

## Jesus the True Bridegroom

### 1. Intro

- A number of years ago I organised the annual black tie ball for the rugby club I played for
- I really went to a lot of effort to try and make it a great night
  - We held it at the City Tattersalls Club in town
  - Everyone got dressed up > tuxedos for the boys > girls frocked up
  - 140+ guests
  - 9 piece band,
  - great menu
- It was all looking great and planned to perfection ...
  
- Until about 9pm, only 2 hours into the night, the venue host came to tell me the bar tab had already reached its limit!
  - I was shocked ... I couldn't believe it!
  - As the event organiser ... this was my worst night mare
  - How can you have a party with no more wine?!
  - I thought I had properly worked out how much people would drink
  - Unfortunately what I hadn't planned on was
    - everyone drinking like fish
    - nor had I planned on the younger lads drinking the wine like it was cordial –
    - some of whom I found out later, had been drinking wine straight from the bottle!
  
- Fortunately for me and everyone else ... just like there was at the wedding at Cana ... we also had a miracle in Sydney that night ...
  - No ... I didn't turn water into wine ...
  - No ... Jesus didn't turn up and turn water into wine
    - But our club president did agree that the football club would pay for the drinks for the rest of the evening
- I can tell you I was a very relieved young man!

### 2. Jesus reveals his glory as the Christ who ushers in the kingdom of joy

- Well the embarrassment that I felt that night at the rugby ball was very much like what the host of this wedding at Cana would have felt when the wine ran out

- You see, weddings in 1st century Palestine were huge events that often went for a whole week and were sometimes the biggest event that would happen in a village each year
- So when the wine runs out at such an important event as this, then this is a DISASTER!
  - This is Cana we're talking about ... a small village in the boon-docks of Galilee ... miles from any major town
  - They couldn't just jump in the car and whip down to Dan Murphy's to pick a few cases of chardonnay and shiraz
  - They were stuffed ... the wedding celebration was as good as over
- So it was lucky for host and the bride and groom ...
  - that unbeknown to them,
  - they had sitting in their midst ...
  - Jesus ... the ultimate barman
- John tells us that Jesus, his mother and his disciples are at this wedding
  - This is not surprising as Cana is only a few miles from Jesus' home town of Nazareth
- And when the wine runs out, Jesus' mother tells him about the problem, and Jesus tells the servants to fill some large jars with water
  - And as we read in v8-9 the water is turned into wine
- This is no small feat
  - Each of the water jars held about 100 litres!
  - In reality Jesus has just whipped up the equivalent of about 840 bottles of wine!
- Not only has Jesus produced a massive **amount** of wine ... we also read in v9-10 that the **quality** of the wine was **far** superior to the wine that was originally served to guests
- The servants bring the wine to the Master of the Banquet, sort of like a Master of Ceremonies, who is so impressed, he says to the Bridegroom
  - *"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 to last"*

- Now I am sure we can all relate to this story
- I don't know about you, but whenever, we have guests over for lunch or dinner I always check to see whether the bottle of wine our guests bring is better than the one I have
  - And if it is ... I stash it away for when I go to someone else's dinner party! Jokes!
  - No ... if you have a couple of bottles of wine at a dinner party, you start with the good stuff – when your palette will appreciate it and then if you want some more later, then you crack open a cheaper bottle
- However, this was not how it panned out at the wedding in Cana
  - Now there is no doubt that the original wine would have been good quality wine
  - I mean, have you ever been to a wedding where the wine wasn't good quality?
  - But Jesus produces wine that is another league
- **Illustration**
- It would be like this ...
- Say ... at your own wedding you serve up a Taylor's Shiraz > one of my favourites ... you can get it in the bottle shop for \$15-20 a bottle
- But then half way through the night ... your MC comes up and says
  - *"Mate, I've got some good news and bad news*
  - *The bad news your wine has just run out!*
  - *The good news is, Jesus has just lobbed up with 70 cases of Penfold's Grange Hermitage and mate ... this stuff is sensational!"*
- Now the reason Jesus does this is
  - not because he wants to make sure he'll be invited to his mates future weddings in case they run out of wine ...
- No ... Jesus uses the opportunity to set his own agenda and we get a clue there in the first part of v11 where John tells us
  - *'This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee.'*
- You see John doesn't just call this a miracle ... he calls it a miraculous SIGN
  - What do signs do? They point to something don't they?
  - And like any sign ... we need to avoid focusing on the sign itself and ensure we look at what it is the sign is pointing us towards

- So what is the sign of Jesus turning water into pointing us to?
- In OT times, abundance of wine was often used as a metaphor, particularly by the OT prophets
  - These guys were messengers through whom God spoke to his people
  - Often the prophets would speak about an abundance of wine as sign of the 'time to come' when God would restore his relationship with sinful humanity and our broken world
  - Abundant wine would be a of the sign that the Christ has come to usher in the Kingdom of God
- Have a listen to Isaiah 25:6-9
  - *On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines. <sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. <sup>9</sup> In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."<sup>1</sup>*
- So ... Jesus' conversion of water into a banquet of top quality wine ... at a wedding banquet ... was his way of announcing that the kingdom of God had arrived
- That the time has come when
  - death will be swallowed up
  - tears wiped away from all faces
  - disgrace of sin will be wiped away from the earth
  - And people will rejoice in that salvation and put their trust in him
- You see in doing this miracle ... Jesus is pointing to himself and revealing his glory
- He saying ...
  - "That time of hope and joy you have been looking forward to has come"
  - "And I am the Christ who has come to make it happen"
  - "I'm the one you need to trust in"

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<sup>1</sup> See also Amos 9:13 and Joel 3:17-18

- **Application**

- A couple of points to note here
- The Bible makes it very clear heaven is going to be a kingdom of joy
  - Any wedding you go to is a joyous occasion
    - A wedding is the best party you can attend
    - Always great food > great wine > great joy
  - God is very deliberately helping us to understand that heaven is like the ultimate wedding banquet
    - Get more choice than chicken or beef
    - Speeches don't drag on forever
    - Won't get stuck with the boring cousins at the back of the room
- The kingdom Jesus has come to usher is a place
  - he will swallow up death
  - he wipe away the tears from all faces
  - he will remove the disgrace of sin from the earth
- And it will be a place of eternal joy and feasting
- And flowing on from that (pardon the pun) ... this means ...
- Any 'wine' except this wine that Jesus brings ... will run out
  - What is that gives you joy in life?
  - You may believe in God, you may even believe in Jesus Christ
  - But what's the real joy in your life
    - Career
    - Kids
    - Girlfriend / boyfriend
    - Spouse
    - Cause
  - What's the real joy in your life?
- You need to know ... that if it's not Jesus Christ and the real joy that he brings ... it will run out
  - Something will come in and ruin it > you can't stop that > no matter how much you try and control it
  - Need to realise that
- All wine ... all joy ... bar the wine Jesus brings will run out
- And so friends you need to see the sign and what it's pointing to
  - Servants saw the sign ... but they didn't see the glory of the one who effected it

- They didn't respond to the one who's coming to usher in God's eternal kingdom
- The disciples however
  - saw what Jesus did ...
  - saw what it pointed to ...
  - realised he's the Christ who's come to usher in the kingdom of joy ...
  - and so they put their trust in him
- Don't be like the servants
  - Don't ignore what Jesus has done ... and what it says about who he is and what he's come to do
- He's the Christ who's come to usher in the kingdom of great joy
  - And so the right response is to put our faith in him

### **3. Jesus reveals his glory as the bridegroom who lays down his life for his bride**

- But something else going on here in v3-4 > really puzzled me
- Told in v3 the wine runs out
  - Mary tells Jesus "they have no more wine"
  - Why is Mary so concerned about the wine?
- In those days the responsibility to supply the wedding banquet lay with the groom
  - In an honour and shame culture ... to run out of wine in the middle of the wedding feast was embarrassing
  - One commentary I read said it was so shameful ... the brides relatives could bring a lawsuit against the groom for such an oversight!
  - Now that's a great way to start your married life!
    - Not only is your wedding banquet is a flop
    - But then your in-laws taking you to court and sue you for being a dud bridegroom!
- So Mary tells Jesus this ...
  - And Jesus replies "My time has not yet come"
  - Strange! What's going on here?
- Throughout first half of John's gospel, Jesus is constantly saying "My time has not yet come"<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20

- In the Greek it's literally, "My **hour** has not yet come"
- Then in the second half of John's gospel he begins to say
  - "My time has now come" or "The hour has come"<sup>3</sup>
- As you read what Jesus is saying here in context it's clear he's referring to his death
  - The hour / time for which he has come ... is to go to the cross as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world
  - The hour is his crucifixion
  - It's the climatic point of his coming to earth ...
- So Mary says ...
  - "We've run out of wine"
- Jesus says,
  - "I'm not ready to die yet!"
- Say what?
  - Why does Mary's request to provide wine at the wedding feast cause him to think about and refer to his death?
- Let's think about it this way
- What do you often end up thinking about when you go to someone's wedding?
  - Single person / before you were married
  - Very hard not to go to a wedding and think about
    - your own wedding day
    - what it might be like for **you** to be the bride or the groom one day
    - what that day might look like for **you**
  - Married person
    - Inevitably end up reflecting back on your own wedding day and your marriage > what I was like and how it has been
- That's what Jesus is doing
  - He's thinking about his own wedding day
- You say
  - "What?! Jesus never got married? Jesus doesn't have a wedding day!"
  - Yes he did

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<sup>3</sup> 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1

- Right throughout the OT, one of the metaphors God uses to describe his relationship between himself and his people is of a bride and a groom
  - God = bridegroom
  - His people = bride<sup>4</sup>
- God uses different metaphors to describe himself
  - Sometimes – King > he's sovereign over his people
    - Doesn't just want a relationship with his ppl like a king and his citizens
    - His relationship with his ppl is much more intimate than that ... like a bridegroom with his bride
  - So other times he describes himself as a bridegroom
- When Jesus comes as God on earth, God in the flesh ... it's no coincidence that Jesus is portrayed in the same way
  - John 3:29, Mark 2:19
  - Jesus = groom<sup>5</sup>
  - Church / Christians = bride<sup>6</sup>
- As you read the rest of the NT it becomes clear that Heaven is the great eternal wedding feast<sup>7</sup>
  - At the end of the Bible in Revelation > letter written by John
  - Describes that when Jesus returns and comes as it were to his bride ...
  - Heaven is like an wonderful eternal wedding feast
  - John says ...
    - *Revelation 19:9 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'*
- So Jesus is definitely going to have his own wedding day
- So when his mother asks him to do something about the wine ... it seems he's casting his mind forward to the time of his own wedding banquet where as the **true** bridegroom **he** will have to supply the wine
- But for the that wedding between to take place ... for Jesus to supply that abundant wine for his wedding feast ... Jesus has to prepare his bride
  - He has to cleanse her and make her perfect
  - That is only possible through his death ... when his time has come
- Why is that? Think about it like this ..

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<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 62:5

<sup>5</sup> 3:29; Mark 2:19-20

<sup>6</sup> Eph 5:21-33

<sup>7</sup> Luke 14:15-24; Matt 22:1-14; Rev 19:6-9



- Why is it that when a bride is preparing for her wedding she goes to so much effort to look perfect on that day?
  - Because she knows she has imperfections in how she looks
- Evidently ... apparently ... she will spend **months** thinking about how to make sure every single one of those imperfections is covered and she's looking gorgeous for that day
  - Hair, make-up, diet, dress, accessories ...
  - When she enters the church ... everyone goes "WOW! She looks AMAZING!"
    - I never thought ...
  
- Why? Because all the imperfections are covered
  - Just a little daub of powder in just the right place
  - Dress is perfectly sized
  - All the imperfections are covered
- When she comes down that aisle everyone goes 'wow!'
  - No matter what she looks like in reality ... on that day she looks wonderful ... all the imperfections are covered
- But when it comes to the wedding between Christ and his church ...
  - There's no amount of
    - covering over the cracks
    - dressing up
    - effort on our behalf
    - can cover over our imperfections
  - If our wedding to Jesus was for real we wouldn't be proudly strutting down the aisle gladly accepting everyone's praise and attention
  - We'd be slinking in a side door in rags, covered in dirt and smelling like a tip
  
- But at the cross ... when his time had finally come ... Christ cleansed his bride
  - He dealt with our sin and shame
  - He washed us clean
  - Purified us
    - In Revelation 19:7-8 – *"For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. <sup>8</sup> Fine linen, bright and clean, was **given** her to wear."*

- And so that day in Cana as Mary asks Jesus to supply the wine for the feast he's basically saying ...
  - "I'll supply the wine for this wedding feast because I need to reveal my glory"
    - "I'll cover over the bridegrooms shortcomings and save him from shame"
    - "And people will see my glory"
  - "But the time when I when I'll supply the wine for the eternal wedding feast ..."
    - "I'll cover over everyone's shortcomings and save them from eternal shame ..."
    - "That time can only happen when I go to the cross and that's when everyone will see my true glory"
  
- You see through this first sign ... Jesus is giving us a glimpse of what is to come in his mission on earth
  - He's the true bridegroom who lays down his life for his bride
  
- **Application**
- How does this help us?
- First of all ... it shows how much God loves us and wants to be in a relationship with us
  - The fact that he considers those who trust in him as his **bride** ... just how intimate a relationship God wants to have with us
  - He's not distant > dictatorial > uncaring
  - He loves us like the perfect husband loves his wife
  
- Which leads to second point ...
- If Jesus is the true and perfect bridegroom who perfectly loves us and give up his life for us ...
- Then you need to make sure you have the right perspective about marriage
- If Jesus is the true bridegroom who lays down his life for his bride ... then this helps us to keep marriage in perspective
  - Some of you are anxious because you're single and you wish were married
  - Some of you are anxious because you are married but your marriage isn't going so well
    - If that's true for you I understand that's complex and requires a different response for each ... but here's one thing that applies to both

- There's only one person in the universe that can give you everything your heart longs for
- And if you believe that Jesus Christ is the true bridegroom ... he's waiting for you
- And you mustn't think that any relationship or spouse is going to give you everything your heart longs for
- You must never look to a spouse or a marriage to
  - Fix you
  - Give you all the love that you need
  - Give you all the value and significance you need
  - Satisfy the deep desire for love that you need
- Whether you're a Christian or not ... if your relationship with Jesus Christ is not real to you ... and knowing Jesus is just an intellectual thing ... a series of doctrinal truths
  - The reality is you will end up putting your longings and hopes in something or somebody else
  - And it will crush them ... and it will disappoint you ... because they will never be able to give you all that
- Of course it's a good thing if you're a single person who wants to marry
- And it's a good thing to have a healthy marriage if you are married
- But you also need to realise that the deepest longings of your heart can only be satisfied by one person and that's our one true bridegroom – Jesus Christ
- What that does it keeps you from putting too much
  - Hope > weight > anger > and even joy in anything and anyone but Jesus
- So friends ... if that's who Jesus is and
  - that's how much he loves us and
  - that's the blessing that comes from being united to the true bridegroom who lays down his life for you
- Why wouldn't you want to follow him
- Why wouldn't you want to love him and submit to him
- Why wouldn't you want to share in the love and blessing that comes from knowing him

- John 2:11 - "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him"
  - May we do likewise
  - Put our trust in Jesus ...
    - The Christ who ushers in the kingdom of joy
    - Bridegroom who lays down his life for his bride

**PRAY**