

# Sermon Outline

**“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:**  
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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## **WATER TO WINE** *JOHN 2:1-12*

### **I. The Gateway to Heaven**

- A. At the end of John 1, Jesus tells Nathaniel that he would see angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.
- B. This was a veiled reference to Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28.
- C. By using that dream to refer to himself, Jesus was teaching us to see that he is that great Ladder that bridges heaven and earth; the new Temple where God dwells, the Gateway through which God comes to meet us.  
—All the teachings and miracles of Jesus are a manifestation of this traffic of heaven.
- D. God’s reality breaks into a cultural environment that is dominated by *Judaism*.
  - 1. From John 2-10, Jesus address himself to Judaism through its key institutions.
  - 2. By showing us how Jesus addresses those institutions, John shows us how God, through Jesus, has begun to break into the world of Judaism, so as to fulfil the highest and most lofty aspirations of that religion.
  - 3. Because it is so closely aligned with the Law of God, Judaism, out of all the religions of the world, is closest to the will of God.
  - 4. The implication is this: If Jesus fulfils Judaism, if Jesus is God’s answer to Judaism’s highest aspirations and loftiest ideals, it follows that Jesus fulfils the best aspirations of every religion in the world.  
—Jesus is the true hope of every man, woman, and child.

### **II. A Wedding (John 2:1, 2)**

- A. With those concepts in mind—the fact that Jesus is the Ladder to heaven, and the fulfilment of Judaism—we’re ready to start with chapter 2.
- B. “On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.”

- C. Of course, we do well to note the significance of weddings in the Jewish culture.
  - 1. Religious Jews take marriages very seriously, because of God’s command for the human race to multiply and fill the earth.
  - 2. God often calls himself the Husband or a Bridegroom to his people.
  - 3. Without trying to be dogmatic, it seems interesting that Jesus chooses a wedding as the occasion of his first recorded miracle.

### III. The Wine Ran Out (John 2:3)

- A. Running out of wine at a wedding was bad!  
—N.T. Wright: “The family would have to live with the shame for a long time to come; bride and groom might regard it as bringing bad luck on their married life.” (*John for Everyone: Part One. Chapters 1-10*, 22).
- B. Upon hearing this bad news, Mary decides to take up the matter with her Son: “They have no wine” (v 3).

### IV. What Does This Have to Do with Me? (2:4)

- A. Jesus responds bluntly: “Woman, what does this have to do with me?”
- B. Jesus’ reply strikes us as strange on two counts.
  - 1. He called Mary “woman.”
    - a. “Woman” was not rude, merely formal.
    - b. Jesus is putting some distance between himself and his mother.
  - 2. From Jesus’ reply, it seems that he discerned a request in Mary’s comment.
    - a. It was as if Jesus knew that Mary was trying to get him to do something.
    - b. While Mary does not appear to be asking Jesus a question, there is such a thing as non-verbal communication!
      - i. When we want people to do something, we can make our requests known in a subtle way.
      - ii. Perhaps Jesus got the sense—as only a son can—that his mother was wanting him to do something about the lack of wine.
- C. So that raises the question: What exactly was Mary expecting her Son to do?
  - 1. The clue may be discerned from what Jesus says: “My hour has not yet come.”
  - 2. The hour that Jesus has in mind is most likely the hour, the time, of his glorification (7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; cf. 16:21; 17:1; cf. also 7:6, 8).
  - 3. Mary may have been trying to get Jesus to act!!

D. But Jesus waits on his heavenly Father.

1. As far as actions related to his central mission were concerned, Jesus only moves when the Father instructs him to do so.  
—John 5:19: “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”
2. Since the Father had *not* told Jesus that his Hour had come, this may explain the formal and sharp tone Jesus takes with his mother.
  - a. As much as Jesus loves and honors his mother, Mary cannot function as *the* authority over her Son’s life.
  - b. Neither she nor any other can manipulate, guilt trip, or shove Jesus into action.
  - c. Jesus’ response puts distance between himself and his mother. He is the Lord—not she.

## V. “Do Whatever He Tells You” (John 2:5)

- A. In spite of the sharp rebuke, there is remarkable kindness in Jesus.
  1. Our Lord is willing to grant some small part of Mary’s request.
  2. Jesus indicates that he would do something after all. It may not be the *Thing* that Mary herself initially wanted. But it was something, nonetheless.
  3. The next thing we see Mary doing is going to the servants and saying to them, “Do whatever he tells you” (v 5).
  4. Mary gets it! She understands her Son and respects his lordship.
- B. Like Mary, we must let Jesus be God in our lives. We may make our requests known to him. And yet, we must always hold our treasures lightly. God knows what is best. And God will answer according to his own time and in his own way?

## VI. Water to Wine (John 2:6-11)

- A. Verse 6 sets the stage for the miracle: “Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons.”
  1. These jars carried a lot of water!
  2. What the jars were reserved for is key: They held water “for the Jewish rites of purification.”
    - a. Ceremonial washings were a Jewish institution.
    - b. These washings were not primarily for the purposes of hygiene but for the purpose of staying clean before God. Jews wanted the holiness of God to dwell in their homes.
    - c. But what Jesus would soon do to those jars might strike some as...shocking.

- B. Verse 7: “Jesus said to the servants, ‘Fill the jars with water.’”
  - 1. At this point, there is nothing yet out of the ordinary. The jars were already reserved for water anyway.
  - 2. But the instruction would seem odd. The problem was a lack of wine, not water!
- C. The servants do exactly as they were instructed by the Lord: “And they filled them up to the brim.”
- D. After they had done that, Jesus says, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast” (v 8).
- E. Again, the servants do as Jesus told them to do: “So they took it” (v 8).
- F. Verse 9: The water becomes wine!

## **VII. His Disciples Believed in Him (John 2:11)**

- A. Verse 11 delivers the main lesson of this episode: “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. *And his disciples believed in him.*”
- B. While turning water into wine was not the ultimate work Jesus had come to do, it did show something of his glory to his disciples. It did hint at what Jesus had come to do.
  - 1. Jesus is the Lord who has power over the elements.
  - 2. Jesus brings the ultimate reality of life and joy to which the Law points.

**The ultimate blessing in this miracle was not the wine. It was Jesus himself, the true Lord and Bridegroom of Israel. Let us enjoy the wine and all the wonderful presents Jesus gives us in this life. But as we do so, let us always remember to set our hearts on Jesus himself. That was what the disciples did. They “believed in him.” May we believe in him as well.**

## Questions for Reflection

1. Is there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. How does our Lord's enigmatic statement in Jn 1:51 help us to understand his ministry?
3. Jesus fulfills the highest ideals and aspirations of Judaism, a religion based on the Law of Moses. How is this relevant to us who were from other religions?
4. What was so bad about running out of wine at a wedding in that culture?
5. "And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.'" (a) Why did Jesus rebuke his own mother? (b) What does he mean by "My hour"?
6. How did this miracle reveal the glory of Jesus? What responses is this account calling from us?
7. How do the lessons in this message affect your relationship with God? How do they change your disposition toward God? How do they teach you to relate to God and show God your love? How does your new relationship with God affect your relationships with others?