

Sermon – 11/04/2004 pm

Wedding at Cana

Study Text: John 2:1-5

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. What could more appropriately follow on such an introduction than for Jesus to attend a wedding? Human society around the globe is characterised by birth, death and marriage ceremonies. ‘Advanced’ western society tragically has turned away from such basic expressions of human society – and the results are becoming more and more apparent. In rejecting Biblical truth that man was created in the image of God, humanists prefer to look to the animal world for clues to help us live in society.

Jesus came into the world of fallen man. He came into our world. And he affirmed the creation ordinance of marriage – both in his teaching and here in his participation in this wedding at Cana in Galilee. Marriage was ordained by God before the Fall.

However, His attendance at this wedding does not make marriage a sacrament. The two sacraments of baptism and the Lord supper are clearly given by our Lord.

Wedding

Jesus was invited to this wedding with his disciples and he went along. Why was he invited? We are not told specifically, but Cana was not far from Nazareth where he grew. We see that his mother was there at the wedding not as a guest but helping in the arrangements. Moreover, Nathaniel, who had just become his disciple, was from Cana. So it was fitting that he be invited.

The wedding feast probably involved the whole town. In India the whole village was invited to any wedding in that village. There was no making guest lists, and limiting the numbers as we do. Everyone was invited and they all had to enjoy good food and wine as we see in this story. There could be hundreds of people come and all had to be fed. Sometimes the feasting could go on for a few days. This was an immense task and a very costly task.

At one wedding I attended I went round the back of the tent to where the food was being prepared. I saw the cooks stirring the food in these massive pots about 1m across – with ladles like shovels. It was a social obligation to feed all these guests. To meet this obligation some hosts had to borrow heavily to pay for the wedding feast. To run short of food was a major embarrassment.

In Israel at this time it seems to have been a bit like this. The obligation to provide food of sufficient quantity and quality was paramount. To fail to do so if your neighbour had provided for you at his wedding was highly offensive. It may even have led to legal action.

No wine

At this wedding the wine ran out. Poor arrangements or more likely just plain poverty on the part of the hosts resulted in this predicament. It was a great concern, a concern which Jesus' mother shared with him. *They have no wine* she told Jesus. Was she just passing on news to Jesus or did she expect him to do something to help. Her instructions to the servants in v.5 show that she expected Jesus to do something – *whatever he says to you do it*. Was she expecting Jesus to perform a miracle? Some think that she has witnessed him doing miracles before but there is no evidence for this. In fact this was the beginning of miraculous signs that Jesus did (v. 11).

There is no mention of Joseph here, possibly because he had died. If so Jesus would have been responsible for his mother. This responsibility he passed on to John as he died on the Cross (19:27). But Mary was also aware of the wonders surrounding the birth of her son Jesus and of his special wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52), not to mention what she heard John the Baptist say about him. *They have no wine* she said to Jesus hoping that he would do something.

Not my hour

Jesus said to her *Woman, what does your concern have to do with me?* Or why do you involve me? Literally it reads 'what to me and you'. This reply was not rude or harsh – he addressed her in the same way from the cross (19:26). Nevertheless there was a note of gentle rebuke as he went on to tell his mother *my hour has not yet come*.

He had now entered upon his ministry. He must be about his Father's business. Jesus was not operating under family direction; he was not even operating by his own timetable. He was operating under the direction of his Father in heaven and according to his divine timetable. This realization is summed up in these words *my hour has not yet come*.

Mary probably struggled with the way in which Jesus distanced himself from her at this time and other times also. Was this the sword that would *pierce her own soul?* (Luke 2:35). But she had to know that though he was her son he was the Messiah of God and that she like every other person must come to know him and believe in him as the Son of God for salvation.

What was the hour that he spoke of here? Although J. C. Ryle thought it was his time to perform miracles, it is clear from other references to 'my hour' that this is not the meaning. Well, to the extent that the miracles brought him glory that may be the case. But this gospel is marked throughout by declarations of the heavenly timetable under which Jesus was operating. Jesus told his brothers – *my time has not yet come* (7:6, 8). John the writer then takes up this same truth (7:30, 8:20).

When did his hour come? The turning point comes in ch.12. It was in the so called passion-week as Jesus was approaching the Cross that Jesus said *the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified*. *My hour* then refers to the time when Jesus would be glorified, fully and finally (12:23, 17:1). That glorification, that glorious exaltation, came in the cross and his resurrection.

The time, the hour, that Jesus was thinking of was the Cross. His death upon the cross would be the decisive hour not only in his life, but in your life and indeed in the history of the whole world. Jesus knew from the beginning that this was the plan of the Father, his plan for the Lamb of God

who takes away the sin of the world. This was the plan of salvation by which God would be glorified in heaven and earth.

Do you glory in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ? What does the Cross mean to you? Many see the cross as a tragedy and not a triumph. How tragic that the cross is portrayed as triumph of wicked men over an innocent man, when Jesus himself said *the hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified*.

Jesus went obediently; he went willingly, to the Cross. It was by the determined foreknowledge of God that Jesus was delivered up and taken by lawless hands, crucified and put to death. Peter proclaimed the death of Christ as victory, the victory of God not of men. For God raised him from the dead and exalted him to his right-hand in heaven.

Jesus, God the Son, resisted the temptations of Satan there in the desert. He refused to be manipulated by man, be it his own mother, his brothers or his closest disciples. He knew that he had come for this very hour. Jesus prayed *Now my soul is troubled and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour* (12:27). He came into this world for this very purpose, the purpose of this hour.

This passage speaks to us of the sovereignty of God. Jesus came into this world according to the plan of God. He died on the Cross according to God's plan and purpose. *I have glorified you on earth, I have finished the work you have given me to do* (17:4). He waited to be glorified together with the Father in heaven.

God is still sovereign. All things operate according to his eternal plan and purpose. He set the hour, the day of salvation, and he has also set the Day of Judgment. He will judge all people – the living and the dead. He is also sovereign in election.

Divine plan

If Jesus, the only begotten son lived and died according to the plan of his heavenly father, should not we, as adopted children be seeking to live according to the will of our Father. Do we not pray *our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* Your will be done includes your life. Is it your desire right now to glorify God in your life?

Most assuredly I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains alone, but if it dies it produces much grain (12:24). Jesus calls upon you to die to the things of this world, to die to self, and to repent and submit yourself to the will of your Father in heaven. His own death on the cross is the means whereby you can be freed from the power of your sinful nature and live to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.

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