

Text: John 2:1-11

Title: “When Life Runs Out”

INTRODUCTION

Two thousand years ago for the first time the God-Man Jesus Christ set His feet on Planet Earth. For the first 30 years Jesus led a rather hidden life with His earthly mother and father, Mary and Joseph. But then the day came when His public ministry as the Messiah began. First He was baptized by John the Baptist, then later Jesus chose at a plain, ordinary wedding to do something He had never done before ... He performed a miracle. We read about it in John 2, so open your Bibles to that passage. Today I'm beginning a new series of messages where we will study seven miracles that Jesus performed during His earthly ministry and that were specifically recorded in John's Gospel for a purpose. And in John 2 we read about the first of these miracles. Read John 2:1-11.

Now notice that John calls these not just “miracles,” but “miraculous signs.” Why? These miracles were intended to point others to Jesus Christ as the Lord of Creation ... that He had the power to change water to wine ... to turn sickness into health ... to turn stormy seas into calm waters ... to turn death into life. And John recorded these miracles for the same reason Jesus performed these miracles ... to draw people in to see the power of Jesus and believe in Him.

ILLUSTRATION – PHOTO OF SIX FLAGS SIGN – If this afternoon you go out Six Flags you'll probably see this sign. You don't jump up and down and say, “Wow! What a great sign!” You don't just stand there and marvel at the sign then go home (though it might be a good deal cheaper and cooler). No, the sign draws you in. And the miracles that Jesus performed are intended to draw us in to the life-changing person and power of Jesus Christ.

Well let's get to this first miracle. Look at the details in vv.1-2:

John 2:1 - On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,

John 2:2 - and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

So there's a wedding. A wedding in Jesus' day, much like today, was a grand family and community occasion. We're not told why Jesus and His disciples were there. Mary is very much involved, possibly indicating that this was the wedding of a family member or close friend. But Jesus is there.

In biblical times on the night of the wedding ceremony, the groom and his friends would go to the bride's house and they would escort the bride and her attendants in a grand parade to the groom's house for the ceremony and the banquet. This party usually lasted a whole week! It was one of the happiest times in the life of any community. But something happens that mars the happiness of the occasion:

John 2:3a - When the wine was gone...

ILLUSTRATION – Having done hundreds of weddings I've seen just about everything. I've seen the groom faint ... the bride faint ... the preacher faint. Once a tornado came and we had to cut the

wedding short. There never has been a perfect wedding. This was a Jewish wedding, but I couldn't help but think about the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." It was hilarious to see all the things that can go wrong preparing for a wedding. But if you saw the movie, no matter what went wrong the secret to everything, according to the father of the bride, was to squirt some Windex on it.

Something goes wrong at this wedding that mars the happiness of the moment. But then that disaster becomes a platform from which Jesus could display His supernatural power ... so others might believe in Him. Have you stopped to think about the fact that God may have brought a disaster into your life because He intends to use it as a platform from which He will display His glory? Just think about this: The thing that made this wedding, this marriage, memorable was the presence and power of Jesus.

How do we go about clearing the way for Jesus to do His great work in our lives and in our homes?

1. ADMIT THE PROBLEM.

John 2:3 - When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

Literally, "the wine failed." So Mary, the mother of Jesus, comes to Jesus and reports: "They have no more wine..." We're not told why the failure occurs. Was it poor planning or more people showing up than they expected? We're not told. But Mary thought, "No problem. Jesus is here." She admitted the problem, confessed the need and turned it over to Jesus.

You may think, "So what's the big deal here? They've run out of punch ... so what?" Actually, this has the makings of a very embarrassing situation for the family. In biblical times it was a disgrace to not be able to provide for the needs of your guests. Just think how you would feel if you were putting on a wedding reception for a hundred people and the caterer doesn't show up with the wedding cake. That would be pretty embarrassing, wouldn't it? On top of that, in Bible times the presence of wine meant the presence of joy. So the joy was in danger of running out.

The fact is that stuff runs out ... stuff fails. Romance fails. Love fails. Patience fails. Health fails. Careers fail. Happiness fails. And the important thing is to take those failures to Jesus. But the greatest failing we all have is our sin. The Bible says that all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We cannot save ourselves. And the first thing that has to happen for us to experience the change that Jesus wants to make is for us to admit our need for a Savior.

Next, to clear the way for Jesus to do what only He can do...

2. FOLLOW JESUS' PLAN.

The presence of Jesus would have gone unnoticed if they had not humbly admitted the problem. Notice that Mary didn't tell Jesus how to fix the problem. She just admitted it and left in His hands. We like to draw up plans for how God should get us out of our problems. And usually it is a very comfortable, convenient plan for us.

Now notice how Jesus replied to His mother:

John 2:4 - “Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.”

The language Jesus uses here seems a bit formal, doesn't it. When is the last time you called your mom, “dear woman”? And perhaps it seems a bit calloused of Jesus to say, “Why do you involve me? What does this have to do with me?” Jesus is not saying, “It's not my problem; don't bother me.” Actually Jesus is reminding Mary that while she is His earthly mother, His life now is being orchestrated by His heavenly Father. He is living His life on the Father's timetable ... the timetable that would eventually lead Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. Jesus followed the Father's plan and we should follow Jesus' plan.

Mary doesn't argue with Jesus. She simply says to the servants...

John 2:5b - “Do whatever he tells you.”

And if we are to clear the way for Jesus to do what only He can do we have to trust and obey, just like the servants: “Do whatever He tells you to do.” Someone here today is facing a huge dilemma in your life. The best counsel I can give you is, “Do whatever Jesus tells you to do.” Things won't *change* until Jesus is in *charge*. It's faith that lets us say, “Lord, it's in your hands. However you choose to solve this problem will be absolutely right, so I trust You.”

Well John goes on to explain...

John 2:6 - Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

John 2:7 - Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.

John 2:8 - Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so,

Again, notice how they simply obey Jesus. While Jesus is preparing to do the extraordinary, these servants are faithful to go about doing the ordinary things they were told to do. These water jars were not for drinking purposes. Rather they contained water for washing and for purification. When guests came in from off the streets, their feet were filthy and needed to be washed. A servant would use the water in these jars to wash their feet. But Jews also used the water from these jars for ceremonial washings for the purpose of keeping the Law of Moses. Many Jews believed that the hands were to be meticulously washed before and during a meal.

Perhaps Jesus uses these jars of purification water because it would point to the purification from sins that He would accomplish by His death. We all know that our greatest problem is not that we have dirty feet or dirty hands; it is that we have dirty hearts that only Jesus can cleanse by His blood. His death on the cross would replace all the rituals of cleansing that the Law required.

So to clear the way for Jesus to do what He wants to do, admit the need, follow Jesus' plan and then

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3. RECEIVE HIS PROVISION.

Now here's what Jesus does: Somewhere in the midst of the servants quietly obeying the Lord, filling the jars and taking a cup to the master of ceremonies, Jesus did something awesome. He changed the water into wine, just like that. That's how quickly Jesus can change something ... and change *someone*.

John 2:9 - and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside

John 2:10 - and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

The M.C. is impressed. The custom was to give people the good wine at the beginning then, when their palates were less discriminating, you give them the lesser quality stuff.

Listen, with Jesus in control of your life the best is always yet to come. I'm not saying that you'll never get sick or that you'll never have marriage problems or that you'll never have financial needs. I'm saying that as you walk day by day, week by week, year by year with Jesus no matter what happens to you the joy and the strength of Jesus will never fail ... will never run out ... it gets better and better. There are times when we wonder, "Does it get any better than this?" But one day we will arrive in heaven and we will say what the M.C. said, "You have saved the best till now."

Now there's one more thing we must do to clear the way for what Jesus wants to do in our situation:

4. UNDERSTAND HIS PURPOSE.

Now this is the most important part. The hero is not Mary or the groom's family or the servants. The hero in the story is Jesus. And He did what He did not just to save a family from an embarrassing situation ... not just to make a party a little more enjoyable. According to v.11, Jesus did what He did with two very important purposes in mind:

Purpose #1 – To glorify Himself.

John 2:11b - This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory...

Remember, what Jesus does is called a "miraculous sign." The sign itself is not important. What makes the sign important is that it is pointing to something (Someone!) greater ... to our glorious Savior. And whatever else you get out of this today, you should walk away awed by the glory of Jesus ... that He is the God/Man who has supernatural power to alter things in the natural realm. And if He can do that He can change your life. Glory in Jesus.

It's a huge step when we can look at our situations and say, "Lord, I don't like hurting. I don't care for failure. But if that's what it takes for You to get the maximum glory in my life, then may Your will be done."

But there's another purpose in all that Jesus does with us:

Purpose #2 – To fortify your faith

John 2:11b - He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

Now we know that these disciples were new to following Jesus. But going through this situation, and watching Jesus display His power pushed them to the next level of faith ... of trusting Jesus. And God is working in every situation we go through (good or bad) for the purpose of pushing us toward trusting Jesus ... pushing us to the next level in our faith.

Maybe you are stuck at the level you are now because you won't...

- Admit the problem. Is that where you are stuck? Admitting that you're a sinner or that you have failed?
- Follow Jesus' plan. Things won't change until He is in charge.
- Receive the provision of Jesus. Maybe you think you don't deserve it. Receive it by faith.
- Understand His purpose. The things you go through in life will never make sense until you see God's purpose for your life.