

8. Ordinary to Extraordinary

October 24, 2010

Wedding is great in general sense – a man and woman who love each other enough to make a promise to spend the rest of their lives together, hopefully, in the presence of their families, friends and others. However, this joyful wedding day can be extremely stressful. Ask any bride and bride’s family, oh yeah, and her soon-to-be-husband. So many details, months of planning for the wedding dress, tuxedo, flowers, invitations, guests, wedding ceremony location, foods, music, photos, videos, and a pastor (not important, but it is nice to have one) to officiate the ceremony, etc.

There is not one bride who doesn’t hope that everything is PERFECT on her wedding day. But every single wedding ceremony and reception has one uninvited guest – the Murphy’s Law – “Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.”

I am sure that everyone of you can tell me your own version of the Murphy’s Law during your wedding or someone else’s, or the ones from the America’s Funniest Home Video” programs.

I believe that it was Ogden Nash, late American poet, who said, “To keep your marriage brimming with love in the loving cup, when you’re wrong, admit it; and when you’re right, shut up.” A very wise man.

This morning we are going to be a group of unseen guests of this joyful wedding that almost was going to be a total embarrassment to the bride and groom families.

A. JESUS AT THE WEDDING

John 2:1-2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

In chapter 1, we find Jesus traveling from the Jordan river to the Sea of Galilee to recruit His disciples. By now, He has John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael as His disciples.

Chapter 2 begins with the words “On the third day.” This raises the question: “The third day of what?” If you trace John’s narrative in chapter 1, the chronology may become a little clearer. The first day of the account is found in v19; the second day in v29; the third in v35; the fourth in v43. So chapter 2’s third day is the third day after Philip’s and Nathanael’s conversion in 1:43-51.

And this wedding day was Wednesday. I know, I know what you are thinking right now – “How do you know that for sure, preacher?” I am glad that you are thinking that question. You see, the typical ancient Jewish wedding should be done on Wednesday according to their tradition.

Many unbelievers and even some believers think that to be a real Christian you have to a boring, stoic, no fun-loving individual with the facial expression that you would have right after you gulp down a gallon of lemon juice. No sirree! If Jesus was that way, they would not invite “Jesus-the-party-pooper” to their wedding. I am a firm believer that Jesus was just fun to be around, don’t you think? Well, if you are a legalist, you wouldn’t like Jesus. The Pharisees didn’t like Him either.

The first event after the creation of the Universe was a wedding ceremony for Adam and Eve at the Garden of Eden according to Genesis 2. The first miracle by our Lord Jesus when He started His public ministry on earth was at a wedding in Cana. The first event in heaven after the fall of the demonic kingdom Babylon on earth will be the marriage supper of the Lamb according to Revelation 19. That is for the groom Jesus and the bride which is the church of Jesus Christ. Don't tell me these are coincidence. Not!

B. WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU, DO IT

John 2:3-5 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." 4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Running out of wine would be a major disaster in Jewish wedding. It would be considered a total social disgrace that would be talked about by the entire town. This would haunt the newly married couple all their lives. Yes, the Murphy's Law kicked in there, too, by the providential will of God.

In my guess, I wouldn't be surprised if this wedding was for someone who was a relative or a son of a friend of Mary, Jesus' mama. Because of two things:

- 1) During that time, the groom's family took care of the entire expenses of the wedding ceremony and reception which often lasted a week.
- 2) Mary was working behind the scene to know that they ran out of wine.

Why did Mary come to Jesus to tell Him that they ran out of wine? Did she expect Him to jump on His 4 wheel drive chariot and run down to a Jewish WalMart to buy some more wine? I believe that she was expecting Him to do something spectacular since she knew that He was the Son of God.

By the miracles of Jesus, Mary was hoping that she would be vindicated. Throughout all her life since the visit by the Angel Gabriel and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, she was known to be a immoral woman who got pregnant before her marriage.

To her surprise, Jesus answered her differently.

John 2:4 Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

First of all He called His earthly mom, "woman". Some of you ladies might think that it is not nice of Him to address her that way. It was not an insult. If we can translate this in a proper sense, it would be, "Ma'am." He called her "Ma'am" instead of 'mother.' What He tried here was to let her know that their 'mother – Son' relationship had changed to 'a sinner – the Savior' relationship.

I asked you to note the word 'hour'. Jesus lived on a 'heavenly timetable,' marked out for Him by the Father. The entire earthly life of Jesus had one purpose and one purpose only – to save the eternally dying human race. In other words, everything He did was leading up to the cross.

Matthew 26:45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Do you know how many chapters were allocated to the early years of Jesus, a.k.a the silent thirty years of Jesus – from His birth to the time right before His earthly min-

istry? Only four chapters total out of 85 chapters of all four Gospels. Out of 85 chapters, 29 chapters were dealing with the last week of His life. And out of 29, 13 deal with just the final 24 hours – the last day of Jesus. That is over 15% of the four Gospels that covers what He did for us on His last day. Those are His hours. He had one thing in His mind – saving our lives, not doing miracles to fancy anybody’s satisfaction.

Mary’s reply shows her complete reliance to her Savior – “Whatever He says to you, do it.” Isn’t it the one we should remember in our Christian life? We should do whatever He says to us with complete obedience.

Speaking of Mary, I need to make this very, very clear here. Even though we should respect her godly example of spiritual submission, she was a sinner just like anyone of us and she needed the Savior and God Jesus Christ.

Just because she carried Him in her womb for nine months and raised Him as her Son, that should not elevate her to the position of a co-redeemer like some people in the Roman Catholic faith believe. They use this very portion of Scripture to convince their followers that they need to go through Mary to access Jesus. That is far from the truth. They are exalting Mary to the position of God.

If Mary could tell us something we should remember today, it would be the same thing what she already said in Luke 1:

Luke 1:46-47 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

C. ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY

John 2:6-12 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. 7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. 10 And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!” 11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

Our Lord’s first miracle was not a spectacular event that everybody witnessed. Mary, the disciples, and the servants knew what had happened. But nobody else at the feast had any idea that a miracle had taken place.

Note what Jesus said in v7.

John 2:7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim.

Jesus wanted all of us to know that nothing was added. It wasn’t one gallon of water and 19 gallons of wine. It was straight water.

Depending on sugar, fruits, and yeast, the initial fermentation can take from 3 to 4 days to over a week to make wine. But between the waterpots to the master of the feast, ordinary water turned to extraordinary wine.

Out of the six waterpots, you could have 120 to 180 gallons of the highest quality wine in Cana was available for this wedding feast. No wedding party on earth can drink 120 to 180 gallons of wine. This is not just Jesus meeting the bride and groom's immediate need for their wedding ceremony and reception. It was Jesus' lavish gift to the newly wed to sell the leftover wine for their early marriage.

This was more than a simple miracle of Jesus. Did you notice that those six empty waterpots were there for the manner of purification? And in the Scriptures, wine is a symbol of joy.

Psalm 104:15 And wine that makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make his face shine, And bread which strengthens man's heart.

In the Old Testament, the nation is pictured as "married" to God, but unfaithful to her marriage covenant. The wine ran out, and all Israel had left were six empty waterpots. They held water for external washings, but they could provide nothing for internal cleaning and joy. In this miracle, our Lord brought fullness where there was emptiness, joy where there was disappointment, and something internal for that which was only external.

Some Bible teachers would go to great lengths to show that what Jesus made here was really grape juice, because they think it is like promoting drinking alcohol. I won't do that. Good wine is good wine, not good grape juice. It is true that wine in that day, as commonly served, had a much lower content of alcohol than modern wine. But it was still wine.

Some Christians insist that the Bible encourages them to drink alcohol by using this Scriptures. My reply for those is, "If you use Jesus as your example for drinking, why don't you follow His example in everything else like Luke 22:18?"

Luke 22:18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Please note what v11 says:

John 2:11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

This is the first miracle Jesus did which means no miracles before. All four Gospels connect and support each other. They don't contradict. I am sure that many of you have heard the gospel of Peter and the gospel of Thomas. They are known as apocryphal books. They are not canonized as a part of the NT. They have some fanciful stories of Jesus before He started His public ministry:

- Child Jesus made a clay bird and then made it come to fly and it flew away.
- He was out on the playground one time and He got mad at a kid and cursed him and the kid fell down dead and then Jesus raised him from the dead.

That is one of the many reasons why they are not included in the Bible.

Jesus performed this miracle and His disciples believed in Him all the more. That is what this Book is all about. I taught you guys that you can summarize this Book of John in one word. What is it? "Remember!"

D. APPLICATION

Whatever Jesus tells us through the Bible, we should do it, because He is our Master.