

## *Do What Your Mother Tells You*

John 2:1-11 (May 10, 2020)

### ***John 2:1-11***

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup>Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup>When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” <sup>5</sup>His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” <sup>6</sup>Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. <sup>7</sup>Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.” So they took it. <sup>9</sup>When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.” <sup>11</sup>Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

### ***Historical Context***

Given the climate, lack of clean water, large number of guests, and sustained duration of ancient wedding feasts, the lack of wine at this wedding was a serious problem. The inability to provide what the guests needed was a failure in hospitality that would bring shame on the wedding hosts. We may read the story and wonder why the family of the bride and groom failed to provide enough wine. However, it was ancient custom for guests to bring wedding gifts in the form of food and drink to share the burden of providing for such a large group. Thus, the family’s lack of wine may indicate a lack of community support in addition to their own lack of resources.

Further, not only was not having enough wine a social embarrassment; it was a symbol and sign of what was yet to come. For a wedding to run out of wine was an omen that there was little chance of this particular marriage reaching its full potential.

### ***Theme: Do What Your Mother Tells You***

Another important detail in this first sign, this first act of Jesus’ public ministry, is that his mother is present. In the Gospel of John, the mother of Jesus is never named, never called Mary. She is always denoted by her relationship to Jesus. It is her urging that initiates Jesus’ action.

The exchange between Jesus and his mother is really quite funny. She notes that the wedding hosts have run out of wine. Jesus’ response is that they should have hired a better wedding planner. But then, she tells the servants to do whatever Jesus says. I have this image of the mother of Jesus much like encouraging your child to get on the school bus for the first time: “Come on, you can do it! I know you can!” But, I also wonder what she saw in that moment. What had Jesus revealed to her up to that point that would cause her to believe that such a miracle was possible from him?

The mother of Jesus appears only twice in the Gospel of John, at the wedding at Cana and at the foot of the cross. It is more than poignant that the mother of Jesus brackets his life, surrounds Jesus’ earthly ministry. She is at the beginning of his career and watches him die. She is the nurturing force when he is the Word made flesh, a shared parenthood with God, the father.