherever the Lord is, there is fullness of joy. And where Jesus is, there is always enough. More than enough. And the finest—his finest or the greatest—is never the first thing spent, but always the gift he has been preserving for the end and the right moment. The best wine came in the end.

“This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” — John 2:11

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