

Of the 35 miracles of Jesus recorded in the Bible, which 3 do you think were the most powerful and beneficial? His resurrection. Raising Lazarus. Calming waves and wind to keep his disciples from drowning are probably on most of our lists. Did you consider today's miracle?

Compared to our list, changing water into wine doesn't seem as impressive. Don't get me wrong, changing water into wine isn't something we could do, but still No dead were raised. No disease was cured. No demons were driven out.

A bride and groom were kept from embarrassment, and their guests enjoyed a couple of glasses of fine wine. That's all, or was it? Today's miracle has a lot to teach. Let's see if we can pick out: **Four Lessons from Jesus' First Miracle.**

Would you have invited Jesus to your wedding? Maybe you did. He was there in the Word that was preached at your ceremony. Did you invite him to the reception? You may have used his name in the prayer before the meal. But once you took care of that you were ready to party. If you think inviting Jesus to your gathering is going to ruin the party, think again. It was Jesus who kept the party going at the wedding in Cana.

Jesus returned his RSVP for the wedding at Cana, only 8 miles north of Nazareth, where he grew up. Back then, weddings in Israel often lasted a week. If you didn't plan properly, you were going to run out of something. That's what happened at Cana. The wine ran out.

Mary, Jesus' mother, became aware of this and told Jesus: **“They have no more wine.”** She wanted Jesus to help. Jesus, replied: **“Woman, why do you involve me? My hour has not yet come.”** Does that sound like the Jesus you know? Not really. It sounds more like a kid who thinks he's too cool for his mom.

At his baptism, Jesus' heavenly Father identified him as God's Son. He wasn't Mary's little boy

anymore. Their relationship had changed. He accepted his role and his responsibility to rescue the world, to be the Savior who came to serve. But that doesn't mean we should treat him like our errand boy.

So, what did Jesus do about the wine shortage? He told the servants to fill 6 stone jars each holding between 20-30 gallons with water. Then he had them take some of the water to the master of the banquet for a taste test. Wouldn't you have loved to know what was going through the servants' minds? They'd trudged back and forth from the town well who knows how many times. Now they're taking some of that same water to the banquet master for tasting?

What he tasted wasn't water. It was the best wine he ever had. He questioned, then complimented the groom for saving the best til last.

How about that! Jesus had changed all that water into – if calculations are correct - 900 bottles of the highest quality wine. That's the miracle at Cana's wedding. That's quite a wedding present!

Why does this miracle matter? What does it mean for us and our lives, 21 centuries later? Here's four lessons.

LESSON NUMBER ONE has to do with the occasion at which Jesus performed his first of many miracles. He could have performed it at a religious festival, a baptism, or a funeral. Jesus chose a wedding. What do you suppose Jesus thinks about weddings and marriage?

He loves them! He wasn't a married man, although his role was to love his Bride - the Church, and give himself up for her. Jesus loves weddings. He invented marriage. He even officiated at the very first one in the Garden of Eden!

Therefore, as Christians, we love weddings and marriage-- no matter what our own personal experience with them has been.

- If you're widowed, celebrate the memories of your marriage.
- If you're divorced, still believe what God's Word teaches about marriage.
- If your marriage has some miles on it, speak of your spouse - God's gift to you - in positive terms, as an example for others.
- If your marriage is just starting, put up with the struggles and enjoy each day. God intends good for you in your marriage.
- If you're not married yet, decide that you're not going to hop into bed with anyone until you are married.
- If that's happening - either hop out of bed, or get married, soon!
- And if you don't intend to get married: that's OK, still appreciate God's gift of marriage.

LESSON NUMBER TWO has to do with the results of Jesus' very first miracle. No storm was calmed. No one was healed. No body parts were fixed. Those all came later. Here, Jesus produced wine.

Does Jesus forbid drinking alcoholic beverages? No! He made wine and drank wine. He drank it here, during the Passover Festival and at other times too. The Jewish leaders noticed he did and John the Baptist never did.

As Christians we can enjoy alcohol ... in moderation. On the one hand, Jesus says in Proverbs that drinking **cheers the heart of man**. On the other, Jesus says, again in Proverbs, that drinking too much **poisons like a viper**. Go ahead and drink, but not too much. And if you do: repent and adjust.

LESSON NUMBER THREE has to do with the interaction between Mary and Jesus. Mary told Jesus what to do. Jesus cautioned Mary. Mary got the message. Jesus did what Mary asked anyway. Jesus is God, but is there a message here for us and our relationships?

Parents, as our children grow into adults, we can suggest things to them, but let's not give them ultimatums. Children growing into teens, and

teens growing into adults, how about listening to us? We love you, and God has given us some wisdom, along with our wrinkles.

Let's take this a bit further. Ladies, here's a suggestion? Tell us anything, just don't demand it. As guys, we don't take orders well! Appeal to our sense of responsibility, and we tend to respond. Guys, let's listen and make decisions that think about her and not yourself.

And finally, LESSON NUMBER FOUR those were 3 good lessons, but they only guide our lives and show us our sins. We saved the best for last – the one that has the power to lift us to paradise through the forgiveness of sins.

Here's our final verse: **What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.** Those guys believed this guy is God!

- It's God, whose presence blesses our weddings.
- It's God, who responds to our needs.
- It's God, whose gift giving goes beyond our simple needs.
- It's God, who produced 150 gallons of wine by taking the fermentation process from many months to a moment with a few words.
- It's God, who now turns this wine into a sin-removing detergent in his Supper where he gives us his blood with the wine we drink.

This might not be the most spectacular miracle in the Bible, but it mattered. It mattered to the bride and groom. Their celebration avoided embarrassment. It mattered to the disciples. Jesus was exactly what he claimed – the Son of God. It matters to us. Here's proof God hangs out with sinners and provides what we need at the time we need it – even something as simple as a glass of wine.