

JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE AND THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

BIBLE TEXT: John 2:1-25.

LESSON 28 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer" (Mark 11:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

John 2:1-25.

¹ And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:
² And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.
³ And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.
⁴ Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.
⁵ His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.
⁶ And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.
⁷ Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.
⁸ And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.
⁹ When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,
¹⁰ And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.
¹¹ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

NOTES:

More Than a Man

The public ministry of Jesus, our Lord, had apparently only begun when He revealed His supernatural power to the people. He proved that He was more than a man who had come to live as an example to his fellow men. As we learned in our previous lesson, Jesus was equal with God in creating the world. All He had to do was to speak, and the earth was made. In comparison, it was a small matter for the Son of God to change water into wine, but it took the same divine power to perform the act.

Tell Jesus

Jesus had been invited to a wedding, and He went with His mother and His disciples. As was customary, they had a feast after the marriage. After a while, the supply of wine ran low; and when Mary heard it she said to Jesus, "They have no wine." When we need something it is a good thing to tell Jesus about it. Jesus is not pleased when His children complain because they do not have everything they want. He said He knows what we have need of, and if we ask in faith He will give it to us. So if we are in need or in trouble, we must tell it to Jesus; and if it is best for us to have what we ask for, Jesus will give it.

We do not know how much Mary and Jesus had discussed the fact that Jesus was different from other people, but the Holy Spirit had told her before Jesus was born that He would be called the Son of the Highest, that He would save His people from their sins, and that His Kingdom would never end. She had "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19). Now she was confident that Jesus had power to do everything, and could help the governor of the feast out of an embarrassing situation.

Implicit Obedience

Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them to do. That is the secret of getting blessings from the Lord. Jesus wants us to come to Him in the exact manner He has laid down in His Word. There is no other way to get saved than to come to Jesus in repentance for our evil deeds, forsaking them, and then believing Him, just as the Bible says. When Christians want something from God they must come in consecration, willing to do what He wants them to do. Then they are rewarded.

When Jesus tells us to do something, He expects us to do it. Disobedience brings trouble, as it did to Jonah when God told him to go and preach to the wicked city of Nineveh the message that it was going to be destroyed. He did not want to go, so he took a ship that was going the other way, to try to run away from God. But we cannot run away from God.

A great storm came up, and the waves tossed the ship around until the sailors thought they were going to sink. Jonah realised that his sin had found him out, so he told the men to throw him overboard and the storm would cease. God had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, so he could not even drown. God could still see him way down there in the sea, inside the whale, and asked him if he was willing to go now. After three days and nights, Jonah was willing to obey God and go preach to the people of Nineveh.

God may not use such drastic means with us; but it is a serious thing to disobey God, and we cannot expect His blessing if we do.

¹² ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

¹³ ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

¹⁴ And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

¹⁵ And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

¹⁶ And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

¹⁷ And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

¹⁸ ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

¹⁹ Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

²⁰ Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

²¹ But he spake of the temple of his body.

²² When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

²³ ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

Preparation before Blessing

It would have been easy for Jesus, to have said, "Let there be wine," and there would have been wine. But sometimes God wants us to do something first. Jesus often healed sick people by saying, "Be thou clean," or "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk"; but one time when He healed a blind man He first made clay and put it on his eyes, and then told him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash. When the blind man obeyed, his eyes were opened and he could see.

When we come to Jesus to be sanctified or to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, God requires us to make deep consecrations. Sometimes those consecrations mean a real sacrifice on our part; we have something to do before the Lord fulfils our desires. When we do our part, God does His.

Obedience Rewarded

The servants filled the waterpots with water as Jesus told them to do; and imagine their surprise when they drew out wine -- good wine better wine than had been served in the beginning!

The Word says that the governor of the feast did not know where the good wine came from, but the servants did. We are sure they told all the people present, but the Scripture only states that the disciples believed. We know that many times afterward when Jesus performed miracles, the sinners did not honour Him.

We see the same condition today. Someone is very ill or injured; and an unbeliever will say, "If that man gets well I will believe God did it"; but after the miracle has been performed, he will say, "It wasn't as serious as we thought." People do not want to believe on Jesus, and they try to do everything they can to explain away a miracle. God gives wonderful blessings to the people who believe and honour Him.

The Jesus we serve worked innumerable miracles when He was on earth. John said, "If they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." In Hebrews we read, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." The miracles Jesus did then are being done also today among the people who believe in Him. What greater miracle is there than a sinner saved from the depths of degradation and set forth to walk a clean, upright life from that day forward? It is not hard for a true Christian to believe that Jesus changed the water into wine.

House of God Defiled

The feast of the Passover was held once a year in Jerusalem, and it was now that time of the year. The Passover was to be a solemn feast, when the Jews were to think about the marvellous deliverance God had wrought in bringing their ancestors out of Egyptian bondage nearly two thousand years before. But the Jews had long ago lost the solemn spirit of the occasion, and were making money out of the celebration.

A part of the ceremony was the offering of a lamb "without blemish and without spot." It was not always easy for each family to provide such a lamb in the city, so the priests kept a supply on hand in the outer courts of the Temple, along with other animals that were used for sacrifices at different times of the year. Historians tell us the unscrupulous priests would often reject the animal the worshiper had brought. They made the pretence that it had a blemish, and then would exchange it, with an additional payment, for one they said was perfect. They would then sell the rejected animal as a perfect one to the next man who came. They did all this to make money.

Jesus was the "meek and lowly Nazarene," and He never sought fame and honour for Himself. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." But when He saw God's House being dishonoured, saw the scandalous conduct of these merchants, He arose in indignation and drove them all out, with their animals, and overturned the tables of the money-changers. He cried, "Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." In Matthew it is recorded, "My house shall be called

²⁴ But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

²⁵ And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." That shows us how careful we should be to keep God's house holy, and do nothing that would dishonour it.

Justice or Mercy

One would have thought that with so many people in the Temple they would have banded together against Jesus; but when the judgment of God falls, nothing that man can do will stop it. In the day of final judgment sinful men will cry for the rocks and mountains to fall on them to hide them from the wrath of God, but in that day nothing will stop the fury of His anger. Now He is merciful and forgives everyone who calls on Him; but when His day of mercy is past, nothing will stop His righteous judgment upon the wicked.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the mother of Jesus expected Him to perform a miracle?
2. Did the servants know who had made the water into wine?
3. What did the governor of the feast say concerning the wine?
4. Had Christ performed any miracles before this time?
5. How should we conduct ourselves in the House of God?