

Your Marriage is Blessed

¹ On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." ⁴"Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. ⁸ Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." ¹¹ 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.

In the Ten Commandments, Adultery is the word used because among the Hebrews, marriage was an obligation, and young people generally were married at the earliest age possible. Even in the Book of Ruth, the woman Ruth is widowed after ten years of marriage yet is young enough to remarry and bear a child at the end of the book. So the commandment doesn't hold up virginity as something to be commended and public lewdness and even prostitution are not tolerated as they are more and more in our culture today even as virginity is looked down upon as if it something to be embarrassed about. Among the Hebrews, adultery, breaking the marriage with unfaithfulness, was the most common form of unchastity.

This is not the place to cover every sin against the Sixth Commandment, but to notice one in particular. That is the sin of despising marriage altogether. In Genesis 2, God commands marriage for men and women. It is what we are designed for. God does not want us to be alone, and be too tempted to be chaste, nor to be too lonely. He wants us to have companionship. In New Testament times, the church took care of widows, except for widows who were young enough to remarry, that is, women under sixty. They were kept off the list intentionally according to 1 Timothy 5:11.

So here, early in Jesus' ministry, Jesus and at least six of his disciples attended a wedding in

Galilee, in the village of Cana. Just as God blessed Adam and Eve with marriage at the beginning of their lives on earth in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise, so also Jesus sanctified marriage and blessed it by attending this wedding, almost before he did anything else at all.

Some of the blessings of marriage escape too many people. Last year the Surgeon General released a report warning about what he called “an epidemic of loneliness.” An anti-social century of self-imposed solitude is becoming a social fact, with the same negative effects on health equivalent to tobacco, alcohol addiction, obesity, and other things. But through marriage, God brings companionship and great joy. Through husband and wife, children enter into the world and into families God himself has established. And he uses these families to pass along the message of salvation and heaven to another generation.

Through marriage, God encourages us and provides for us to enjoy physical intimacy and pleasure and yet be chaste.

Jesus stayed for the banquet, that is, the party after the wedding. Is it okay to have a celebration after a wedding, even one with alcohol? Certainly. This is a celebration of God’s estate of marriage. As with anything, we want to be moderate and not over-indulge, but Jesus and his disciples did not abstain or scorn the celebration, either. Of course, those things are not required. Just because there was wine at the Wedding of Cana, that doesn’t mean we have to have wine at our weddings. Someone might rather have Root beer floats. But here there was wine, and there was a problem-- there wasn’t enough wine. There may have been various reasons for this. The couple might have been poor, or more guests showed up than were expected.

But Mary was there, and seems to have been helping as if she were a relative. And she sees an opportunity for something she has been waiting for, for thirty years. She knows her son is the Son of God, and her Savior. He has at last begun to gather disciples, followers, whom he is teaching. Now, here at this wedding, he might have an opportunity to perform a miraculous sign. There was a need, and he could supply that need through a miracle.

But she is not the Redeemer or the Co-Redeemer. It is not for her to say. So even though he must submit to and honor her under the Fourth Commandment, that stops when it comes to his ministry. In ministry, in matters of carrying out one’s call in the church, a man is no longer a son or a brother, but is the one called. So he does not speak to her gently. He says, “Woman, why do you involve me?” And she does not try to say anything more to him. Instead, she instructs the servants: “Do whatever he tells you.” And although he said “My hour has not *yet* come,” it was close very close, for the time to begin. It just wasn’t for her to say. But he told the servants to fill the water jars with water, and when they drew some out, it

was changed into very good wine. Not watered down; not just juice, but excellent wine. That was the judgment of the Master of the Banquet.

Those water jars were there for ceremonial washing, something required by the Law of Moses. Jesus puts them to a new use: wine, to strengthen and delight. The Law of the Old Testament could be and was oppressive in its sternness. But God himself replaces it with the joy of the Gospel. This is the message of the New Testament: The Old is fulfilled; the New has come.

Once before Pharaoh, Moses had turned water into blood and death. Here, before friends and family, the Lord has turned water into wine. Moses wounds. Jesus heals. That is his mission.

And from the eyes of those who were there in that moment, the wine had been lacking; a failure not of the bride, nor the master of the banquet, but finally of the Bridegroom; the new husband, who made all of the plans. But where we fall short, Jesus steps in as the heavenly Bridegroom for the Church, his bride.

In the words of the Song of Solomon, the bride, who is the Church, listens for the voice of her Bridegroom, her Beloved, who is Christ. She says that his mouth, that is his holy Word, “is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. This is my husband, this is my friend,” she says, “O daughters of Jerusalem” (Song 5:16).

Let’s remember once again the necessity of the family. The Apostle Paul confesses that not everyone has the need to be married; they do not break God’s will by remaining single and active in the church. But counting Paul as an Apostle leaves twelve married men and one unmarried man. Marriage is the will of God for most of us, and for all who would have an intimate relationship of any kind. When we sin against marriage, we sin against the will and the commandment of God himself. For this we ask forgiveness, and Christ gives. And give.

When Christ came to Cana to bless marriage, he performed his first miracle here in the heart of the family, which is the Church in miniature. His disciples already believed in him, but now their faith grew. We already believe and trust in him, but our faith and our trust will grow as we learn to selflessly love spouse, children, and all of the blessings of the home. For Jesus blesses not merely marriage, but your life. Your marriage. Your home. Your loved ones. Your sins are forgiven: Now, love each other. Listen to each other. And serve one another. Jesus Christ blesses you.