

Weddings. Two ½ years ago, I traveled to Kalamazoo Michigan for my daughter Carolyn's wedding. The rehearsal dinner was held on a Friday night at the Spring Lake Yacht club. My future son-in-law's father and mother paid for the dinner. It was a good time to meet my son-in-law's side of the family. We stayed that night in a Spring Lake area motel. On Saturday morning, we drove to Kalamazoo. We checked in to a downtown hotel. My wife then was gone for a time as she helped my daughter get ready. Several hours before the wedding we traveled by a bus limo to the Kellogg Manor House located on Gull Lake. Pictures were taken. We did a rehearsal of what would happen. Then it came time for me to walk with my daughter from the Manor House, down a stone stairway, to the lakefront where the altar was set up facing the lake. It was a perfect day. The string quartet played the processional and recessional, a soloist sang a number. After the service, we traveled up the steps to the Manor house for hors-d'oeuvres and drinks. Then it was off to a large tent for a meal, and dancing. Sparti, the Michigan State mascot was on the dance floor. I was very nervous about the Father Daughter dance. But let me tell you, I just went around in circles and it was over before I knew it. I have performed a lot of weddings in my career as a pastor, but I have to say, this was the nicest wedding I ever attended in my life. I had saved for this wedding for several years. But the amount my wife and I put it, only paid for a portion of the wedding. My daughter and son-in-law picked up a good portion of the tab, and my son-in-law's father paid for all the beverages. Let's just say the wedding wasn't cheap.

I guess we would say my daughter's wedding celebration lasted 3 days. Friday night, through Sunday noon. But if you thought my daughter's wedding was fancy, you should have been around in the days of Jesus. Did you know back then a wedding celebration lasted 7 days. You had a big procession going around the town, and then traveled from the bride's house to the groom's house for a 7 day celebration. I have trouble with company staying over for 3 days, but 7 days. In addition, you had to feed that group food every day, and have plenty of wine on hand.

And you know it was very important back then, as it is today, to have things run smoothly. No snafus. But a major snafu occurred at the wedding in Cana. For some reason, they ran out of wine. Wine was crucial, not for drunkenness, but for what it demonstrated. The presence of wine stated that this was a special day and that all the guests were special guests. It was considered an insult to the guests if the host ran out of food or wine.

How could this happen? Remember these wedding celebrations went on for up to a week. Maybe the couple was poor and could not afford enough wine. Maybe the disciples and Jesus were unexpected guests that they hadn't counted on. Whatever the reason, Mary comes to Jesus, expecting him to do something about it. She says to Jesus, "They have no more wine". Jesus responds back, "Why do you involve me in this? My time has not yet come!"

In essence Jesus is saying, "What common interest do we have in my activity here?" Mary was speaking as his mother, "Heh Jesus, help me avoid embarrassment and dissatisfaction among the guests. Jesus was speaking as the long awaited Messiah. "I am looking for ways to show the world I am the Messiah, the Son of God. I want to strengthen my disciples in their trust in me." So you see, although their purposes were different, a miracle here would satisfy Mary's need as well.

Herein we learn our first truth. Mary took the problem to Jesus before she took it

to anyone else. She trusted Jesus and knew that He would help her with her problems. What causes us to think of prayer to Jesus as the last option rather than the first? I can think of two reasons: feelings of independence and insignificance. Sometimes we're independent. We can handle our own life. We will use our power and resources to get us out of this mess. We are self-centered. This spirit that we find in us, shows clearly that we are sinners. We don't want to always give glory to God. We want to handle life our way. But through the snafus and troubles that come our way, God wants to show us the world is broken, out of sync with Him. God wants us to recognize in our troubles in life, how desperately we need Him.

Another reason why we may not run first to Jesus for help is that we feel insignificant. We think, "Sure, Mary can take her problems to Jesus. She's his mother. He doesn't want to hear my problems. I mean, he's got a universe to run. He's got planets to keep balances and presidents and kings to watch over. He's got wars to deal with and famines to fix. Who am I to tell him about my problems?"

I'm glad you asked. Let me tell you who you are. You are an heir of God and co-heir with Christ. You are eternal like an angel. You have a crown that will last forever. You are a holy priest, a treasured possession. You were chosen before the creation of the world. You are destined for praise, fame, and honor, and you will be a holy people to the Lord your God. But more than any of the above-more significant than any title or position-is the simple fact that you are God's child. The Bible says in I John, "The Father has loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children." That's why Jesus, the Son of God came. He came to restore us to the family of God. He came so we could once again be children of God.

Jesus performed this first miracle for the same reason he performed all of his miracles. Sure, he was showing us that it's good to have compassion or that we should help the poor and the sick and weak. But that's not why Jesus performed miracles. Jesus performed miracles to back up his message. Jesus performed miracles to prove who he was. Jesus performed miracles to authenticate his claims to be the promised Messiah and the Son of God.

**II.** We all know what it's like to feel like Mary did at this wedding. She seems to be so consumed by the physical need for wine at this wedding that she apparently lost track of the real reason Jesus had come. It's interesting that no one asked Jesus to officiate at this wedding. We don't hear of anyone asking him to say a prayer or give a blessing. We don't hear about Jesus delivering a message of encouragement from Scripture to the newlyweds. It would appear that Jesus was simply asked to attend as a friend. But then when they ran out of wine (oh no, end of the world), then they sought out Jesus and his divine help.

We've been there before. We get so busy. Work, work, work. We have places to go, people to see, things to do. Even in retirement in the Villages our schedule can become full with activity after activity.

But then we get sick. Then our relative gets cancer. Then we find ourselves in dire financial straights. So we turn to Jesus. Now don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with looking to Jesus for help with the problems we face in this world. But why do we so often only remember Jesus when we really need him? Why do we so often only have time for Jesus when we want something from him? If I had a nickel for every time on my visits someone has told me, "Well things are going well right now, I don't really need

church,” or “I’m pretty busy and don’t have time for church right now,” or on the flipside, “Yeah, life has been tough. I really need Jesus in my life right now” . . . if I had a nickel for each time I heard something like that, I don’t think we would need to worry too much about paying for an addition to Open Bible.

Yet that’s why Jesus came in the first place. He came because we are sinners who are selfish, and so busy with our own personal recreation and pleasure. He came because we have fallen short of his glory. He came because we often let other things become more important in our lives. He came because we needed him to save us. How reassuring, then, is the Gospel today! Today we see Jesus show he has awesome *power*. If Jesus has power to turn water into wine to prove He is God, then suddenly his death on the cross has much more meaning. This wasn’t some nice guy who made a nice gesture by dying on a cross. This was the Son of God on the cross. This was the Son of God who came to rescue his people from their sins. This was the Son of God who came to crush Satan and destroy death. And if the Son of God died on that cross, then surely he was able to carry our sins. Then surely his death grants forgiveness and salvation. Then surely his promise of eternal life will come true.

At the wedding at Cana we see a loving Jesus who was willing to help out with a worldly need by providing some wine. But more importantly, we see Jesus show that he truly is our God and our Savior. **III.** This wedding at Cana has even more meaning for us today. By proving his power as God and Savior, Jesus also proved that he has the power to help us in our everyday lives. (No, I’m not saying that if you run out of drinks during your Super Bowl party you should pray really hard and then Jesus will turn your water into Pepsi and Yyling or some stones into chips and chicken wings.)

But Jesus does and will listen to things you ask for according to his will. Jesus promised, **“I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”** So if you want stronger faith, if you want wisdom, if you want a better understanding of the Bible, if you want more patience, if you want to be filled with more love—Jesus will give you those things. When you are in constant contact with him and his Word, Jesus has shown he has the power to give you those very things. He has the power to help. He has the power to heal. He has the power to give strength and courage. Today we see Jesus that he can help us with any and every need in our lives.

So go ahead. Tell Jesus what hurts. Talk to Him. He won’t turn you away. He won’t think its silly. Let us approach his throne with confidence. He is the Son of God. He is the Messiah. Has your joy run out today? Jesus wants to transform you! Bring your need to him! Jesus will supply you with what you need for the situation, even more than you ask for. Amen.