

Read John 2: 1 – 11

1. When we think of weddings, the thought uppermost is commonly the joyous union of two people in marriage. The hope and expectation is that by this union the two individuals will be stronger both as a unit and individually. This image is used in the Bible frequently to depict ideal relationships.

1a. Can you give Biblical examples of these relationships depicted?

1b. Of course, good relationships are by no means restricted to marriage alone; family relationships, working relationships etc can be fully rewarding and fulfilling. In the church, God brings people together to strengthen and bless people working for his purposes. There are many examples in our church. Let's take a moment to thank God for them and bless their ongoing ministry, both inside and outside the church.

2. Water into wine. Where Jesus is invited to act, he brings transformation. The ordinary becomes extraordinary; the plain becomes exotic; the old is made new.

2a. The six stone water jars were used for ceremonial washing (purification rites) but Jesus transforms their use. The old way to purify oneself was coming to an end. What do you think John is pointing us towards, an act that Jesus subsequently commanded his followers to do?

2b. Approximately 150 gallons of the best vintage wine suddenly became available. What can we draw from this about the magnitude of Jesus' blessings?

2c. The master of the banquet was surprised by this 'miracle'. I wonder if what had happened was explained to him! People are surprised by the blessings Jesus pours out. I wonder if we do a good enough job of telling our family and friends of the blessings we receive, and who we believe provided them?

3. Let's look at the role of Mary, mother of Jesus, within this story. Although John was present at the wedding, it is most likely that John learnt the detail of the interaction between Mary and Jesus from Mary (remember John took her into his home following Jesus' crucifixion – see John 19: 26-27). Mary's age at this time is most likely mid-forties, having mothered a number of children (the Bible names four brothers of Jesus and an unknown number of sisters – Matthew 13: 55).

3a. Give some thought to how unusual and unique the relationship between Jesus and his mother must have been as he was growing up. Is this reflected in the exchange of words between them recorded in this passage?

3b. What do you think Mary's expectation was when she told Jesus that the wine had all been drunk? What can we learn from this?