THE EMBARRASSMENT SAVING MIRACLE

Throughout His ministry, Jesus performed many miracles. Some of those miracles provided life-saving remedies for incurable medical conditions. Some of those miracles rescued people from the crippling bondage of demon possession. Some of those miracles brought loved ones back from the dead. But His very first miracle was not as dire or complex as any of these. I like the way one author described Jesus' first miracle. Philip Yancey said, "As emergencies go, this one falls well down the list. It caused embarrassment, to be sure, but need a Messiah who had come to heal the sick and liberate the captives concern himself with a social *faux pas*?"[1]

John 2:1-2 tells us that "there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee" and "Jesus…was invited to the wedding." Does it seem odd to you that Jesus attended a wedding? It's so normal. And, to some degree, we're not accustomed to Jesus doing normal things. Most of the time we read about Jesus traveling to Jerusalem for religious events or traveling to various towns for the purpose of teaching. But on this occasion, He attends a wedding, which at that time was a celebration that could last up to a week.

During the festivities, something happened. John 2:3 tells us that "the wine ran out,", and Jesus' mother, who may have functioned in some type of hostess capacity, approached Jesus and said, "They have no wine," which was her roundabout way of telling her son to do something about it.

Interestingly, after Mary presented the dilemma of insufficient wine to Jesus, He never actually agreed to help. He said, "What does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come" (2:4). But the next thing you know Mary turns to the servants and says, "Do whatever he tells you" (2:5). Her reaction to Jesus' noncommittal response indicates that Mary not only knew Jesus COULD do something about the situation but that He WOULD do something about the situation.

This is the Son of God who would one day resolve mankind's greatest need—the need for salvation. And here's His mother asking Him to reveal Himself to the world by resolving an insignificant issue that would at worst embarrass a couple of individuals. And she doesn't even wait for Him to agree to help because she knows that He will. She knows that He cares about people to the point that He's willing to help them with even the smallest of problems.

And this begs the question: are we as concerned about people as Jesus was? Throughout His ministry, Jesus' disciples tended to be less concerned about other people than Him. It was His disciples who rebuked parents for bringing children to be touched by Jesus assumedly because they viewed this as an activity that was beneath Him (Luke 18:15). It was His disciples who begged Jesus to "send away" a Canaanite woman who was requesting help for her demon-possessed daughter simply because she was annoying them (Matthew 15:23). It was His disciples that encouraged Jesus to "send away" the 5000 plus member crowd when it got late in the day because they didn't want to be responsible for feeding that many people (Mark 6:36). In each of those scenarios, Jesus ignored or overturned the disciples' decision and thereby put people first.

Maybe it was His disciples' lack of concern about people that caused Jesus in one of His last teachable moments with them to say in John 13:34-35 (ESV)…

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[1] Philip Yancey, *The Jesus I Never Knew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 167.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ***35*** *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

In other words, He instructed them to love other people like He loved other people. He wanted His disciples to possess the same compassion for others that He demonstrated throughout His life.

So, when you read about Jesus' miraculous conversion of water into wine at a wedding in John 2:1-11, don't focus on the miracle's SUBSTANCE. Don't focus on was the wine fermented or unfermented. Don't focus on whether or not Jesus drank the wine. Instead, focus on the miracle's INSIGNIFICANCE. Focus on the fact that this was not a life-saving miracle and yet Jesus did it anyway. Focus on the fact that Jesus cared enough about people to resolve an issue that in the grand scheme of things wasn't that big of a deal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come," He was indicating that He didn't think it was time for Him to "get involved in a situation that could complicate His greater mission."[2] And, yet, He ended up doing something about the wine anyway. What can we learn from Jesus' handling of this situation regarding our own time and opportunities?
2. Read Colossians 3:12-14. What is the implication of the "put on" or "clothe yourselves with" language in this passage as it relates to "compassion" (or "tender mercies") and "love" in particular? How do we "put on" or "clothe" ourselves with these characteristics?
3. This miracle of compassion succeeded in "manifest[ing Jesus'] glory" and causing the disciples to believe in Him, according to John 2:11. Based on what this miracle accomplished, what should be the ultimate objective of our acts of compassion? Consider the words of 1 Corinthians 10:31.
4. What can we learn about the relationship between parents and children from the interaction between Jesus and His mother?

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[2] Bruce McLarty, *Journey of Faith* (n.p., 1997), 54.