

## **The Beginning of Miracles**

Scripture: John 2:1-11

Code: 43-8

I do want to mention to you that tonight we're going to continue a brief series on the idea of the Messiah. We all know that Jesus is the Messiah, but do we know what that means? Last week we looked at the office of Messiah, tonight we're going to look at the person and the ministry of Messiah in what I think is one of the most fascinating and sort of overview perspectives that help us to understand the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So be with us at six o'clock tonight as we continue to learn about the Messiah.

For now, it's John chapter 2, John chapter 2. And I have reminded you and will remind you again that John has written his gospel for one purpose, really. These have been written, he says--the words of this gospel--that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. John writes to give evidence for the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah and is the Son of God, that you may believe that, and that believing you may have life, eternal life, in His name. So we've been saying he has an apologetic purpose to give evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and he has an evangelistic purpose that you might believe that, and then believing have eternal life in His name. John's gospel is a collection of evidences, of evidences concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, to prove His deity and His humanity. The whole purpose of this gospel is just to line up supporting proofs for the deity of Jesus Christ.

We already know that from our experience in chapter 1. There is the first eighteen verses, which is the testimony of John the apostle himself. In the opening eighteen verses that some call the prologue, John gives his own testimony that the Word, who is Jesus Christ, is God, with God, created everything, is the Light, is the life, all of those things are part of that. "The Word," verse 14, "became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory. The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

So in the opening eighteen verses, it is the testimony, the inspired testimony of the apostle John concerning the fact that Jesus is the Creator God Himself and yet distinct from God, being God and yet being with God. Then starting in verse 19, we have the testimony of the greatest of all Old Testament prophets, the greatest man who had ever lived up until this time--John the Baptist, the great and last Old Testament prophet and the first preacher of Jesus Christ. And he affirms that Jesus is the Messiah, the Lamb of God.

And then starting in verse 38 you have the third group of those giving verbal testimony--Andrew, Peter, John, Philip and Andrew--who are Old Testament believers who were true worshipers of the true God, who give us first-hand testimony that Jesus is in fact the Messiah, that He is the One spoken of by the Law and the Prophets, that He is the Son of God, He is the King of Israel.

So the first chapter is verbal testimony from John the apostle, John the Baptist, and five followers of John the Baptist who then follow Jesus and later will become apostles. All of that is verbal testimony. Jesus is God, with God, is the Light, is the life, is God in human flesh, is the Lamb of God, is the Messiah, is the One spoken of in the Old Testament, is the Son of God and is the King of Israel. All of those confessions are made in that first chapter.

Now we come to chapter 2, we move from verbal testimony to testimony by the works of Jesus. And John is going to alternate now as we go through His gospel, between the words of Christ, and the works of Christ. He's going to have us look at the statements Jesus made that indicate His deity and the works He did that demonstrate and prove His deity. He will do what no one but God can do. And we see that in the very first miracle in chapter 2.

Now in John's book, he gives us eight signs, eight miracles that Jesus did that are signs pointing to His deity. He turns water into wine in chapter 2. He heals a dying man in chapter 4. He cures a paralyzed man in chapter 5. He creates food for thousands of people in chapter 6. He walks on water at the end of chapter 6. He gives sight to the blind in chapter 9. He raises a man dead for days in chapter 11. He creates a meal in chapter 21, breakfast for His disciples. And then the culminating miracle beyond the eight, He is raised from the dead. So those are the miracle signs that John records. And I would just remind you that in chapter 20, verse 30, it says this: "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book." So I don't want you to think that these are the only miracles Jesus did, far from it. There are many others. They were a daily experience of those who followed Jesus.

And then in chapter 21, verse 25, the last verse in the gospel of John, John writes "there were also many other things which Jesus did which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written." Jesus did so many signs and so many miracles that the books of the world wouldn't be able to contain the details of all of them. Many other things; John is merely giving us samples of these miraculous evidences that Jesus is in fact God because He does what only God can do. In chapter 1, verse 14, the Word, the divine Word, the eternal Word became flesh and manifested His divine glory. That's John's point. He shows His glory as God through these signs.

Now as we come to chapter 2, it is also in chapter 2 that we have the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. His ministry to the crowds, His ministry to the people of Israel, and His public ministry goes from chapter 2, verse 1 to the end of chapter 12. When you come to the end of chapter 12, that's the

end of His public ministry. Chapter 13 through 17 is His private ministry in the Upper Room to the apostles. And that is right before His death and resurrection, which then become the subject of chapters 18 to 21. So the book is divided then into those sections: chapter 1, verbal testimony; chapter 2 to 12, public ministry; 13 to 17, private ministry; 18 to the end, His death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances. That helps locate you in the big scheme of things in the gospel of John.

So, we're going to start His public ministry, and we're going to be following that till we get to the end of chapter 12. And it all begins with a supernatural miracle. Let me read it to you starting in verse 1, chapter 2. "On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'

"Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the water pots with water.' So they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now and take it to the head waiter.' So they took it to him. When the head waiter tasted the water which had become wine and did not know where it came from, but the servants who had drawn the water knew. The head waiter called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Every man serves the good wine first and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.' This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory and His disciples believed in Him."

There is no human way to explain Jesus. He has to be God. If this was all we had, we would know that, because He creates wine out of nothing. We already know He is the Creator: John 1:3, "Nothing was made that He didn't make. Nothing was made without Him making it and He made everything that exists from nothing." Here you have a miracle in which the God/Man creates wine out of nothing. This is evidence that He is divine. And Scripture leaves us no other explanation, and that is John's mission, and it will mount as we move through this book.

Now let me just break down this account into four simple features. The party, let's start with the party, okay? It's a party. It's a party that exceeds all other parties because it's the most important event in the ancient world in the life of people in a town and a village. It is a wedding. It is a wedding.

Verse 1 says, "On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee." Now that identifies this as the most significant and important and carefully planned event that happened in ancient family life. We are told it is the third day. The third day? What does that mean? The third day after the previous meeting with Philip and Nathanael, which was concluded when Philip brought Nathanael, and Nathanael said in verse 49 concerning Jesus, "After we've examined You, we see You are the Son of

God, You are the King of Israel.” That’s what John the apostle said in the opening, that’s what John the Baptist says, that’s what these men all say, and now it is going to be proven to us in the miracle that happens in the wedding at Cana. It’s the third day after that meeting. What that tells us is that from the time that John the Baptist said “Behold the Lamb of God” and turned his disciples away from him to follow Jesus--those five men to follow Jesus--from that day to this day everything happens in a week. They have gone from being across the Jordan and Judah, all the way back to Galilee to the village of Cana, which is about nine miles, the ruins of it are about nine miles north of Nazareth. All of this happens in a very power-packed week. Jesus being declared, these men being called to follow Him, and they do so and end up in the town of Cana. As you remember now, we’re talking about Andrew and Peter and Philip and Nathanael and John and just incidentally Nathanael’s hometown, according to John 21:2, was Cana. This is a very small place. Nazareth, for example, the highest number we read about in terms of the population of Nazareth at the time of Jesus would be 500. That would be the max. Small place.

Cana is a village nine miles away, even smaller; maybe a few dozen people, a sort of a gathering place for the agricultural folks in that region; very, very small place. That would make this wedding a huge event. And obviously people from Nazareth would know those people because they lived nearby, they farmed together, the people in the outlying areas would come to Nazareth when they needed things that could only be gained in Nazareth.

It would also be true that if a town of Nazareth has five hundred or less people, they know each other. They’ve been there for generations; they aren’t mobile. They’re not only friends, many are family, and that would be extended into Cana. So we’re not surprised that Nathanael would be there because that’s his village. We’re not surprised that Mary would be there, she had lived in Nazareth for a long time. And we’re not also surprised that the rest of these folks from Galilee, the other men who came with Jesus, would also be there. Surely they would know people in that wedding as well.

So on the third day, there’s a wedding in Cana of Galilee. And this is a very significant experience, not because of the wedding, although the wedding is important, but because of what Jesus does at this wedding, and I’ll explain some of its importance to you even beyond the miracle itself.

I want to give you a footnote to think about though. The fact that our Lord did His first miracle at a wedding emphasizes the sanctity of that covenant. Weddings matter. Public covenant matters. The ceremony matters; it always has, it always has. People are not married who just live together. People are married who make public covenant before God and before people.

Marriage is a condition of life designed by God, ordained by God, and authenticated in an open, public covenant. It is the highest and noblest and best of all human relationships. No other human relationship is as wonderful as marriage. It is called in the Bible “the grace of life.” It is *the* most wonderful and most blessed of all common graces. And we talk about common grace. What we mean

by that is a grace gift from God to all people without regard to whether they believe in Him. That's a common grace. And of all the common graces--the beauty of the world, a sunset, sleep, health, a good meal, falling in love--of all the common graces, the epitome of common graces is marriage. It is the best gift that God can give to humanity in general without regard to whether they know Him at all. Any society that honors marriage, any society that elevates marriage--a life-long commitment openly; a covenant made and kept between a man and a woman who rear children in the bond of that love--any society that honors marriage will be blessed temporally. It will prosper. It will be safe. It will be secure. It will know peace. It will have a minimum of crime.

On the other hand, any society that fails to honor marriage as a covenant, open covenant between a man and a woman for life, in which children are reared and cared for; any society that diminishes marriage, that fails to honor marriage, is corrupt, is doomed to chaos, turmoil, evil and judgment. Where marriage for life is not honored, where the covenant vows between a man and a woman are not kept, immorality abounds. Immorality overruns the culture, delinquency overruns the culture. The fabric of society is shredded and even escalates. Our Lord honored marriage by attending and doing His first miracle at a wedding.

I also can't resist saying at this point that the Roman Catholic Church has decided that because Jesus was at this wedding, marriage is a sacrament. The Roman Catholic doctrine of the sacrament and the sacrament of marriage is based on John 2, that Jesus was at a wedding. Verse 2, both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding, as well as the mother of Jesus being there from verse 1. Based upon that, the Roman Catholic Church has developed the notion that marriage is a sacrament simply because Jesus was at a wedding.

Now what do you mean a sacrament? Well, those of you who come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, you know what that is saying. The sacraments are baptism, confirmation, communion, extreme unction, holy orders, penance, and marriage. Now what is a sacrament in the Roman Catholic system? A sacrament is a sacred rite in which God grants efficacious grace.

What do we mean? It is a sacred rite in which God grants inward spiritual grace through Jesus Christ. Let me take it further. Roman Catholicism says this, "Marriage as a sacrament, like the other sacraments, is a means by which God dispenses through Christ efficacious grace for justification and the promise of eternal life in marriage."

Now I'm happy that the Roman Catholic Church puts a priority on marriage. I'm glad that they want people to be married. But to get there by telling people that this is the path of justification and eternal life is a lie. That's not true. There is no efficacious, justifying grace in marriage. It's a common grace. It's not a saving grace. Somehow marriage becomes a means by which Christ causes grace to enter the soul with mysterious effects, causing justification which has to be aided by works and becomes a pledge of eternal life. That's right out of Roman Catholic theology. That's all utterly absurd, of course.

But marriage is ordained by God. And it is the universal, relational, common grace that's at the top of all common graces in the benefits that it provides.

So Jesus went to a wedding. And the mother of Jesus was there. Not surprising. Again, how many generations of her family had lived in the little town of Nazareth? A few hundred people. And how well would they have known the folks just up the road? Not surprising, likely related--cousins, extended family, close friends. Maybe Mary was there because she, of course, would have been who served, just her character as a godly woman demonstrated in her Magnificat at the time of our Lord's birth. She would have been a wonderful woman, a loved woman, a beloved woman. She probably had some role to play in the wedding to serve as indicated by the fact that she sees the problem and brings it to Jesus. Again this is a major event going on, it lasted for days. Some writers say they usually would start in the middle of the week and go on for many days. Sometimes they would start early in the week and go all week long, as long as seven days. When people came to this celebration, they came because there had been a betrothal, an engagement period. About a year earlier, the couple had been engaged. That's a legal, binding, covenantal contract that could only be broken by divorce. But the marriage wasn't consummated; it wasn't consummated till the end of this party.

What was going on all that year? The husband was preparing a place for his bride. That's what he did. He built a house for his bride. He may be extended on the father's house, the family house. The bridegroom had full responsibility for all the cost of the wedding. And his job was to get everything ready, and then when everything was ready and the house was built and the house was furnished and all preparations were made and he had demonstrated that he had what it took to care for this girl and to provide for this girl, the party began. It was a great celebration because he had been working hard for a year. She had been waiting and preparing for this, and finally the time comes, and it's just an immense celebration. Jesus is there, as well, with the five; and they're in the celebration.

I just want to stop here to say this. There's something really beautiful about this because He's had thirty years in Nazareth in this little town, a few hundred people, and He's about to step out into the world, if you will. Thirty years of absolute obscurity in private life, and now He's going to begin public ministry, and the bridge from His private life to His public ministry is a miracle for His family and friends. Do you see that? This didn't happen in Judea. This happened for His family and His friends, they were the first ones who were to recognize what He had never demonstrated before, that He is the Creator God. It's a family and friends miracle, which makes even more bizarre of the fact that when He came back to Nazareth, a few months later, Luke 4, and went back to the synagogue where they all went, where they all knew Him, where He had gone since His birth. And He preached a sermon and told them that He was the Messiah, which He had already proven at this event. And believe me, what He did would have spread through that little community. He came back a few months later. He tells them this day these prophecies are fulfilled in your ears and the people in the synagogue He grew up in, the friends and family for whom He had done the miracle, took up stones and tried to murder Him. Tried to murder Him.

How strange, what hard-heartedness. So He starts His miracle ministry with a friends and family miracle, transitioning Him from the obscurity of Nazareth to public ministry. By the way, Joseph isn't mentioned and I would assume that Joseph was dead. He must have died during those silent years. There were people who knew Joseph and Mary. John 6:42 says there were people who knew His parents, they knew Joseph and Mary, but Joseph was very likely dead. We know he was gone by the time Jesus went to the cross because in John 19, when He's hanging on the cross, He commits His mother, Mary, into the care of John the apostle because she's a widow. Which means then that He had been the father once His earthly father Joseph had died, Jesus as the oldest son would have taken the responsibility to care for the widow and the family.

Well, a wedding, as I said, is the greatest occasion. No occasion like it. And the celebration is in full swing. Everybody's having a wonderful time. That's the party. And then comes the predicament, verse 3, when the wine ran out, that's a problem. When the wine ran out, this is a major catastrophe. This is a colossal social embarrassment because if there was anything that the bridegroom had spent a year trying to prove is that he could take care of his bride. He had to build her a house; he had to acquire everything that was necessary. He had to demonstrate his ability to take care of her for the rest of her life. Her father was handing her over to him. This is a problem. Maybe he can't plan. This is what all of you fathers who marry off your daughters fear. Is this guy going to be able to make a living? Is this guy going to be able to take care of you? Is this guy smoke 'n mirrors here? Is there substance there? This is the same issue. They ran out of wine at the greatest celebration that they would have had. Remember, life was tough, life was hard, labor was extreme. It was a difficult world to just survive and a celebration like this meant so much as a relief and then to run out of wine.

"When the wine ran out," what about the wine? Well, it was a staple drink in the ancient world, and they made it from all kinds of fruit, mostly grapes, but other fruit as well. And let me just remind you of the fact that wine and the juice of any of those fruits was subject to fermentation because there was no refrigeration. So everything fermented and developed alcohol. To quench your thirst with water was dangerous because water was not purified. But to quench your thirst with fermented wine was dangerous because you could get drunk and that was a sin. You didn't want to be sick and you didn't want to sin. So the way they dealt with that is that they diluted the water, or they diluted the wine with water, one to three to one to ten--ten parts water, one part wine, down to three parts water, one part wine. And they did that so they could drink the water because it had been purified, and they could drink the wine and it wouldn't make them drunk because it was diluted. So this would have been prepared in the normal fashion and it ran out. This is a problem--big problem, big embarrassment.

The mother of Jesus, verse 3, said to Him, "They have no wine." Why her? Well, I don't know; maybe she was in charge of things. I don't know. We don't know that. But she certainly knew what was going on. When the wine ran out, everybody knew the wine ran out; there's nothing to drink. And this is a several day event. Some have suggested she wanted Him to do a miracle. He had never done a

miracle. Why would she all of a sudden want Him to do a miracle? He had never done a miracle. Well, but He had been baptized by John. She knew He was about to embark on His public ministry. He was gathering followers. This was all new--He had left home; He had gone south; He had gone through His temptation. You know, John had identified Him as the Lamb of God and certainly that had been circulating in the little meeting at the wedding if it hadn't before. And maybe she was thinking, "Wow, now, maybe this is it. Maybe the miracles begin here." That's a possibility, that's a possibility.

But I think there's something more obvious than that. Think of it this way: whenever Mary had a problem, who do you think she went to for a solution at home? He never had a bad idea in His life. He never had a wrong solution in His entire life. He never led her one step in the wrong direction. He had the perfect solution to every dilemma. He had the perfect answer for every predicament. Everything that ever went wrong in a house, He knew why it went wrong and how to make it right. He was the most wise, intelligent, resourceful person that had ever lived or ever will live on this earth. And He was in the house with her.

You know, some of us are severely challenged domestically. Things I can't do; I can't solve all problems, not by a long shot. But He would know the way to solve every problem. And not only that, He cared about people. He was compassionate, He was kind, He was loving, He could see the issues. Who else would she go to? Who else? Who else had one that they would go to the equal of Him? None. He had the perfect solution to every dilemma, the perfect answer to every question, perfect solution to every problem. And she also knew He cared and He cared deeply about people because He loved as only God can love. I don't think she's necessarily asking for a miracle. She just goes to the One she would always go to when there was a very difficult predicament. So she simply says to Him, "They have no wine," "they have no wine." She's learned as a widow to trust in His leadership and His wisdom.

Oh, by the way, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that you don't want to go to Jesus if you need something, you want to go to Mary to ask Jesus. The whole idea that you go Mary to plead with Jesus because Jesus can't resist Mary comes from this passage. Can you believe that? Oh by the way, never mind that she was rebuked by Him for asking. This is the only time in the New Testament that Mary ever made any request to Jesus. And He responded by saying, "None of your business." But this is where the Catholic Church finds the fountain of its Mariolatry, going to Mary to get things from Jesus.

Verse 4, after Mary says to Him, "they have no wine," Jesus said to her, "Woman." Woman, not mother? It's not harsh to say "Woman." Some say it's kind of the southern expression, "ma'am." It's not harsh, but it's not intimate. It's not mother. It's courteous. By the way, it's the same word that He used on the cross in John 19 when He said to her, "Woman, behold your son," and handed her over to John. He called her "woman" there as well. Why? Because He is telling her we don't any longer have the relationship we've had up till now. It's over. She is no longer in a position to act as an



authority in His life. She is no longer in a position to tell Him what to do, to make suggestions to Him. This would be a big change because I'm pretty confident that everything she ever asked of Him, everything she ever desired of Him, He gave out of His love. But she could no longer demand anything from Him. She played no role in His ministry.

Listen to this carefully. When He was twelve years old, He gave her a preview of this moment, and He was in the temple talking to the officials, and He said, "I must be about My Father's business." And this day His Father's business started and His mother's business ended. From here on He was saying, "I don't do your business; I do My Father's business. I'm done with My mother's business, fully engaged in My Father's business."

Can I even extend that? He never asked for suggestions from anybody...from anybody. In fact, when people gave Him suggestions, He normally rebuked them such as "Get behind Me, Satan." Here His rebuke is a little milder. He says, "What does that have to do with us?" "What does that have to do with us?" This is so critically important. The years of compliance, the years of submission, the years of obedience are over. He is finished with His mother's business and He is now doing His Father's business. He says from here on, as we'll see in John, "I only do what the Father tells Me to do. I only do what the Father wills that I do. I only do what I see the Father do. It is the Father who gives Me His Word, and it is what the Father speaks that I do."

He is distancing Himself from that mother/son relation which had existed for thirty years. To call her mother would have kept that relationship kind of intact. "Woman" shows that she is now dealing not with her son, but with the Son of God. What does that have to do with us? What an amazing statement. By the way, that statement is made a couple of times in the Old Testament. It's made in Matthew 8 and Mark 1 and Mark 5; it's a very familiar expression; it's a Semitic kind of expression, literally it is as "What to Me and to you?" What is it that concerns you and Me together? Nothing. What do we have in common? Nothing. It is a separating statement. I am completely free from you as to your desires, your wishes, your advice. He sealed this in Matthew 12; you remember the story, no doubt, in verse 46. He was speaking to the crowds and His mother and brothers were standing outside and they wanted to talk to Him--Mary and His half-brothers. "Someone said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside standing out there seeking to speak to You.' Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother? Who are My brothers?' Stretching out His hand toward His disciples He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers. Whoever does the will of My father who is in heaven, he is My brother and My sister and My mother.'" The only relationship I have is with people who do My Father's will. Other human relationships cease. That's what He's saying. What do we have in common? You have no role to play in My life; all family connections are over. All family relationships are over.

This is the opposite of what the Roman Catholic Church has said, that Mary has any function, any role at all in His life. He clearly dismisses that idea. Luke 11:27, Jesus was speaking and one of the

women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed." He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it." He completely distances Himself from Mary. He has assumed a higher position, and she has no role to play. He is done doing His mother's business. He is doing His Father's business.

And then He says this, "My hour...My hour has not yet come." This is the first time we see this statement, but we're going to see it again. We're going to see it in chapter 7. We're going to see it in chapter 8. We're going to see it in chapter 12. We're going to see it in 13, 17, "My hour has not come." "My hour has not come," or "My hour has come." This is a phrase that in its fullness looks at the cross, the hour of His death and resurrection. And what Jesus is saying is, "Look, we don't have anything in common because I'm now on a divine schedule that culminates in My death and everything leads to that. Every event, every issue, every circumstance is leading to that final hour."

So He's saying that phrase, "My hour has not yet come," by simply saying, "that final hour of My death and resurrection is set by God and all events that lead up to that are determined by God. You're outside the divine timetable." And Mary bows out. "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it!'" She just bows out. Okay.

And then He does what she asked. He made the point, and it just so happens that this is on the divine timetable. I don't know that she knew that. Certainly she didn't assume some great miracle. She probably assumed just some kind of a natural solution. But it was on God's list to be done there and then. So we go from the predicament to the provision.

This goes pretty quick. "There were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each." So what have you got? A hundred and twenty to a hundred and eighty gallons in these water pots. This is not for drinking. I told you they didn't drink water unless it was mingled with a purifier. This is for purification. If you go to Mark 7, verses 3 and 4, you read that the Jews always purify everything. They wash their hands, they wash the utensils, they wash the plates, they wash...wash the pans; they wash the copper pots; they washed everything. This is not about cleanliness, this is about ritual--a purification rites and rituals and ceremonies that they had developed. And the water was used for that because people were going to be there, and it was a custom, and they would go through ceremonial washings before every meal, and there's lots of meals in a multi-day experience. So there was plenty of water there for everybody to wash ceremonially. So Jesus said, "Fill the water pots with water."

So they filled them to the brim, which is what He wanted. If they weren't filled to the brim, somebody would just say He added wine to the water. But if the water goes all the way to the brim, there's nothing left to...no room left. That was the point. And by the way, you have people who are completely disinterested parties now who are going to give testimony to this miracle. They don't have

any stake in this issue. They're not trying to prove anything about Jesus. These are servants, whoever they were, the people who were serving there. They might not have been full-time servants. They might just have been friends and folks who were willing to do this. But they don't have any issue. They are disinterested parties who are going to witness and give testimony to this miracle. So they filled the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. "And He said to them, 'Draw some out now and take it to the head waiter"--the *architriklinos*, the maitre d', the chief waiter, take it to him--"so they took it to him. When the head waiter tasted the water which had become wine." Whoa-whoa-whoa; when did that happen? Well, that happened between verses 8 and 9. What? No, it actually happened in the white space between verses 7 and 8. They filled it to the brim and all of a sudden they drew some out, took it to the head waiter, they took it to him and the head waiter tasted water which had become wine. This is so understated. This is like in the backdoor. Where's the miracle? I mean, this is massive. How do you get wine? Grapes. How do you get grapes? Vines. How do you get vines? Seeds. How do you get seeds? Other vines. How do you make the vine grow? Sunlight, water, earth. How do you get the wine? Crush, strain.

There are no grapes, no vines, no seeds, no other seeds, no sunlight, no water, no earth. Nothing. He's created wine out of nothing. I mean, at least He could have said, "Wine!" Right? I mean this is a pretty dramatic deal here.

The head waiter tasted the water which had become wine, and didn't know where it came from. But the servants who had drawn the water knew they knew what happened. So you've got these completely disinterested eyewitnesses giving testimony that He had literally created wine to replace water. Where did the water go? And by the way, this would have been unfermented wine that just sort of bypassed the curse. It bypassed the earth, the vine, the grapes, everything. This was the best wine ever. This was Eden kind of wine.

And it becomes apparent right away because the headwaiter calls the bridegroom and the bridegroom is the guy who wants the news 'cause he's responsible for this. Said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first, and the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine, but you've kept the good wine until now." That's just axiomatic. Everybody does that. You do that. You have company over. If they keep eating long enough, they're going to get the leftovers that are still in the refrigerator. You know, I mean, that's the way it goes. You prepare something; you give them what you've got. If they're still hungry, you start digging down into yesterday and the day before and last week. I mean, that's...so he says, "Nobody does this. Nobody keeps this quality of wine until the end, nobody does that." Which is the unexpected, again an indifferent witness to the fact that this was wine. And it was not only wine, it was the best wine that had ever been consumed, pure, sweet, unfermented, delicious, like nothing else the man had ever tasted.

So you have this testimony of a creative miracle in the mouth of people who have no stake in trying to prove anything about Jesus. It's amazing. Well, the party was back in full bloom. And verse 11 gives

us the final word on this. And the final word is the purpose. We saw the party, the problem, the predicament, and then we saw the provision and the purpose in verse 11. "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory and His disciples"...What, did what?... "believed in Him."

So now we're seeing the purpose of the gospel of John. "These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing have eternal life in His name." That's the purpose. That's the purpose.

He manifested His glory, John 1:14, "We beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John wrote that and John first began to behold that glory right there at the wedding of Cana because he was there, he was there.

Let me just separate all of you into three groups. Can I do that? And you will be in one of these groups. His disciples believed in Him. That's group one. Turn to John 12, we'll close here. John 12:37, John 12:37, "Though He had performed so many signs"--so many miracles before them"--"yet they were not believing in Him." That's group two. There were people who believed in Him; there were people who did not believe in Him. And both groups saw the same signs like you today. You have been exposed to this sign, this miracle sign, confirmed by eyewitnesses who were objective. You believe, or you don't believe. And you've been exposed to far more than this.

But there's a third group. Go down to verse 42, "Nevertheless, many even of the rulers believed in Him." Of course, the evidence is just massive and overwhelming and clear that He is God. "Many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him for fear they would be put out of the synagogue." They didn't want to pay the social price. Verse 43, bottom line, "They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God."

All of you are in one of these groups. You believe, you don't believe, or you believe and you're not willing to pay the price to come to Christ. That's tragic. To love the approval of men who can give you nothing eternal over the approval of God who gives you eternal life in His Son, that is a fool's bargain.

Father, we thank You again for the privilege we've had this morning to worship You and to spend a little time with our Lord at a wedding, which seems to be such a minor event in a tiny little vision outside of a very small town in an obscure part of the world two thousand years ago. And yet what happened there was the first great miracle proving Jesus to be the Messiah, the one promised in the Old Testament, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the King of Israel. And we thank You that we have been able to see and to hear the record of the testimony of those who were there, that He had the power to create, power that only God possesses. We believe, we believe, and in believing have eternal life. I pray for those here this morning who don't believe who are fighting against the evidence. And I also pray for those who see the truth and acknowledge it as the truth but will not come to Christ

because they love the approval of men more than Your divine approval.

Lord, would You help us all to see where we are because that's where we have to begin. For those who don't believe, grant them faith. For those who believe but are unwilling to make the commitment 'cause they love men, they love the world rather than loving You, and they want what the world can give them rather than what You have prepared for them. Lord, grant them grace to see what a horrible, horrible decision they've made, especially when the greater judgment belongs to those who know and believe and will not come. Do work in all our hearts. For those who believe, fill us with joy in believing. For those who don't believe, grant them faith. For those who believe but will not make commitment, Lord, press them to embrace You to seek Your approval, which is bound up in loving Your Son that they may receive eternal life.

Now, Father, we ask that You would be gracious, pour out Your grace even today on many hearts who have resisted, who have fought the battle against what they know to be the truth, who have had to muster up all their sinful strength to fight against the gospel, and may they give up and embrace the truth and receive the salvation that You promise. We ask in Your Son's name. Amen.

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