What Comes Next?

What Comes Next for You?

Marriages, like new years, are in a sense a fresh start. Obviously for most, marriages have a far more profound impact on one's life than a random new year, but you cannot know what a new year brings until you have gone through it. The coming year can completely turn your world upside down or have the feel of your past few years. Our text today describes a wedding but as we look at it, you will see that it was not an ordinary wedding and it probably was not the sort of start to a marriage the young couple expected. We cannot say what your new year will bring you, but if you put it in God's hands, it too can have the miraculous in it like this wedding did. Here is our big idea. Be excited this year about what the salvation of Christ will bring you.

John 2 provides a clear cut answer to the question that springs out of John 1. "What did the Word become flesh come to do?" We find out in John 2. The first part of it is the account of a crisis. **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."** (John 2 :1-3 NIV) Jesus and His mother and His disciples were invited to a wedding in Cana, a small town nine miles north of Nazareth, Jesus' hometown. Weddings of virgins were on a Wednesday and wound up being a seven day event. Friends of the groom brought the bride in a procession to the groom's house where a feast took place. But at this particular wedding, something humiliating occurred. The groom ran out of wine. Mary, who it would seem had some sort of important connection to the groom's family, brought Jesus over to do something about this. Keep in mind that it would have been a quite distressing circumstance for the groom and the bride too. In a small town where everyone knew everyone else, the couple would have been mocked throughout the region and perhaps for generations as the ones who could not provide enough wine for everyone at the party.

Notice that Mary did not explicitly ask Jesus for anything. She simply pointed out the terrible situation to Him. Jesus though read the room. He knew what His mother wanted. More wine from Him. Did Mary expect a miracle was required? Of course she did. Certainly He did not have the money to step in and fund the party. What He did have though was the power of God in Him. Jesus' response to Mary is fascinating. **"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."** (John 2 :4 NIV) Literally, He tells her, **"What to me and to you woman? My hour is not yet here."** At first this sounds quite disrespectful, calling His mother "woman". Keep in mind the movement of language and culture. This was Jesus' normal, polite way of addressing the women He came upon during His three years of ministry. What is more pertinent here is Jesus making it clear this was not His hour. In John's Gospel, the hour was the time of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection and when that would take place was up to God the Father and not Mary. Jesus was not the master of His fate, and neither was anyone else including Pontius Pilate, the High Priest Caiaphas or the crowd of hateful Jews calling for Jesus' crucifixion. It was all in the Father's hands, what He did and what happened to Him. Jesus was not willing to let anyone, not even His own mother stand in the way of the Father's plans for Him.

When you consider this new year, the biggest question before you is this. "What does God plan on doing with me this year?" He may not tell you and He probably won't, but this is your opportunity to trust Him in whatever it might be. Mary, who gloriously took the great leap of faith and trusted God to take care of her when the angel announced she as a virgin would give birth to God's Son, now practiced confidence in God's Son. Notice carefully Mary's reaction to Jesus' response to her unspoken request. **His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."** (John 2 :5 NIV) Mary was absolutely certain Jesus would take care of the matter of the groom not having any wine for the guests. She had no idea what He would do but was confident the Christ would make sure there was more wine. That's why she ordered the servants at the party to follow Jesus' directions, whatever they might be. Her faith was in Jesus. Mary is not equal to Jesus in authority nor is she ever someone we are to go to in prayer. But we can follow her example here. What will Jesus do with you this year? You do not know. But have faith in Him that He will make things right for you, take care of you, protect you and bless you.

We know what Jesus then did. He turned the water into wine. There are two details about this sign to us that must be noticed. First, Jesus, when He told the servants to fill the six great water containers with water, He insisted they fill them to the brim. **Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.** (John 2 :7 NIV) There was to be no room for anything but water getting into the 25 gallon stone jars. There is something

wonderfully beautiful about this and you must make note of it. The servants did exactly what Jesus told them to do and left no doubt about their loyalty to His word. Many are halfway Christians. They follow the Bible when it seems reasonable to them, when it is in their best interest, when it is convenient, when it works out for them. But to go all the way, to make sure they are completely aligned with God and what He wants, they don't. You can take this as you will but if you want miracles in your life, if you want to see God working in you, doing what is clearly Him and no one else, then you cannot be a halfway Christian. There would have been no water turned into wine if these servants just filled the jars part way, if they left some room for something else in those jars. There is a point when you have to decide if you want God to do what only He can do in your life. If you decide you will only obey Him some, only just a bit, then don't expect a miracle, don't expect the working of God in you that transforms your life. You must do what God tells you to do if you are to live supernaturally, fully in the working of God in you.

One more detail in this passage to note. The headwaiter, whose job it was to maintain the stock of food and wine for the party, tasted the wine Jesus miraculously made from the water in the water pots the servants filled. He did not know Jesus supernaturally turned the water into wine, but the servants did, the disciples did, Mary did because they were all watching. He tasted it and made this astounding observation. **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."** (John 2 :7-10 NIV) Anything God does in your life is far superior to anything you might do on your own. You cannot find a counselor who can accomplish what He can in you. You cannot find a financial advisor who can accomplish what He can in you. When Jesus takes on your personality, your life, if you by faith let Him have His way in you, He will make miraculous changes in you that will make you gasp, make you look back in awe. When the Lord told me to leave behind my plans for the future and make a career out of following Him, I went two years to a private college and then seven years to graduate school without any financial support from my family. I left school with only $600 in loans which I paid off in a month. Was it because I smartly managed my finances? No. Was it because I received an inheritance? No. It was because Jesus Christ turned my poverty into provision. God will turn your life into perfect peace and joy if you let Him be in charge of you. You must obey Him moment by moment, day by day and trust Him to lead you in all you do. But if you do so, He will work a miracle in you too, just as He did in that little village in Cana so long ago. Take to heart the hope you have in Jesus and His salvation. Once again, here is our big idea for the day. Be excited this year about what the salvation of Christ will bring you. You future is bright with Jesus Christ in charge of it.