

## The 411 on 2:11

### John 2:1-11 (KJV)

**1** And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: **2** And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. **3** And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. **4** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. **5** His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. **6** And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. **7** Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. **8** And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. **9** When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, **10** And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. **11** This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

There's a principle in Biblical scholarship where we treat the first occurrence of something with great importance. We study the first time something happens, because it establishes a pattern that we can follow. Even if something happens later in the Bible, we want to know not so much how those later events are the same, but rather how they are different and why. After a brief introduction in chapter one, John finally gets around to telling us about Jesus. He starts chapter two with the miracle of turning water into wine. Then John tells us two things: this was the beginning of Jesus' miracles and the disciples believed him.

Because this is the first of Jesus' miracles, I wanted to talk to you this evening about "The 411 on 2:11."

A few years ago, we were having a birthday party for my daughter. The party consisted of mostly my family, but since my daughter was good friends with Alyson Kelley, we invited her family over as well. After the cake was cut and my daughter opened her gifts, the kids went outside to play, while the adults talked. The men sat in the living room and the women gathered around the kitchen table.

At that table, my mother and sister would have discussions about various topics as they normally do. As their conversations wandered around, the two of them would often get into disagreements about the subject at hand. My mother would express her opinion about something and then my sister would counter with her opinion. They would both argue back and forth until one of them would say, "Well, Billy says..." and then the topic would suddenly change and the argument would stop. From there they would start on another subject and repeat the process.

No matter the subject, 'Billy' was always an invisible member of the conversation. Sometimes Billy would argue in favor of my mom's opinion, other times he would side with my sister. Even though Billy never made an appearance at the table, Billy was always there to offer the final word to any conversation.

After they left, Sis. Beth asked my wife, "Who is this 'Billy?'" My wife looked at her and said, "That's my husband Bill."

Sis. Beth stood silently for a moment and then burst into thunderous laughter. "Your husband Bill is 'Billy?'" she chortled. It was completely ridiculous to her that I could be the same person that they had been discussing all evening.

Of course, being placed on a pedestal like that doesn't mean that I'm freed from any of the responsibilities of being a son. I'm still required to give my mother a gift on her birthday and Mother's Day.

When I was younger, I would buy her practical gifts of things she could use. I'd buy her cooking utensils, kitchen gadgets, and vacuum cleaners. One year, she came right out and told me, "Don't buy me anything practical; I want something pretty." So, after that I started buying her decorative vases, flowers, and picture frames.

I'm still expected to perform certain task just because my mom wants me to. For example, when I was young, I used to take piano lessons. When we went to someone's house, it wasn't uncommon for her to say, "Play something." Now I hated playing the piano. At one time, I was decent, but that was mostly due to the strength of my teachers, not my inherent talent. I have forgotten almost everything that I've learned about playing the piano.

My kids are much better at playing it now than I ever was. However, as a son, I was expected to perform when my mother told me to, so I did. So, when my mother asked me to play, I responded as any son would. I said, “But mom, I don’t want to...”

You know what I did? I played the piano for my mom’s friends.

Even as an adult, she makes these demands for me. Just a few years ago, my grandfather was visiting the house. At the time, I was living in Cincinnati and we came back for a visit. While we were visiting, my mom said, “Hey, why don’t you sing that song you did for Father’s Day in church?” I said, “But mom, I’m an adult now. I’m married. I shouldn’t have to sing a song if I don’t want to.”

You know what I did? I sang the song for my grandpa.

My mother and I have this relationship. Sometimes I tell her what she needs to do, and sometimes she tells me what I need to do. That is why when I read the story of John chapter two, I feel like I understand the relationship between Jesus and Mary.

She came to him and simply stated the problem, “They are out of wine.” Jesus replied:

**John 2:4 (KJV)** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

Which is Jesus-speak for, “Mom, I don’t want to.”

Mary, on the other hand, completely ignores his objection. She doesn’t argue with him at all. She completely ignores him, turns her back on him, and says:

**John 2:5 (KJV)** His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

I find this exchange utterly hilarious. In fact, It’s my favorite passage in the entire Bible. Probably because I can relate to it on a personal level.

Mary is the only person in the whole Bible who can get away with turning her back on God without suffering dire consequences.

What can we learn from this exchange?

### **Mary Knew**

There's a song that asks, "Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?" Based on this story, I think she did. Notice that Mary never hesitated when she approached Jesus. Many scholars believe that it's likely that Mary was related to the bride and groom at this wedding. In fact, she was probably involved in some capacity. As a relative, and a woman (sorry ladies), she was very likely involved in the wedding meal itself. That is how she came to know that they were running out of wine.

In the tradition of the day, it was the groom's job to secure enough wine for the wedding. Weddings often took place over the course of several days. In fact, verse one mentions the "third day." Many scholars believe that this refers not only to the day of the week (Tuesday), but also the day of the wedding. Wedding ceremonies in Jewish household even today involve many blessings being spoken over the wedding couple, usually accompanied by a sip of wine. To not have enough wine means that the proper blessing cannot be spoken.

Those we are denied the opportunity to bless the couple feel offended. By not securing enough wine, the groom has not just cut the party short, he has also offended the friends and relatives who travelled to wish the couple well.

If Mary were a relative of the groom, she would have shared in the shame of the family. She might have taken it upon herself to go to the relatives and try to smooth over the hurt feelings. The groom's shame would have been, in part, Mary's shame. Mary didn't hold onto that shame; she gave it to Jesus.

Too many people hold onto their shame. They are ashamed of their past sin. Mary shows us that if you have something that you're ashamed of in your life, don't hold onto it. Mary didn't try to pretend that she didn't know about the shortage of wine. She didn't ignore the problem; she picked it up and carried it right to Jesus.

If you have a sin in your life, take it to Jesus. Drop it and walk away.

The next lesson we learn is that Mary tells Jesus about the problem, but she doesn't tell him how to solve it. There are people who use this passage to try and turn Mary into something she isn't. The angel Gabriel told Mary in Luke 1:28, "...blessed art thou among women," and it's clear from this passage that she had authority with Jesus, but that doesn't mean that we can pray to her today.

**1 Timothy 2:5 (KJV)** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

However, there isn't scripture that says, "There is one mediator between Christ Jesus and men, his mother Mary." We don't need to pray to Mary so she can go to Jesus with our problem and tell him what to do. Jesus is our mediator and just like Mary, we can approach him directly.

Even more to the point, Mary doesn't make an explicit demand of Jesus. She never told him how he needed to execute the miracle; she just gave Him her problem. In fact, she doesn't even address His objections; as she's walking away, she only addresses the servants, not Jesus.

For all we know, she could have expected Jesus to pull out His wallet and hand the servants money to go buy more wine. It's Jesus who decides how to solve our problems.

**We need to be more like Mary...**

**Hebrews 4:16 (KJV)** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We can't tell God how to solve our problems, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to solve them ourselves either. Let us approach the throne of grace, lay our burdens at His feet, and then walk away. Let him figure out how to solve them.

**Jesus Is Our Groom**

I mentioned that it was the groom's responsibility to secure enough wine for the wedding. Jesus wasn't the groom at this wedding, he was a guest. It wasn't His responsibility to do anything about the problem of wine. Yet He took it upon Himself to acquire the wine they needed. Even though He didn't have obligation to this, He took it upon Himself to prove the wine.

As God, Jesus had no obligation to the sins of the world. But by becoming a descendent of Adam, He took that sin upon Himself. Nobody told Him how to save the world: not Mary, not John the Baptist, not Elijah, not Moses, not Adam. No one told Him that He had to come to earth and die on a cross; they simply cried out to Him and he chose the cross as the method for His miracle.

**Numbers 30:8 (KJV)** But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the Lord shall forgive her.

In other words, even though a bride makes a commitment, that vow can be taken away by her husband. We are the bride and Christ is our husband. If we try to take on a sin, Jesus has the power to void that sin and remove it from our lives.

We need to take our burdens to Jesus so he can void the sin and we can be forgiven.

### **An Abundance of Wine**

Not only did Jesus take on the role of the groom by providing the wine for the wedding, he provided a lot of it. Per John 2:6, there would have been about 180 gallons of wine! Jesus didn't just make enough wine for the wedding; he made more wine than they all could possibly drink. Why'd he do this? Because there is a prophecy that says the Messiah would be accompanied by an abundance of wine.

**Amos 9:13 (KJV)** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

By providing so much wine, I'm certain that the wedding guests were never without wine. In fact, I find it highly likely that when the wedding was over, the groom found himself turning the stone jars onto their sides and pouring the wine down the hills just as the prophecy said that it would.

As our husband, Jesus can provide for us in ways that even we can't fathom. While we may not have 180 gallons of wine here in the sanctuary, we do live in a country where we waste more food every day than some people have in a week. For years, people have prayed to God to save them from starvation, while we pray that we won't get too fat.

### **Wine, Water, Rocks, and Blood**

I spoke earlier about the importance of first occurrences in the Bible. John says that this the first miracle that Jesus performed and with it, His disciples came to believe. The first miracle that Moses performed was turning water into blood. It was Jesus that equated wine and blood into the same thing at the last supper when he said,

**Matthew 26:28 (KJV) For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.**

So, Jesus performed a miracle like Moses did. Instead of turning water into blood, Jesus turned water into wine and wine into blood.

But, Jesus told the servants to put the water into stone jars and it turned into wine. In Old Testament times, there were two kinds of water: stagnant water and living water. Living water was created by God and existed within rivers, streams, and wells. Stagnant water was created by man by storing it in clay jars or cisterns.

The only way that stagnant water could become living water was by having it touch stone. In fact, the whole reason that the stone jars were there was so that the water would be ritually pure for the washings that needed to take place before the wedding meal.

Speaking of stone, Moses brought water from a rock by striking it.

**Numbers 20:11 (KJV)** And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

But according to Paul, Jesus is the rock.

**1 Corinthians 10:4 (KJV)** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

At every turn, Jesus shows himself to be greater than Moses. Moses struck a rock; Jesus was the rock who was struck for us. Moses got water from the rock; Jesus put rivers of living water within us. Moses saved the people by turning water into blood; Jesus saved us by shedding his own blood.

Jesus showed how He could take it one step further by not only turning the stagnant water into living water, but turning the living water into wine.

Jesus was not simply another Moses who led us to salvation; He, Himself, is our salvation directly.

### **Fill Yourself to The Brim**

When you're in a church for a while, you find that your supply of wine runs low. There are times when the Holy Ghost that once filled you to the brim is now running low. Your spirit has become weak and diluted; watered down.

If that is you this evening, I pray that you would come to this altar. Bring your empty vessels of clay to the altar and ask the Lord to fill you once again. The Lord wants to fill the empty vessel within you.

But he doesn't just want to fill you with the water you've always had, he wants to fill you with something new. You're expecting water, but he's going to fill you with wine.



On the Day of Pentecost, it was supposed by some that the people speaking in tongues were filled with wine. Strangely, that's true. However, they weren't full of the wine they were thinking of. Those people in the upper room were full of a new kind of wine; a wine that they were filled with by their new husband, Jesus Christ.

Jesus filled them to the brim with the Holy Ghost, just like He filled those stone vessels with wine.

Mary was the mother of Jesus and as such, she knew how to treat Him. We should follow her lead: come to the altar with your burdens and lay them here. Do as Mary did and lay those burdens down at Jesus's feet. Once you make it His problem, you won't even have to deal with it anymore.