

**John 2:1-11**  
**Jesus Is Revealed in the Wine of Cana**  
**1. His obedience is revealed**  
**2. His glory is revealed**  
**3. His love is revealed**  
**January 17, 2016**

*On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."*

*"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."*

*His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*

*Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washings, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.*

*Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.*

*Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."*

*They did so, 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 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."*

*This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him. (NIV84)*

Some people are not real connoisseurs of wine. Oh, they can drink a glass of wine and either say that they like it or that they don't like it. But if you asked them why they did or didn't like it, they give you a deep answer consisting of a shoulder shrug and "Don't know. Tasted good, I guess."

On the other hand, there are those people for whom wine is something to be savored, treasured--something over which to linger. There are people to whom a wine says a lot. By simply tasting a wine, they can describe the wine for you--whether it has a fruity taste, a woody taste (I have yet to learn exactly what that means), whether it's a dry wine (again, another term that seems to make no sense when referring to something you drink). They can even tell you the **character** of the wine. They can tell you if it's "bold" or if it's "subdued."

While some can see all that in a glass of wine, others can see nothing more than a glass of smooched grapes.

Similarly, it is possible to look at today's gospel reading and just see a story of Jesus turning water into wine. But if we look at Cana's wine a little closer, we will see it speak to us. Yes, if we look very closely we can see that in the wine of Cana, Jesus is revealed—his obedience, his glory and power, and his love.

Then we will no longer see a story of a man turning some water into wine, but we will see a story to be savored, treasured, lingered over, a story that tastes as good to our souls as fine wine tastes to our mouths.

**1. His obedience is revealed**

Shortly after Jesus' baptism, he and his disciples made the trip to Cana to attend a wedding.

Wedding celebrations typically lasted a number of days, so they required considerable planning. Apparently someone in charge of planning this wedding had miscalculated either the amount of wine

people would drink or else the number of guests who would be there—because the wine was all gone!

This was a potentially embarrassing situation for the wedding couple. And apparently Mary felt some of that embarrassment for herself--or at least she felt a strong desire to fix the problem for the wedding couple.

So Mary comes to Jesus and says to him, "*They have no more wine.*"

Clearly Mary was not just coming to Jesus to share some interesting news with him about how the reception was going. She was hoping/expecting that Jesus would do something about it. I doubt that she was expecting Jesus and his disciples to go next door to fetch some wine from the neighbors. The servants could have done that.

No, what Mary appears to have been expecting was something out of the ordinary, a miracle. While the Bible gives no indication that Mary had seen Jesus do miracles previously, we can be certain that she knew Jesus was special, that he was the Son of God.

Remember that the Christmas story in Luke 2 concludes by saying that Mary "*treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart*" (Luke 2:19). She thought about everything that had happened and attempted to understand what it all meant. Perhaps also she had heard of the words that God had spoken at Jesus' recent baptism--"*You are my Son, whom I love. With you I am well-pleased.*"

At any rate, underlying Mary's simple statement of fact--"They have no more wine"--was also a suggestion--"Can't you do something about it, my son?"

Jesus' response shows that he recognizes it as a request. But his answer seems unnecessarily harsh. "*Dear woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.*" Especially in light of the fact that Jesus **did** eventually do what his mother had asked, Jesus initially comes off as somewhat petulant--almost like the little child who refuses to carry out his parent's command immediately, waiting instead to show his independence--saying "I'll do it when **I'm** ready."

I think you know exactly what I'm talking about. Those of you who have or had children of your own nod your heads and roll your eyes, because we've seen it from our own children, and we've seen it from ourselves when we were children. Our parents told us to take out the garbage, and for some reason we said, "Later." When they asked us again, we snapped impatiently, "**I told you. I'll do it later. Not!...Now!**"

That was wrong. It was in direct disobedience to God's 4th Commandment, which tells us to honor our father and our mother, to honor those who have authority over us. Neither do we lose that stubborn, individualistic attitude as adults. The government makes a law that says we must wear our seat belts. We roll our eyes and say, "I'll wear a seat belt if **I** want to wear a seat belt." In other words, "What are you—my mother? Mind your own business. I'm in charge here."

In fact, we even do that when it comes to God's commands. God tells us to love one another as Christ has loved us, and we say, "What about me? Hey, I'm making sure I get taken care of first. And **then** I'll see about doing what you say." And sometimes God tells us not to do something, and we do it anyway--for no other reason than that we don't like him running our lives and telling us what to do.

Is that what Jesus is doing here? Telling Mary that she has no business telling him what to do here and that he will do it only when **he** is ready? We instinctively answer "no", certain that Jesus would never disobey his mother, and he would certainly never rebuke her.

And yet that is exactly what is happening here. So does that mean that at Cana, Jesus' disobedience was revealed, and that his failure as our Savior was also revealed? (And make no mistake about it. If Jesus sinned here, even if it was just for a moment with an impulsive "Not now!" that he later corrected, he cannot be our Savior. For God demands perfect obedience.)

No. In fact, it is here that we see his obedience revealed. Mary, his earthly mother, had attempted to give Jesus a task, but God, his heavenly Father, had already given Jesus a mission. And every part of that mission was to take place at an appointed time—a time that was not to be dictated or set by Mary, but by God.

We remember reading a few weeks ago that God sent forth his Son into the world at Christmas--but only "when the time had fully come." Not 10 minutes earlier, and not 10 minutes later. Later on in John's gospel we see some men attempting to capture Jesus. Now we know that Jesus eventually was captured anyway, yet these men were not allowed to capture him. Why? Because the time wasn't right. The Bible says that he was able to escape because *"his time had not yet come."* (John 7:30) For Jesus to allow himself to be captured a year early--even a day early--would have been too soon.

And so it was with Jesus' first miracle. Jesus was born when the time had fully come, Jesus would eventually die when the time had fully come, and now Jesus would reveal his glory only when the time had fully come--and not a moment sooner.

For this reason Jesus had to let Mary know that while he was still her son, when it came to matters pertaining to his calling Mary was not his mother--or at least she had no special claim on him because of that. When it came to matters pertaining to his calling, Mary was just another sinner in need of a Savior.

Rather than being disturbing, then, this exchange between Mary and Jesus should be comforting. We should be comforted as we see Jesus treating his mother with the respect that God says our parents deserve--fulfilling the 4th Commandment that we have not--keeping the law for us. But we should also be comforted as we see that Jesus would let nothing get in the way of obedience to his heavenly Father and obedience to his calling.

Don't think that this was easy for Jesus to do. Don't think that he shook his head in disgust as Mary walked away. No, it must have hurt Jesus to disappoint his mother—even if that disappointment would be brief, and even if that disappointment would be in a relatively minor thing. We know it hurt Jesus because he is a Savior of love. We'll see this more clearly in just a moment.

But for now look at Cana's wine and see your Savior revealed--a Savior who was obedient--to his mother, yes, but also to his calling from God.

## **2. His power to be our Savior is revealed**

Mary humbly accepts Jesus' answer as an answer from the Son of God. She turns to the servants and says to them, "Do whatever he tells you." Realizing that Jesus said, "My time has not **yet** come" she patiently waits for Jesus to fix the problem.

And eventually Jesus does. Nearby were 6 large jars of water--each holding about 20 or 30 gallons. Since there was no indoor plumbing, Jews stored water in these large jars for things such as the washing of feet and for ritual washing associated with the ceremonial laws.

Jesus had the servants fill the jars with water and then take the jars to the head steward, who was in charge of the banquet. By the time the steward tasted the water, it had changed into wine--such good wine, in fact, that the steward was amazed. And so Jesus had performed his first miracle.

There is no way of explaining the transformation of water into wine, and John doesn't feel compelled to apologize for that. Instead, he comes right out and says that it was a miraculous sign. Truly, it was a sign indicating that Jesus was someone special, that Jesus had power from God.

This wasn't the last of Jesus' signs. Jesus would give many more indications that he was God. In fact, John says later in his gospel that many of Jesus' miracles are not recorded. But the ones that **are** recorded continually reveal Jesus' power and glory. That power revealed when we look into Cana's wine was shown fully in a most unpowerful-looking scene. After 33 years of obeying not only the 4th, but every commandment that we had not kept, after 33 years of obedience in our place, Jesus was placed on a cross to suffer for our sins. The power which Jesus used to change water into wine at Cana was used to change sinners into saints. Not all the blood of beasts on Israel's altars slain had been powerful enough to give the guilty conscience peace or wash away the stain. But Jesus was. Jesus is powerful enough to take away your sins and my sins.

Not only is he powerful enough to defeat sin, but he's also powerful enough to defeat death for us. On Easter morning, Jesus showed his power by rising from the dead. And because Jesus' power was able to do that, he is able to be our Savior from both sin and death. That power that was first revealed in the wine of Cana was revealed again at a tomb near Jerusalem and will be revealed again when he returns in all his power and glory to take us to be with him.

### 3. His love is revealed

Still, Cana was kind of a strange place for his first miracle—such a tiny town. And water into wine was kind of small potatoes compared to walking on water or healing the blind. Considering that this was going to be Jesus' first miracle, the first sign he would perform to show himself as the promised Messiah, why didn't he “go bigger?” Why did he waste his first miracle in such an insignificant town—and on such an unimportant problem? While The Wedding Day and all that goes with it—the type of cake, the seating arrangements, and so on—seem of monumental importance at the time, we later realize that they were pretty insignificant in the grand cosmic scheme of things.

And so was running out of wine a little early.

But it was important to Jesus. Jesus saw people who were suffering—a very minor suffering to be sure, but suffering nonetheless. So he moved to fix their problem. Why? Because Jesus our Savior is a Savior of love.

Take a closer look at Cana's wine and you can see Jesus' love. What does this mean for us--that Jesus would take time to help a couple who was facing the embarrassment of being poor hosts--something that was just a speck in the grand cosmic scheme of things? To state it real simply, *"Cast all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you."* (1 Peter 5:7) Maybe you hear that passage and you fix on the word "cares." Or maybe “for you.” Those are important and comforting words.

But don't forget to also focus on the word "all."

Bring all your cares to Jesus. All of them. Yes, come to him in prayer concerning your faith. Yes, come to him in prayer concerning your children's faith. But come to him in prayer also that your boss would grant you your two weeks vacation for the weeks you have chosen. Pray that the post office would still be open when you get there. Pray that your headache would go away. And if you're hosting a party and you're running out of food much faster than the party is running out of time, pray that the food would last. Pray for all these things, for Cana's wine reveals Jesus' love.

Seeing all this, do as the disciples did at the end of our reading. It says that they put their faith in him. When you pray to him--even for little things, put your faith in the love revealed at Cana. When the guilt of your sins weighs you down, put your faith in the obedience he revealed at Cana--obedience which has become ours through faith. When the fear of death and hell shake you, put your faith in the power Jesus revealed at Cana--a power that has defeated death and hell, a power that has given you eternal life. Amen.