

THE HOME IN CANA TO SHOW HIS SPLENDOR

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Christians would like to know more of the bridal couple who invited Jesus to their wedding. Were they young or middle-aged, relatives or neighbors of Mary, and why did they include the disciples who probably were strangers? John wrote, "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there." She did not need an invitation! That fact invited investigation, for evidently Mary was not a guest. Today such a person would either be a caterer, a coordinator in charge of proceedings, or a reporter authorized to collect facts and take photographs for publication or family pleasure. The fact that Mary's presence was announced without explanation might indicate she was a trusted and loyal friend of one of the families. Either the bride, the groom, or both, wanted her to share their special day.

If Mary was an intimate friend or relative of the family, it may be assumed the couple also knew Jesus. He was known to be a carpenter, who perhaps had already made a wedding gift for the bride and groom. Marriages in Palestine were celebrated by festivities that continued for several days, and guests were invited to stay as long as possible. At that time Jesus had four disciples; Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathaniel, who also were "called to the wedding" (see John 1:40, 47-49). Jesus and His followers appeared to be inseparable, but it is not known if Mary had any part in inviting additional guests.

John's description of the wedding was significant. He believed that during the proceedings Jesus "manifested forth his glory" (John 2:11). The happy bride and groom were not aware of the fact, but their wedding had been planned in heaven before they were born. Jesus had already decided to use the occasion to reveal the glory He shared with His Father before time began (see John 17:5). The Lord had not previously been the great Physician. He was more like a graduate from God's School of Medicine about to embark upon a career, meeting His first patients. Circumstances were about to destroy the happiness of two special people, but the Savior intervened to make the event a very memorable occasion.

Many problems perplex Christians, but blessed are they who share their emergencies with the Son of God. When Jesus solved the problem at the wedding, it became evident He always gave

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more than He received. No home was impoverished when He was there.

His Presence Was Requested... A Gracious Desire

What might have happened if the Savior had not been present at that wedding? Thrills would have been replaced by embarrassment and delights by disappointments. The neighbors would have remembered the lack of wine rather than the love of a woman. It is commendable when believers invite the Lord to share their sorrow, but it is even more so when Christ is invited—not for what He might give, but for what He might receive from us. Jesus was pleased to give His benediction to those about to be joined in matrimony. Many years have passed since that memorable occasion, but He has not changed. He said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Tertullian, one of the early church leaders, believed that promise related to the Christian family. He interpreted the statement as "When two (the husband and wife) or three (their child) are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." All young people should remember that Jesus loves to attend weddings.

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Unless a marriage is solemnized in the presence of Christ and thereafter life revolves around Him, the union may quickly deteriorate. It is a cause for regret that many modern marriages end within months. When the fascination of wedlock wears off and participants become attracted to others, matrimonial vows are quickly forgotten. Young people see no need for wedding ceremonies and are content to live together. They believe the money saved can be used to furnish a home. If their marriage fails, they can separate and save the money necessary to make divorce legal! This indicates moral decay within a nation. When parents pray with their children, the danger of disintegration within the family is minimized, and the future filled with prospect and hope. Conversion follows when people invite Christ into their hearts. Contentment is preserved when the Savior is given first place in their homes. The couple in Cana of Galilee recognized this fact, and Jesus probably was high on the list of friends invited to the marriage.

His Power Was Recognized... A Great Discernment

It should be remembered that prior to this wedding, as far as is known, Jesus had not performed any public miracles. Mary had

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lived with Him for thirty years, and what she witnessed enabled her to believe the Lord could do the impossible. When she became aware of the predicament in the kitchen, she hastened to Jesus to share the news of the embarrassing situation. Although He made no promise to intervene, she looked into His eyes and was assured He could not remain indifferent to the problem. Her statement to the servants was inspired by faith. She said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5). Her range of possibilities defied limitation. Had the Lord commanded the most outrageous thing, Mary, though puzzled, would have said, "do it." Faith and doubt cannot live together; one will destroy the other.

Mary believed her Son could do the impossible, but He needed human cooperation. Obedience is the introduction to overcoming. When the servants had filled the pots, the water in the well became wine, and they continued to draw until every need was supplied. If they had ceased their efforts, guests would have remained thirsty. God placed wine in the well, but the servants had to take it out. The great Physician may supply medicine, but His patients must take it!

Many years later when John reminisced and described that first miracle, he said, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory" (John 2:11). The author of the first gospel saw in the event much more than the solving of a temporary problem. He saw this display as an indescribable attribute which Jesus had from eternity. The Lord possessed something which He shared with God from earth's earliest ages. The word glory is a diamond with many facets. It might be expressed as excellence, majesty, brightness, or effulgence. It is impossible to comprehend everything about God, but whatever is found in the Almighty can be seen in the Lord Jesus Christ. John believed this display of everlasting excellence was visible during the wedding in Cana.

The apostle suggested that Mary alone was aware of this possibility. She knew beforehand what He was able to accomplish. They had lived in the same home for thirty years, and what she saw during that time influenced her outlook. Her Son was capable of doing the impossible. When the governor of the feast praised the quality of the wine, Mary quietly said, "I knew He could do it." Faith brings its own reward. No one can live close to Jesus and remain unaware of His capabilities.

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His Provision Was Remarkable. . . A Glorious Discovery

"When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (John 2:9-10). Three details deserve consideration.

(1) The Pertinent Question. The logic of the governor's comment should be a warning to all alcoholics. It drew attention to the indisputable fact that when men "have well drunk" their minds cannot differentiate between good and evil; even cheap liquor may seem an excellent vintage. The ruler of the feast, who probably had supervised many wedding receptions, instantly recognized the difference in procedure. For some inscrutable reason, the best wine was now inferior. This new refreshment presented to the guests superseded anything produced by the local wineries. The governor was amazed and desired to know why the usual custom had been reversed. Unaware of the miracle, he could not be expected to know that anything supplied by the Savior surpassed everything produced by man.

(2) The Pleasing Quality. "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." It has been reported that when John Wesley was a student, he was required to write about the miracle at Cana. His mind would not respond and, with only a few moments left, Wesley wrote, "The wine looked at Jesus and blushed." The human mind is unable to comprehend the unlimited power of the Lord; how He changed the water into wine is as mystifying as how He placed billions of worlds in space. Yet one thing is evident—His wine was not fermented. It was the pure juice of grapes, something which would never impair the faculties of men and women. When Peter and his colleagues preached on the day of Pentecost, the people "were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, what meaneth this? Others mocking said: These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, Be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day" (Acts 2:12-15). That display of spiritual power was not the product of troubled minds. The preachers were not drunkards, but God-fearing citizens

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who had met the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit had given them a degree of happiness which, like the wine at Cana, could only be supplied by Christ.

(3) The Perfect Quantity. Some commentators believe Jesus filled seven pots with wine. A careful consideration of the Scriptures may negate that idea. When the Savior said, "Draw out now, He might have been referring to the well which in all probability was in the courtyard of the home. The servants had already filled six large pots, for the water was used in ceremonial washings before and after meals. A firkin equals about nine gallons, and thus each container held between 18 and 27 gallons. The total capacity of the six waterpots would be approximately 140 to 150 gallons. That these were empty at this time would suggest a large number of diligent guests and an unknown number of careless servants! The men had been drawing water from the well and probably continued to do so. It is hard to believe that good wine would be wasted on

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ceremonial observances. Yet before the wedding terminated, more water would be needed. Possibly Jesus commanded the servants to fill the waterpots for two reasons: (1) that water would be available from the stone jars when only wine was being drawn from the well and (2) that faith is hardly faith until it is tested and proved to be true. Even the servants had to exercise faith before the miracle became a reality. The well continued to produce wine as long as it was needed; afterward everything reverted to pattern. One wonders what connection might be made between this verse and its predecessor in Isaiah 23:3, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of God's salvation."

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