

Chapter 12

Jesus at the Marriage Feast in Cana

John 2 vv 1-11

Three hours walk to the North of Nazareth lies the town of Cana. Cana is but a small town, and its inhabitants are not rich.

In one of the houses on a certain day there is a scene of bustling activity, for a marriage feast is being held.

In the land of Canaan these marriage feasts lasted seven or fourteen days. You can well understand that everything had to be prepared days in advance for the coming feast. Bread and fruit, meat and wine were bought and prepared. So of course, all this took place at this marriage too.

Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus had evidently gone a few days beforehand to Cana, to help out. Whether her husband, Joseph, was then still alive, we do not know, but since we never hear any more about him, he was probably already dead. Whatever the case, Mary was there present. Many writers say that the bride and bridegroom were relations of Mary.

Since they were not rich people, there was not a great flood of provisions. Just enough for the guests who had been invited.

Suddenly they hear that the Lord Jesus has returned. But He does not return alone, no, He brings five men with Him. They are the five disciples who follow Him. They have come along with Him.

In the last chapter we told you how the Lord Jesus had called those disciples to Him.

They were John and Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael. Nathanael was no stranger in Cana, for that was his birthplace. The Lord Jesus has come out of Judea into Galilee.

When they hear that Jesus is again in the vicinity they invite Him and his five disciples.

The Lord Jesus does not decline the invitation, but goes along with His five disciples.

How surprised His disciples must have been. Their former master, John the Baptist, lived so differently. He had pointed again and again to their sins. He had preached continually "Repent ye". He had fasted much, which means that sometimes he did not eat for a whole day. He had shown them the Lamb of God. Now they are with the King of kings and he goes straight away to a wedding feast.

Yet they accompany Him. So it is that six extra guests appear suddenly at the wedding feast. They had evidently not allowed for this in purchasing provisions.

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Look, there they are in the house, at the marriage feast, a happy company together. No, it was not a godless wedding feast, for Jesus was in their midst.

O, boys and girls, in our land too, many wedding feasts are celebrated, but often the devil and not the Lord Jesus is invited. Very often drunkenness and all sorts of godlessness prevail.

# THE BIBLE HISTORY TOLD TO OUR CHILDREN

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There is frequently toasting and dancing until late at night. Many a time things happen there which are unseemly: Have you ever been to such a wedding? - I hope not. Certainly a wedding is not a funeral. Gaiety may indeed be expected but then becoming gaiety. It must always be such that Jesus too can be in the midst.

In Cana then, they were celebrating this wedding joyfully and happily. They were drinking wine. And why not? Wine may indeed be used, but never misused.

At a certain stage the wine is all finished, there is no more. That is really a disgrace for the family. It seems that they had not bought enough. And there is evidently no money to buy new wine.

Mary, the mother of the Lord, knows that the wine is all gone. She finds it annoying. She is ashamed of what the other guests will think.

Close to Mary, perhaps next to her, sits the Lord Jesus.

Suddenly, a wonderful thought comes into Mary's heart. Her Child is the King of kings, the Son of God, the Almighty.

The prophet Elisha had once, centuries ago, wonderfully helped a poor widow woman. From a small cruse of oil, many large cruses had then been filled to the brim, so that that widow was relieved at once of all her troubles and needs.

Oh, if only that could happen here too, how wonderful that would be. The Lord Jesus can do it. Mary doesn't doubt this for a moment. Do you know what she will do? ... She will suggest it to Him, she will give him a quiet hint.

She leans over to Him and whispers softly "They have no wine". She means by that, "Come now, give us thy aid. Give thou us wine.

Perform a miracle". Oh, Mary so much wants the Lord Jesus to let it be seen who He is.

And what does the Lord Jesus say in answer? Just read it. In God's Word, it says that He answered "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

Should the Lord Jesus say such a thing? Are you allowed to say "Woman" to your mother? No, surely, - that would be disgraceful. That would be rude. But can Jesus then say to His mother "Woman"? Is that not rude?

No, boys and girls the Lord Jesus is not being rude here. That He never was, and neither is He now.

But Mary does something here which she should not do. She must learn, that the Lord is not her servant. The Lord Jesus is in His Father's service. This has nothing whatever to do with Mary. That is why the Lord Jesus speaks thus. No, He does not say it impolitely, but in a friendly way. Neither does He say, "I will not do it" but He says "Mine hour is not yet come".

So then, Mary does not get angry, but she still hopes that Jesus will help. Just hear what she says to the servants. - "Whatsoever be saith unto you, do it." In other words "If Jesus should command you to do something, then don't refuse, but obey Him immediately."

Then she waits, her heart doubtless trembling with suspense.

And... Jesus will not betray her confidence.

The bride and bridegroom are very embarrassed. The wine is all gone and they have no money to buy new. They do not know what to do. The happiness of the feast is disturbed.

All, of a sudden the servants set to work

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diligently. What are they doing now?

In that house, apparently close to the door, stand six large stone waterpots. The water which they contained served to keep everything clean, to purify things. These stone pots are now empty however.

Then the Lord Jesus says to the servants, "Fill the waterpots with water."

They obey at once. In those days there were no water pipes, so they drew water from a well or a spring and poured it into those empty pots. Before long they are filled to the brim. The servants do not ask "Why must we do that?", but they do it. When they have finished, they tell Jesus.

Then the Lord commands them to draw a little out and to take it to the governor of the feast. The governor was a man who looked after everything at such a wedding. So the governor ruled the whole feast. At our weddings there is frequently such a man too, but we do not call him the "governor", but the "master of ceremonies".

Again the servants obey at once.

But ... why must the man have water? He needs wine not water. There is plenty of water but far too little wine.

Look, there they go with a drop of water towards the governor. When they get close to him however, it is no longer water. In that short interval the water has been changed to wine. And not only that little sample which they bear, but the water in the pots too has changed into wine.

Oh, children, see here a proof of God's almighty power. Men cannot do such a thing, God only can.

The governor tastes it .... tastes it again Mmmm ...! Lovely!

He goes at once to the bridegroom and says astonished "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."

When the Lord Jesus gives something, then He gives something good, yes, then He vouchsafes us the very best. That is what has happened here. Now, there is all of a sudden plenty of wine. In those waterpots stand several gallons of the best wine, ready for use. There is an abundance.

How happy were the bride and bridegroom. Jesus has helped, miraculously. They had not expected this.

The disciples and the other guests soon notice what has happened. With what amazement they must have observed all these things.

It says in God's Word that the disciples believed in Him. Now they see that they have not deceived themselves, but that He is in truth the Son of God.

Yet Jesus did not do this merely to save that bridal pair from embarrassment. He did it for another reason.

"He manifested forth His Glory." He will show the Jewish people through signs and wonders that He, and none other, is the Messiah.

But we too can learn something from this. We too can ask the Lord Jesus for things in our normal daily life. Are you in need of something? Bend your knees, and ask if He will give it. Certainly, we sometimes ask for things which could be bad for us. They would not be to our profit, but, for our ruin. Yes, in such cases the Lord does not give it.

But if we ask Him in humility for

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something which is for our profit and God's honour, then He will hear and answer.

That is what the Lord Jesus did in Cana

too. There He used His power to increase the festive joy.

This is the first miracle which Jesus did.