

**Jesus' mother said to the servants
"Do whatever He tells you."**

John 2:5



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Let's begin with a time of SILENCE followed by PRAYER

Listen to this hymn; centre your thoughts on Christ who calls us to follow Him.

HYMN I Sing for Joy

REFLECT on these WORDS (from Tearfund Lent Reflection):

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.' (Ephesians 3:20)

'Safe? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.'

Mr Beaver speaks these wise words in C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, referring to Aslan, a lion the author paints as a picture of God.

To try and make God safe only serves to make us comfortable. But God cannot fit within the limits of our imagination. We must not reign God in and instead let go, so we can see for ourselves the fullness of God at work.

As part of my role as Editor of One Voice (Tearfund's weekly prayer email), our global teams send me weekly prayer requests. Most of them feel too big: peace in Yemen, or deadly floods that hit the Rohingya refugee camps.

I have to remind myself not to put my human limits on Almighty God. I surrender to him and include the requests of thousands of our supporters who stand with us in prayer. Through them we see God's love in action and lives transformed. Rachael Adams (Rachael is a youth mentor who writes for Tearfund and others) closes with this prayer:

Dear God,

Open my eyes and teach me to let go, so I can see your love at work in all its fullness. Amen.

PRAYER

Holy and Eternal God, whose every breath creates life and whose every word results in a miracle! We come into Your presence feeling unworthy of Your love. Some of us have climbed a small part of a mountain with our own strength, now to realise You were standing beside us, Your hand outstretched to help us; some of us are dealing with insurmountable problems, only to now realise You were standing before us waiting for us to look into your face and ask, *Tell me what to do, Lord!*

Some of us are carrying heavy loads, burdened with worry, with regret, with fatigue, with illness, with despair for the faceless and nameless millions in the world who are hurting, in imminent danger, in bondage and much more.

As we gather to worship you Eternal God, our hearts pounding, breathing hard, our minds pondering what else might befall us, we look to you to calm our minds and placate our anxious thoughts and focus on Your Divine person, filled by the sheer delight of your presence.

We pray this, for ourselves and for one another, in the Name of the One who redeemed us to Yourself, we know as Jesus, Your obedient Son, our Christ!

AMEN.

HYMN I will enter His gates with Thanksgiving

PRAYER for OUR WORLD

Jesus said, *“In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world”*¹. The Apostle Paul cautioned us, *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world”*². God has given us the best survival strategy: **PRAYER** a fixed, always open, dedicated channel of communication with Him.

Father! The state of our world causes us to cling to You for dear life. Human history as recorded in Scripture, is scarred by our fallen nature. The awful

¹ John 16:33

² Romans 12:2

conditions in our world keep increasing. Bless and heal our world, Father. Come, Lord Jesus and take Your rightful place as our King! May Your love comfort, give hope to the hopeless and bring unity where there is conflict.

Father, we pray for those who have authority over people, be they over nations, over communities, over businesses large and small, and over Your Church. Let each of them stand in hushed awe of Your presence, and experience the peace that only You can give, that in so experiencing, they may be driven to work for peace in and among the people under their care. Let us all honour You by loving the people You place in our lives.

Lord! We are in awe how you orchestrate the days of our lives, and Your individual love for each of us. Your Love leads us to love others, and we know it brings You joy when we recognise Your love in each of us. Father, let the light of Your love so shine through our lives, that other may see it, praise You and offer themselves to be Your adopted daughters and sons.

Loving Father, let what we pray for, begin with us. Living with joy in our hearts may be difficult, but not impossible with You. May we bear witness to Your many miracles in our lives and sing of the glory each brings to You. May we submit to You and the work of Your kingdom. May we be committed to Truth and filled with Your Love.

AMEN

HYMN **His Name is Wonderful!**

READING **Gospel of John 2:1-12**

Two days later there was a wedding in the Galilean village of Cana.

Jesus' mother was there and he and his disciples were invited to the festivities. Then it happened that the supply of wine gave out, and Jesus' mother told him, "*They have no more wine.*"

"Is that your concern, or mine?" replied Jesus. *"My time has not come yet."*

So his mother said to the servants, *"Mind you do whatever he tells you."*

In the room six very large stone water-jars stood on the floor (actually for the Jewish ceremonial cleansing), each holding about twenty gallons. Jesus gave instructions for these jars to be filled with water, and the servants filled them to the brim.

Then he said to them, “*Now draw some water out and take it to the master of ceremonies*”, which they did.



When this man tasted the water, which had now become wine, without knowing where it came from (though naturally the servants who had drawn the water knew), he called out to the bridegroom and said to him, “*Everybody I know puts his good wine on first and then when men have had plenty to drink, he brings out the poor stuff. But you have kept back your good wine till now!*”

Jesus gave this, the first of his signs (*miracles*), at Cana in Galilee.

He demonstrated his power and **his disciples believed in Him.**



MESSAGE

Disciple John started by introducing us to the *Eternal Word* present at Creation, then Witness John’s *Lamb of God who takes away the Sin of the World*, and finally to Israel’s long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, as declared by each individual whom Jesus called to follow Him.

You see, Jesus did not become the Son of God when He was born of a young virgin girl some 2,000 years ago. No, He has always been the eternal, pre-existent Son of God. He merely assumed a human body in Mary's womb, in order to live among us. By the time John wrote his Gospel account, it was important for him to establish the deity of Christ at the start of his Gospel, *The Word became human and lived among us*³. Throughout his Gospel account, Disciple John highlights people to whom Jesus revealed His eternal status as the Christ, the Messiah.

Jumping ahead to underscore this point, the miracle at Cana ends with, *Jesus gave this, the first of his signs (miracles), at Cana in Galilee. He demonstrated his power and his disciples believed in him (v.11)*

Every chapter in John adds brush strokes and colours to John's portrait of Christ, giving us greater insight into His nature and His character.

John is often referred to as *The Revealer* because, among other things, he unveiled and revealed the true identity of Christ in greater depth than any other Bible author. Jesus drew Disciple John closer to Himself than any other disciple and was given deeper insight into His divine nature. Such was the depth of relationship and trust Jesus had in John, when God revealed to Jesus, *the events that must soon take place*⁴, Jesus dispatches an *Angel to present this revelation to his servant John, who faithfully reported everything he saw*.⁵

As we read the opening lines of chapter 2, *The next day...*, we realise John probably kept a daily diary of events and happenings. It might have been equally memorable because there was a *wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee to which Jesus, His mother and His disciples were all invited*.

It is noteworthy that Joseph is not mentioned. It is generally accepted, by this time Joseph had entered his eternal rest; it is also widely mentioned, in the

³ John 1:14

⁴ Revelation 1:1

⁵ Revelation 1:1

providence and plan of God, there should be no confusion about Jesus' father. Joseph was father **to** Jesus (not **of** Jesus) during His early years. When Jesus started His ministry and taught about "My Father", there was no doubt He was referring exclusively to His Father in Heaven.

Weddings were not the 'functions' we have today. Weddings in Jewish society were festivities held over several days, each day a significant event symbolising marriage, the last day being the arrival of the Groom, followed by a feast, and ending with the bride and groom leaving for their new home.

So, it would have been a great embarrassment for the families of the bride and groom if they ran out of food and wine, especially the latter which was important in the feasting and toasting over several days.

Mary's concern, *They have **no more** wine*, tells us the host was **not** *running out of wine*, he had *no more wine*, he had completely run out of wine. Mary would have picked up the panic as she moved around the house and she felt she had to do something about it.

The dialogue and John's reporting the event tells us about the significance of what happened next. In the years after Joseph's death, Mary would have related to Jesus, the eldest son, as the man of the house, the *go-to* person in an emergency or a time of difficulty. It would have been natural for her to inform her eldest Son of the problem, expecting Him to do something.

This is a pivotal moment in this mother-and-Son relationship. Jesus' response, *Is this your concern or mine?*, is a testing moment in this relationship. Jesus is not being disrespectful of His mother, but He is asking a deeper, albeit rhetorical question, *Am I still under your authority? Could this be moment when I come under my Father's authority?*

During the years after Joseph's death, Mary would have pondered how, when and where, her Son *Jesus, will be known (revealed) as the Son of the most high.*⁶

⁶ Luke 1:31-33

It is likely that Jesus' response, *My time has not yet come*, was one He had given Mary in the past. We are not privy to the body language and facial expressions during this exchange, but Jesus was making it clear, a new relationship was being established, and Mary must **not** presume on their mother-and-Son relationship. I would love to think that at this very moment, Jesus did not want to cut Mary off, rather He "consulted" with His Father in Heaven before doing what He did, and His Father would have said, *Your time may or may not be now, but we share in our compassion for the plight of those to whom we have breathed life. Go on... show them what it means to have our blessing, and don't forget! Our best which is **THE** best, is what they deserve!*

The servants knew who did it and Mary knew who did it. *This was the first time Jesus revealed His glory, **and His disciples believed in Him!***

With all the undertones recorded in this narrative, the wedding, running out of wine, Mary and Jesus' relationship, all of which are valid and significant, John's inclusion of certain details reveals the real purpose of this miracle.

Jesus could have filled the water pots Himself, or He could just as easily created the liquid in the pots, but He knew that if the servants shared in the work, then they also shared in the blessing. The servants did nothing to make the miracle. Their efforts alone were completely insufficient. Under Jesus' direction, the servants were in a unique place of blessing for this miracle. Clearly they were expecting something to happen when Jesus requested them to fill the jars with water, and filled to the brim they did! Whatever was going to happen, they wanted every drop of it for their employer to enjoy. Jesus wanted their cooperation, that they become carriers of His blessing.

Little did they know, Jesus wasn't going to *add something* to the water to make it taste like wine; He was going to **transform** the water into the best wine, ever! It would no longer be water for ceremonial purification according to the law; it would forever be, the best wine at the wedding.

This event concludes, *His disciples believed in Him*. That little preposition is dripping with significance. Jesus disciples did not believe He could turn water into wine; **their belief in Jesus was such that they seemed to submerge themselves in Him**. They were so absorbed in the person of Christ, they did not want to think of a way out.

Miracles signify a transforming power associated only with Jesus. We are transformed from the old person into a new person, and transformation can never be partial - either we are changed completely, or we are not.

- when Jesus calls, we either follow Him or we don't
- when Jesus requests us to obey Him, we either obey or we don't
- when Jesus says, *leave the old ways of living and let me **transform** you into a new person with a new life*, we offer Him our complete self, to the brim. When He transforms us, we are poured out as God's blessing to those around us, for them to enjoy God's best through us.

This is the pattern for our life of faith and obedience. Are you ready to submerge yourself in the person of Christ, that He may transform **ALL** of you to be a blessing to your family, your community, your nation, and who knows, even the whole world?!

AMEN.

LISTEN Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

BENEDICTION

Father! With astonishment, we see you perform miracles, every hour, every day! As you leave this time of worship, joined with others in Spirit, let the joy of your fellowship with The Father remain in you as glowing embers, ready for the Holy Spirit to fan into flame, to join with renewed vigour, the work of God's kingdom on earth.

Journey this week walking...

... in boldness, as a beloved child of God

... in peace, under the shelter of the Most High

... in faith, knowing Christ walks with you.

AMEN

HYMN All Glory Laud and Honour

LISTEN Kim Collingsworth play Hymns