

Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Encounters with Jesus: "The Wedding Party" John 2: 1-12 by Jean Davies February 2021

"Here comes the Bride" is such a familiar tune that, on hearing the first few notes, we automatically think of a wedding. When Jesus was on earth, "Here Comes the Bridegroom" would have been a more fitting fanfare. The bridegroom would come at night, with a host of friends, to claim his bride and take her to his home. She, waiting in white, and looking out for him, and he, resplendent in his richest clothing and maybe even wearing a crown, would be united. A celebration lasting up to a week would then begin with often the whole village taking part, and the bridegroom bearing the cost. Such a wedding took place in Cana, Galilee, just four miles north of Nazareth, the hometown of Jesus. **Read the account in John 2:1-12.**

The wedding guests would be many and varied: some close relatives, others more distant, friends, neighbours and local dignitaries. John 2:2,3 tells us that "Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding". Jesus' disciples at this stage included Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael and, as most all scholars agree, John himself. Things often go wrong at weddings, some quite humorous as a quick look at the Internet and our TV's reveal, but at this wedding in Cana a genuine social catastrophe presented itself in the form of the wine running out.

MARY: In v3 we see Jesus being informed of the problem. **Q1 Why do you think John refers to "Jesus' mother" (vs 1, 3, 5) rather than by her name, "Mary", as do other Gospel writers? Q2 How do you interpret Mary's understated request for Him to meet the need (v3), and then Jesus' response to her (v4)?** Despite Jesus' initial response, Mary senses that He is about to do something miraculous. She is encountering Him at a different level than their mother to son relationship. Her confident instruction to the servants to "Do what He tells you" illustrates this. **Q3 Are you encountering Jesus at a deeper level? What event has brought this about?**

THE SERVANTS: While the guests were unaware of Who was in their midst, it was the servants who knew from where this new, and finest, wine had come. They had encountered Jesus in their daily working lives, obeyed His commands (vs 7,8), and became witnesses to, and participants in, what John described as "His first miraculous sign", which would point to His second Coming. **Q4 In your daily life, are you encountering Jesus? In what way is He directing, or redirecting, you?**

THE STEWARD, THE BRIDEGROOM, THE OTHER GUESTS: We read that the busy master of the feast was mystified regarding this new wine but did not take his query beyond a remark to the bridegroom. The bridegroom and all who were aware of the potential disaster would have been greatly relieved. All the other guests, completely unawares, just got on with the celebrations, perhaps not even caring so long as their immediate appetites were satisfied. **Q5 Can you think of a situation when you have not recognised God's grace in your life until you stopped to think?**

THE DISCIPLES: Jesus' changing of the water to wine confirms to these, His first disciples, that He is indeed the Messiah, the Son of God (John 1:41, 49). This new encounter with His glory combined confession from their lips with faith in their hearts. **Q6 When did faith in Jesus begin in your heart, and do you confess it openly? Would you be willing to share your testimony with others as an encouragement to them?**

The power and love of Jesus converted water into wine contained in six very ordinary stone jars. This same power and love can also change us ordinary people into "vessels" containing and pouring out the new wine of the Gospel of Christ for His glory, the praise of God and the blessing of others.

May God continue to bless you as you encounter Him in fresh and new ways just as those who attended this wedding encountered Him.