

Article

Exegesis on John 2:1-11: The Wedding at Cana: Interpreting the Miracles in Our Life

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Abstract

The passage of the wedding at Cana is a unique Gospel passage, which can only be seen in the Gospel of St. John. In reading such a passage, we can see how Jesus did his first miracle – turning water into wine. Such a scene in the Gospel shows the drama of a mother and a son, showing the parental authority of Mary to Jesus. In the same manner, this passage is full of emotions since there is a wedding feast, Mary is there assisting the servants, and Jesus replied to Mary, which seems to be a kind of hostility. Though Jesus is already with some disciples, we can see how he performed a miracle, showing his divinity, and at the same time, following her mother's request, which shows his humanity. At first glance, we can say that there is a hesitation in Jesus' side when it comes to the request of Mary, but there is also an internal force, which made Jesus follow his mother's request. Jesus' disciples saw the miracle. Jesus obeyed his mother, and the servants saw what happened. The host was grateful for having the best wine. These emotions manifest multiple events that happened in a single event in the Gospel. Thus, St. John's Gospel can be said to be full of signs and unique events on the portrayal of the life of Jesus.

Keywords: Exegesis, Gospel of John, Miracle, Wedding at Cana

Suggested citation:

Rosales, R.J.J. (2025). Exegesis on John 2:1-11: The Wedding at Cana: Interpreting the Miracles in Our Life. *Philippine Association for the Sociology of Religion Journal*, 5(2), 59-71. <https://doi.org/10.63931/zmfvem97>

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Introduction

The passage of the wedding at Cana is a unique Gospel passage, which can only be seen in the Gospel of St. John. In reading such a passage, we can see how Jesus did his first miracle – turning water into wine. Such a scene in the Gospel shows the drama of a mother and a son, showing the parental authority of Mary to Jesus. In the same manner, this passage is full of emotions since there is a wedding feast, Mary is there assisting the servants, and Jesus replied to Mary, which seems to be a kind of hostility. Though Jesus is already with some disciples, we can see how he performed a miracle, showing his divinity, and at the same time, following her mother's request, which shows his humanity. At first glance, we can say that there is a hesitation in Jesus' side when it comes to the request of Mary, but there is also an internal force, which made Jesus follow his mother's request. Jesus' disciples saw the miracle. Jesus obeyed his mother, and the servants saw what happened. The host was grateful for having the best wine. These emotions manifest multiple events that happened in a single event in the Gospel. Thus, St. John's Gospel can be said to be full of signs and unique events on the portrayal of the life of Jesus.

The Gospel of John is a unique portrayal of the life and ministry of Jesus as a divine person. It is far different from the other three synoptic Gospels. It is dated to have been written around 80 – 110 CE and was known for its deep theological portrayals of the Gospel itself. The author, John the son of Zebedee, known as the "disciple whom Jesus loved" [19:26] and eyewitness at the cross [19:35], wrote the Gospel in his late age – since he was with Jesus until His death on the cross, we can see the gap between Jesus' death and the time the Gospel has been written. Since the thought of the apostles about the *Parousia* or the second coming of Christ will happen in their lifetime because Jesus somehow gave a hint that He wants the beloved disciple to remain until he comes [21:22], they had the urgency to "go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature" [Mk. 16:15]. The evangelists might have understood that the second coming of the Lord will not happen in their lifetime, they switched from the rampant spread of the good news through oral tradition to a written tradition to memorialize and eternalize the life and ministry of Jesus. John lived with Jesus as one of the apostles and dubbed as the beloved disciple, hence he is a reliable first-hand source of the account of Jesus' life and ministry together with the first three evangelists.

The symbol of an eagle "represents this Gospel because it alone of all living creatures can look straight into the sun and not be dazzled, and John has the most penetrating gaze of all the New Testaments writers into eternal mysteries and the eternal truths and the very mind of God." The Gospel of John depicts Jesus as the one who speaks not focusing on the Kingdom of God nor of the parables but "in symbolic discourses, which often refer to his relationship to the Father."¹ John writes the Gospel

¹ Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Michigan: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 942.

with many figurative speeches because he already reflected on what Jesus taught and made his writings more of a reflection².

The Gospel according to John is viewed as a Hellenistic work “written by a Greek thinker for the Greeks”³ for the fact that it was written in Greek and the community around him. In understanding the community of John, we can view two Johannine communities: a group accepting Jesus as a Davidic Messiah and the other is a group critical about the practice in the Temple and acknowledges Jesus against a Mosaic background. In essence, these two groups were later on dominated by pagan converts and become more anti-Jewish.⁴ Being a Hellenistic Gospel, imageries such as the “dualistic division of humanity into light and darkness, truth and perversity, and the concept of the Word” (Λόγος)⁵ can be noticed, which are purely products of Greek philosophical thoughts.

Going back to the Gospel passage on the miracle of the wine at the wedding at Cana, the events that had happened are not clear before the wedding feast. In other Gospels, such as the Gospel of Matthew, after Jesus’ baptism was the temptation of Jesus at the desert, followed by Galilean Ministry [Mt. 3:13-4:17]. The Gospel of St. Mark also has the same events but a shortened narrative on the baptism of Jesus and temptation at the desert, followed by the Galilean ministry [Mk. 1:9-15]. Also, the Gospel of St. Luke also narrated the baptism of Jesus, followed by his genealogy, then the temptation at the desert, before beginning the Galilean ministry [Lk. 3:21-4:15]. In the Gospel of St. John, there is no baptism, temptation, and beginning of the Galilean ministry. In contrast, John’s narrative shows the testimony of the Baptist and call of the first disciples that happened before the wedding feast at Cana, then they went down and stayed at Capernaum before they go up to Jerusalem for the cleansing of the Temple. There are missing scenes in John’s Gospel that are vital and present in each of the synoptic Gospels. There is no synoptic parallel for this Gospel account. Though Cana is situated in Galilee, there is no account saying that Jesus had started his ministry in Galilee. However, by reading and understanding the Gospel of John, we can understand that his writings are all about Jesus’ manifestation of his divinity through the miracles and authority from the Father. This passage begins the manifestation of the miracles of Jesus, where he gave his first sign, though he mentioned that the hour has not yet come.

² Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: a concise commentary* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988), 3.

³ Charles Kingsley Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 3.

⁴ Rene Kieffer, “John.” Chap. 6 in *Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. John Muddiman and John Barton (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2001), 187.

⁵ Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: a concise commentary*, 13.

The Wedding at Cana

The passage of the miracle of the wine in the wedding feast at Cana is unique. As stated earlier, it is only present in the Gospel of John, and it comes from and goes to events that are not present in the synoptic gospels. The passage of the miracle of wine in the wedding at Cana is showing five parts to which we can reflect on: (1) the setting and the guests; (2) the dialog with Mary; (3) the dialog with the servants; (4) the dialog of the steward of the feast and the bridegroom; and (5) the conclusion on the significance of the passage⁶.

The Setting

The passage began with the words, “On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee” [2:1]. The term “third day” is an allusion that we can see on both the New and Old Testaments. In Exodus, it has become a theophany, a revelation of God, to Moses. The event of the revelation of the Lord in a terrifying form during the time of Moses now becomes a revelation of the Lord in a human form in a wedding feast⁷. God said that on the third day, He would reveal Himself before the eyes of all people [Ex. 19:11]. The allusion of the “third day” is also present on the promise of Jesus to be resurrected [Lk. 18:33, Mk. 9:31] and on the building of the temple after three days [Jn. 2:19]. Even if there could be a relationship between the “third day” of the passage and the allusions on the “third day,” we can still look at the traditional aspect of the wedding. Since a week-long celebration of the wedding feast is a law for the Jewish people, the third day presented in the passage shows the event of the call of Philip, which happened on the seventh day. After two days, they came with Jesus to the feast that falls on the third day. It also shows a practical tradition of the Jewish people when it comes to marriage. Since this is a weeklong celebration, the setting of the passage took place on the third day, the night before the bride and bridegroom’s wedding day. It was a custom that the wedding day should happen on the fourth day to meet the assembly of the twenty-three, the Sanhedrin, on the fifth day to divorce if ever the wife is no longer a virgin before the wedding⁸. Looking at the situation given, the term “third day” John used could be understood as both allusion to the importance of the revelation of God and Jesus’ glory and the Jewish custom of having the wedding of a virgin on the third day. The “third day” seems to be a significant symbol for John in manifesting the appearance of Jesus as the bridegroom.

The place of the wedding feast is in Cana in Galilee. *Kenna* (Cana) is a place three and a half miles north of Nazareth with about thirty to forty houses and a small synagogue⁹. The place of the wedding feast is the place where Jesus manifested his

⁶ Rene Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988), 208.

⁷ Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding A Reading of John’s Gospel* (Makati City: St. Pauls, 2015), 53.

⁸ John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Mathew - 1 Corinthians) (Oxford: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), 250.

⁹ George Clark, “The Gospel of John.” in *Clark’s Peoples Commentary*, Vol. 4, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1895), 49-50..

first miracle. *Kenna* is not that far from Capernaum, where Jesus will be coming from to make his second miracle in Cana, again. *Kenna* was the place of Jesus' first miracle, the changing of the water into wine [Jn. 2:1-11] and the cure of the court official's son [Jn. 4:46-54]; it is also the place where Nathanael, called through Philip, came from¹⁰.

The guests at the wedding feast mentioned in the passage also give importance to the wedding feast itself. Mary, who was not named by John but referred to as "the mother of Jesus," was first mentioned to be there [2:1]. After Mary, the passage mentioned that Jesus and his disciples were also there [2:2]. The popular teaching always tells us that Mary is invited together with Jesus and his disciples. Seemingly, Jesus brought with him his mother. However, looking closely, Mary was first mentioned to be there before Jesus and his disciples; she is there independently¹¹. The presence of Mary in the wedding feast may give us a hint that she is not just a visitor but may play a role in the event. Mary might be related to the bride since Cana is quite near Nazareth, and she has something to do with the arrangement since she is worried when there is already a lack of wine¹². Another thing to consider is the reference to Mary as the "mother of Jesus" than naming her. The title "mother of Jesus" focuses not on the identity of Mary but her son and their relationship¹³.

On the other hand, Jesus' presence, together with his followers, shows a subsequent appearance of guests in the wedding feast. It is as if Mary is also waiting for Jesus to come since there is already a problem. Jesus' appearance in the wedding feast is a sign of his celebratory presence to the couple. If we look at Mary as someone related to one of the couple, Jesus too should be related. It is a custom for us to go to a wedding feast of a relative, but if it is not the case, there is still a reason why Jesus is present there. Jesus, as testified by John the baptizer as the Son of God [Jn 1:34], is a new celebrity for nearby towns. As a result of the baptizer's testimony, Jesus became known to others, and many would want to meet him. There might be a reason for Jesus' presence at the wedding. He is a teacher whom many wanted to see, including the couple. The company of Jesus is his newfound disciples who followed him, making him a legitimate teacher at that time. Though it is not clear whether the disciples are also invited on they are present because they are followers of Jesus, we can see that uninvited guests may be a burden to the wedding feast.

The Dialogs

The problem now in the passage is the running out of wine; then, the dialog between Jesus and Mary began [Jn 2:3-4]. Mary told Jesus they have no wine. Wine is

¹⁰ Sebastian Kizhakkeyil and Kurian Ammanathukunnel, *A Guide to Biblical Studies* (Makati City: St Pauls, 2018), 143.

¹¹ Denis Farkasfalvy, *The Marian Mystery* (Makati City: St Pauls, 2014), 43.

¹² William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1. (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 96.

¹³ James McPolin, *John* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1979), 58.

an essential part of the feast since it is a necessary provision for a joyous occasion¹⁴. Being part of the wedding feast, if we assume that Mary has a role to play, the shortness of wine is her concern. By saying that they are running out of wine, Mary might show urgency for Jesus to do something since he is already in the age where public teachers entered their work. She is expecting a miracle as a sign of the beginning of his public life. We can see that Mary did not say anything to command Jesus; she let him do something in his own way¹⁵.

Jesus replied to Mary in a somehow hostile way, "Woman, how does your concern affect me?" The reply of Jesus strengthened the argument that Mary is concerned about the shortness of wine, making her part of the wedding feast's attendant. At first glance, we can see Jesus' hostility in his reply, calling Mary "woman" (Gk. Γύναι) instead of mother. Actually, in the whole Gospel of John, the name of Mary was never mentioned. Though we may consider it a hostility in our time, Jesus' reference to Mary as "woman" in itself is respectful and even a solemn address. It also shows a deeper meaning, connecting it to the first woman, Eve. The first woman drew Adam into the first evil act while this new woman, Mary, led the new Adam, Jesus, to his first glorious work¹⁶.

Note should be taken that from being called "the mother of Jesus," John, later on, mentioned Mary as "woman" that have different meanings. The title of "mother of Jesus" gave Mary the spiritual motherhood of all believers. When Jesus referred to Mary as "woman," he gave her a title of honor that expresses the dignity of her new relationship with Jesus in the order of faith and hope. This occasion is far from being an offensive expression of undue reserve or distance on the part of Jesus towards Mary¹⁷.

Mary played the role of the new Eve. The former Eve is simply the mother of all human beings, while the new Eve is to be the mother of all those who, through God's grace and their faith will be born again with God's eternal life¹⁸. Jesus' reference to Mary as "woman" is connected to the moment when he entrusted Mary to his beloved disciple. The woman in Cana led to the anticipation of the definitive marriage feast where Jesus wanted to bestow a new wine. John shows that the woman in Cana is the new Eve which belongs to the new Adam. Though this allusion is hidden, the Church's faith explored it¹⁹. It is significant that John begins and ends the public ministry of Jesus with the presence of the "woman" that shows the fulfillment of the promise in Cana has been prefigured. The old Israel to the new Israel is now entrusted to the motherhood of Mary²⁰. After referring to Mary as "woman," Jesus points out to

¹⁴ Clark, *Clark's Peoples Commentary*, 50.

¹⁵ Clark, *Clark's Peoples Commentary*, 50.

¹⁶ Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: a concise commentary*, 21.

¹⁷ McPolin, *John*, 59.

¹⁸ Byrne, *Life Abounding A Reading of John's Gospel*, 54.

¹⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth Part Two* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011), 221.

²⁰ Therese Borchard, *Our Blessed Mother* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), 42.

the concern of Mary and his. Mary's concern is as if not crucial for Jesus when he said: "how does your concern affect me?" [2:4]. These words indicate that Jesus did the miracle in his own will, not due to the request of her mother. Knowing that Jesus did the miracle and, at the same time, rebuking the request of Mary, it merely shows a willingness on the part of Jesus to do the miracle. Jesus then said, "My hour has not yet come" [2:4], he refers to the hour of his glorification – his death on the cross and resurrection. The miracle he did in Cana is related to the hour he is talking about because Jesus will pour new wine when he is already glorified. The request of Mary is an anticipation of Jesus' evidence of his power²¹. Though Mary somehow received a negative reply, Jesus' answer seems to be enlightening of his plan for humanity. He speaks of the time, which gives an eschatological meaning in the present time. John might have written the meaning of Jesus' "hour" as an expression of the glorious manifestation of the divinity of Jesus.

Despite the unclear answer of Jesus, Mary showed persistent faith in what will be the reaction of Jesus. She said to the servants, "do whatever he tells you" [2:5]. Mary's faith led her to instinctively turn to Jesus when knowing that there is something wrong. Her persistent faith also led her to trust something that she cannot fully comprehend²². Mary took the risk of telling the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them. This courage of Mary brings forth the miracle and incipient faith of the disciples. Jesus did something in response to Mary's faith²³. By doing whatever Jesus tells, even the disciples are affected by these words of Mary. At the end of chapter one, we noticed that Jesus told Nathanael that he would see greater things than just being seen under the fig tree [1:50].

After Mary's command to the servants, another part of the scene took place. The introduction of the available resources took place, and a precise number was given. There were six stone water jars present for the Jewish custom [2:6]. Those jars consist of twenty to thirty gallons each. These jars were used for the customary purification rituals²⁴. The number six signifies imperfection compared to the perfect signification of number seven²⁵. Whenever we speak of this perfection, we can see the significance of number seven in the creation story where God perfected the world in seven days. In total, there could be more or less one hundred and eighty gallons of water. If this will be transformed into wine, no wedding party can consume such a multitude of wine. For the Jewish people, John's message is clear. The imperfection brought about by number six and the purification rite, which uses the water that shows the imperfection of the Jews, were transformed into grace. The grace that Jesus let them

²¹ Bruce Vawter, *A Popular Explanation of the Four Gospels* Vol. 1 (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1955), 122.

²² Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible The Gospel of John*, 101.

²³ Gil Alinsangan, *PESAH* (Makati City: St Pauls, 2019), 81.

²⁴ Clark, *Clark's Peoples Commentary*, 51.

²⁵ Byrne, *Life Abounding A Reading of John's Gospel*, 55.

experience is a grace from God, which is limitless and more than sufficient for every need²⁶.

The dialog of Jesus with the servants took place after Mary's command. When Jesus commanded the servants to fill the jars with water, they followed and filled them to the brim. The servants, having filled the jars with water, knew that Jesus did not add anything in it. They filled it with water to the brim, and there will be no room for Jesus to add anything out of their sight. After filling with water, Jesus commanded them to draw some from it and bring it to the headwaiter – though there is no enough evidence of this position, it could be a friend of the bridegroom who acted as the master of ceremony²⁷. According to Clark, the headwaiter is a governor of the feast, who superintends the tables and preserves order in the banquet. He is the first to taste the new lot of wine and test the food before being served²⁸.

The dialog between the headwaiter and the bridegroom began immediately after tasting the wine. When the headwaiter tasted and tested the wine, without knowing its origin, he immediately talked to the bridegroom. There is an astonishment on the headwaiter because it is usual to give the best wine at the beginning of the banquet, but in this case, the best is served lately. We cannot say that it was served at the end because there is no reference that the banquet is already ending, but assuming that it is on the third day, it could be the last night before the wedding rite takes place. Giving the best wine at the beginning of the banquet has been a customary act since the visitors' impression is crucial, for they are critical of what is served. By looking at the action of the headwaiter, we can notice that he is clueless about the origin of the wine he just tasted. He called the bridegroom, thinking that it was the bridegroom's prepared wine. There is a timing of the wine given here. The headwaiter speaks of the best or good wine to be given at the beginning of the banquet while the inferior one is given when the visitors are already drunk. The best wine was given in the latter part of the banquet, and the headwaiter was surprised about it. It shows the consistency of the best to be given. Nevertheless, without the knowledge of those who are present, Jesus filled the gap and what lacks in the banquet²⁹.

Looking into a Greek perspective, John wrote the Gospel for the Greek audience, and including the miracle of the wine would mean something for them. One of the most revered gods in Elis is Dionysos, the god of wine. There is an old belief in Elis that took place during the festival of the Thyia, where Dionysos became well-known because of performing a miracle with the wine. Three empty kettles are brought inside a building by the priests during the ceremony. They let the people and other visitors look at the empty kettle before the seal the door of the building. On the next morning, they let the people inspect the seal before opening it, where they will find the three empty kettles filled with wine. In writing the miracle of the wine in Cana,

²⁶ Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible The Gospel of John*, 103.

²⁷ Notes taken from the New American Bible.

²⁸ Clark, *Clark's Peoples Commentary*, 52.

²⁹ Thomas Brodie, *The Gospel According to John* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 171.

John showed something similar to the Greek legend, but he presented a fact that happened compared to a legend which they can't prove to be true. By doing so, John showed even more confidence in the greatness of Jesus by performing a miracle with the wine more than the amount that Dionysos did. When Dionysos filled the three kettles with wine, the Greeks were astounded by their legend. By presenting the miracle of Jesus, John showed more reliability on the divinity of Jesus. This miracle gave them a synonymous account of their legend, where Jesus became more reliable since it happened during their lifetime³⁰.

The Significance of the Passage

John gave the conclusion of the significance of the passage in the latter part of the passage. It shows and explains the effect of writing the Gospel after he witnessed and reflected on it for a long time. Since John wrote it in the sunset of his life, he already inserted his theological explanation of Jesus' actions and put it in a manner where his audience will understand it more. We must remember that John wrote the Gospel to promote faith in Jesus as the Christ³¹. John wrote that Jesus did the miracle as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and the disciples began to believe in him [2:11].

When John wrote that Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana, it is not clear if this is the first miracle he has done. Clearly, it shows a promise of a succeeding miracle to happen in Cana – the healing of the royal official's son [4:46-54]. The "signs" that John speaks of are the miracles that Jesus did. The "signs" (*sēmeia*) may mean two things from the perspective of John. First, the signs that Jesus performed point to the reality of his identity and messianic role to promote faith during that time. The last part of John's Gospel have mentioned that Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in the book, but the signs are written for them to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing, they might have life in his name [20:30-31]. On the other hand, the signs that Jesus did, especially at the wedding, do not produce faith. Those who are with Jesus already have faith in him but were strengthened because of what they have seen. The faith is already present but was brought into a new level of belief that is truly adequate to the revelation of the divine in the person and work of Jesus³².

Furthermore, when Jesus did this miracle in Cana, the passage stated that his disciples began to believe in him [2:11]. The result of this miracle, through the intervention of Mary, the woman, is the completion of the vocation of the disciples³³. This completion speaks not of the finality of the disciples' vocation but the fullness of what they are clinging into. The purpose of John in writing the miracles or signs that Jesus did lead to two claims. First, to strengthen and confirm the faith of those who

³⁰ Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible The Gospel of John*, 104.

³¹ Edwin Freed, *The New Testament: a critical introduction* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2001), 354.

³² Byrne, *Life Abounding A Reading of John's Gospel*, 56.

³³ Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: a concise commentary*, 22.

believe in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God. Secondly, John wishes to bring out the profound theological meaning of the person and life of Jesus through his public ministry³⁴.

By revealing his glory, Jesus was able to convince his disciples of who he is. Mary's intercessory act made the faith of the disciples strengthened without her knowing it. We can see how encouraging was the word of Jesus when he said to his disciples that they would see greater things. The last part of the passage of the wedding at Cana shows us the importance of Jesus' actions to the faith of those who witnessed him. Without telling his divinity, Jesus showed it to the people around him – making the wedding at Cana a symbol of the wedding feast he is about to partake, where he is the bridegroom of the new and everlasting covenant.

The Passage in Our Time

The Gospel of John's passage on the wedding at Cana shows many points for reflection. At first glance, we can see that it is just a typical setting where Jesus made his usual works of miracles. However, when we look deeper into it, emotions and communion are manifested. The importance of Jesus' actions and the emotions of the people who have witnessed his miracle brought about a sense of awe and conversion that led to quite an introduction of his identity.

There are points that I would want to emphasize in this passage on the wedding at Cana. These points are based on how we can relate to the event in the life of Jesus in our modern time, namely: Jesus' company, Mary's presence and request, the response of Jesus, the command of Mary to the servants, the importance of the water, the headwaiter and his actions, and the effects of Jesus' miracle.

The first point to look at is the presence of Jesus' company. Whenever we look at the life of Jesus, there is always a crowd following him. However, there is always a specific group around Jesus whom we call apostles. His company, at the wedding in Cana, is composed of his first disciples. They could be firm believers of John the baptizer because they immediately followed Jesus after John introduced him. At this point, the importance of a company or friend can be seen. Jesus is a new person for them, but they befriended him and followed him despite uncertainties of who he really is. They followed because of Jesus' promise of seeing greater things than what they saw before. Finding Jesus in our life will always be of great help in us, like how they found Jesus in a very unfamiliar way. Now, our opportunity to be with Jesus lies in how we are convinced of the would-be effect of Jesus in our life. They followed because they believe that something will happen, and that shows their faith. Following Jesus means being with Jesus, we can never follow him without being with him spiritually. To strengthen the faith, Jesus himself brought the disciples to the miracle sight. In the same manner, Jesus will make the way to meet us, to greet us, and it will only be up to

³⁴ Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles*, 205.

us whether to follow Jesus or not. To follow is to accompany Jesus – to be part of the company of Jesus.

The presence of Mary would also mean a lot in our faith. In the passage, we see Mary's presence as the bridge between Jesus and the needs at the wedding. Mary has been instrumental in making the wine sufficient, maybe overflowing, for all. At first, Mary's presence at the wedding is to assist the couple in assisting the visitors. She is already there before Jesus and his company came. A role was played by Mary, which speaks of her relatedness to the couple. Everything is going well until the wine is already running out. When she saw Jesus, she believed that something could be done because of her faith in Jesus' identity as the Son of God. She knows Jesus very well and so made known to Jesus what the situation is. This part of the passage shows the intercessory prowess of Mary when it comes to Jesus. Mary implied something in her message to Jesus, and she wanted Jesus to do something about it. The effect of Mary's presence in our life would mean a great deal for Jesus' attention. Jesus also cares for all that Mary is taking care of. All we need to do is to be under Mary's maternal care, and so to make Jesus not just our friend but also a brother.

When Jesus responded to Mary, it could sound awful for our literal translation. However, going deeper into it, there is a sense of great respect to Mary's identity as a "woman." In the course of the passage, we see how Jesus entertained Mary's request. But before doing anything, Jesus also shows his concern, that he also had a plan for his ministry. Jesus' plan is deeper than Mary's request, yet he heeds his mother's request because of his respect and love for Mary. Jesus is teaching us the importance of respect for the elders, especially to our parents. We always have plans for our life, but our parents' presence and plan for us will lead us to a better part of our life.

In making things possible, we can always turn to Mary and let her know what we are going through that she may also intercede for us. Nevertheless, there is, of course, a requirement to be done. Like what Mary told the servants, we must do whatever Jesus tells us. The command of Mary for us is not for her glorification; it is for Jesus'. Mary is, indeed, the bridge of the miracle; without her, Jesus will not be performing something out of his plan. Jesus is still waiting for the hour, but Mary's intercession made Jesus' preparation began.

To make the miracle possible, Jesus did something unfamiliar. The six jars, which supposed to be part of the Jewish purification rites, which simply means used for cleaning, are used as the major part of the miracle. Jars of water for washing are now used for making the best wine. The way Jesus treated the six jars is as if the jars are used for the drinking water. They might not be suitable for drinking, but Jesus made something better out of it. By just looking into it, we can see how Jesus can transform not only the water but also the jar into something great. The water for washing is now the best wine for the banquet; the jars for the water are now the jars to be kept because of what is inside of it. Jesus can always transform us into something better; all we need to do is to let Jesus enter into our lives.

Jesus already did the miracle. To verify the miracle, they called the headwaiter. Since he is not present when Jesus did the process of the miracle, he exclaimed of the greatness of the wine and immediately told it to others, especially to the bridegroom. This part teaches us our mission as evangelizers of Jesus. Even if we have not seen the process of Jesus' wondrous works, we can always share it with others in joy and thanksgiving. However, we should also be cautious not to make the same mistake made by the headwaiter. He gave credit to the bridegroom instead of giving it to Jesus. If faith can move us to believe Jesus' miracles, our faith should also move us to credit Jesus in every good that we experience in life.

Lastly, the effect of the miracle is the strengthening of the faith of the disciples and the witnesses around. Many people say that to see is to believe, but that should not be the case in our faith. Mary and the disciples already believed in Jesus even before the miracle. The disciples followed Jesus because they believed, and Mary made the request to Jesus because she believed. Our faith is not something to gamble upon. It is something we should always cling on. Miracles do happen when Jesus is present in our life. The miracles we witness are and should also be a sign for us to begin something that we should do as how our faith and conscience dictate us.

The gospel account of St. John about the wedding at Cana is a reminder for us to keep holding on our faith despite the dryness in our life. The people are already waiting for the Messiah at that time and the faith that they have led him to be closer to Jesus. The dryness that we also have will lead us to Jesus only if we keep our faith burning in us. The miracle is not the start of our faith, but a product to what we are believing.

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