

September 30, 2018

**(More Than Just a Nice Guy Series): Depictions of Jesus in the Book of John
“Jesus is the Life of the Party”, John 2:1-11**

As we work our way through John’s Gospel in this sermon series, we see a new depiction of Jesus as the provider of fine wine for a party - a wedding in Cana in John 2:1-11. On one level this is Jesus’ first miracle, changing water to wine for the relief of his mother’s frustration and the pleasure of the wedding guests. On a deeper level, however, this event points us to the top priority of Jesus’ heart, drawing people to God (John 2:11) and saving humanity from sin, which ultimately “revealed His glory” for all eternity (Jn.2:11).

In the midst of a Jewish wedding traditionally lasting seven days, the wine was gone and Mary notified her son, Jesus, that “they have no more wine” (Jn.2:3). Mary knew Jesus was special as God’s only Son. Yet Jesus surprisingly rebuked her, saying, “My hour has not yet come.” (Jn.2:4) Unlike Mary in angst about the current wine problem, Jesus had an overall higher priority of resolving the division of sin between God and man. His life was focused on His eternal purpose: the “hour” of the glory of His sacrifice, when He is unjustly tried and hung on a Roman cross, to die and be raised for the forgiveness of sin for all people of all ages. Jesus chose to love and trust God even though it caused suffering and pain for Himself.

While Jesus first focused on His priority, the Father’s eternal plan of salvation for all people, He did not ultimately neglect the immediate needs of those around Him at the wedding feast, and used this opportunity as “the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory” (Jn. 2:11). He stepped in and showed His caring through a “behind the scenes” miracle (known only to Himself, his disciples, Mary, and the servants) of changing 20-30 gallons of water into high quality wine (Jn.2:6-10).

As with all His signs and future miracles, Jesus shows that He cares about the details/circumstances of our lives and is Lord over everything. In the midst of the crises/the challenges/the pain/the suffering of life, Jesus shows generosity (Rom.8:31,32), compassion, and even weeps (Jn.11:35). God really loves us. Yet Jesus’s top priority is not simply our comfort, but our character (building us into His image - II.Cor.3:18). Jesus came to forgive us for eternity in the midst of our circumstances, giving us a personal, loving relationship with God. He did not come just to fix all our problems in the here and now. In fact, learning perseverance in the testing of our faith is necessary for maturity (James 1:2-4).

May we keep bringing it all to Him...praying, asking about everything, as Mary did with the wine. Jesus’s Spirit will listen and move in love and generosity, in His wise priorities for you and me.

Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever truly known that God loves you and cares for you, or is it simply a belief?
2. When you became a Christian as a child or an adult, did all your problems disappear? Does God not protect us? What is this all about???
3. Have you experienced God WITH YOU in crises? Have you ever experienced God working THROUGH you in problematic circumstances?

4. To whom do you take your problems first? God, friends, professionals, reading/Internet...? Do you feel your problems are too small to take to God, or so large that you feel selfish in asking?
5. How has God through the years shown His priorities in and for your life?
6. Do you have any idea what is your "hour" of glory, when you choose to love and trust God even when it hurts. We are not Jesus, but we can catch glimpses of glory here on earth.
7. Is your service to others focused on temporary relief or eternal salvation for others?