



Lesson 2 ~ Jesus changes things!

John 2

Discussion Starter

- What is the funniest, worst or most embarrassing thing you have seen happen at a wedding ?

Introduction

The second chapter of John presents two contrasting events which show Jesus in two, quite different situations. In the first event, we see the personal, intimate side of Jesus in a joyful celebration in a small town. In the second, we see his decisive authority displayed publicly at a major national festival.

At the end of the first chapter of John, Jesus told Nathanael, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see **greater things than that.**" Little did Nathanael know how quickly

Jesus' prophetic words would come to pass! Within days of this statement, Jesus performs the first of his many miraculous signs followed quickly by a powerful, public display of his authority. As Nathanael watched Jesus in action, we can be sure he was reflecting on Jesus' words!

It becomes obvious, from the very start, that Jesus' ministry is going to be all encompassing, touching all of life. When Jesus enters a situation, whether private or public, things change!

Preparation

1. Before you read **John 2**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read **John 2** slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, **underline or highlight** any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a **question mark** beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version (NIV)*, the *New Living Translation (NLT)*, or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

3. Write one question that you have about this chapter that you would like answered as you do this lesson.

QUESTIONS

Read **John 2:1-11**.

- Summarize this story into ten main actions. Write a short phrase beside the verse divisions that captures what happened. The first one is done for you.

2: 1-2 <i>Jesus and disciples went to a wedding</i>	2:3 (<i>the problem</i>)	2:3-4
2:5	2:6-7	2:8
2:9-10	2:11	2:11
2:11		

- How does Jesus attending and entering into the festivities of a wedding enhance the meaning of **John 1:14**?

♥ Do you think Jesus is personally interested in the personal concerns and significant events of your life? Why or why not? If so, what difference does his interest make?

Wedding at Cana in Galilee – A wedding in Jesus' day was a festive, community celebration. The ceremony usually took place late in the evening after a feast – on Wednesday if the girl was a virgin and Thursday if she was a widow. Then there was a procession to the home of the groom – a joyous, noisy parade, with an open house and entertainment that went on for a least a week. Refreshments were provided for all the guests. Of these, wine was very important. Failing to provide adequately for the guests would be a social disgrace. In the closely-knit village culture of Palestine, such an error would never be forgotten and would haunt the newly married couple all their lives. Running out of wine was not merely an embarrassing situation; it was a dishonoring crisis for the host.

- What was Mary's reaction to the problem of the wine running out and why do you think she took this action (**2:3**)?

♥ What can we learn from Mary's example?

- Consider Jesus' reply in **2:4**. Do you think Jesus is upset with his mother? Why or why not?

♥ Imagine Jesus saying the words of **2:4** in three different ways: 1) stern and serious; 2) smiling with a twinkle in his eye; 3) lovingly with a tender look. Does considering these three scenarios change, in any way, the impact of Jesus' words for you? What can you learn from this exercise?

- How does Jesus' statements in **John 5:19, 20, 30** help explain his reply in **2:4**?

6. How can Mary's actions and words in **2:3** and **2:5** serve as a model for praying about our problems?

7. John tells us that the changing of water into wine was the first of many miraculous signs that Jesus performed. What were two tangible results of this sign in **2:11**?

Jesus revealed his glory – The *glory* of God is the sum of his majesty, power, beauty, goodness and splendor. When God's glory is revealed, we get a glimpse of who God really is. In this miraculous sign, Jesus revealed (gave us a glimpse) of his glory as the Son of God. By changing water into wine, he shows his mastery over creation and the material universe. Jesus reveals his glory so that we might believe; and, believing allows us to see more of his glory. Jesus allowed his disciples to see his glory so that they would put their faith in him. He does the same for us.

- ♥ When have you gotten a glimpse of Jesus' glory (majesty, power, beauty, goodness and splendor)? What was your reaction?
 - ♥ What miracle has Jesus done in your life that has increased your faith in him?
8. **Problems are opportunities for God to act.** Choose two characters from this story (*Mary, Jesus, disciples, guests, servants, master of the banquet, the bridegroom*) and explain what they personally would have missed if the problem of the wine running out had not occurred.
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- ♥ What problem in your life has been an opportunity for God to act?

Miraculous Sign – A *sign* is something that points beyond itself by teaching a spiritual truth. A *sign* discloses something that was hidden before. Each of the *miraculous signs* in the Gospel of John have great spiritual significance. For John, the author, the miracle itself was less important than what the *miracle revealed about Jesus' character, identity and mission.*

9. Discuss with your group the *spiritual significance* of the following details from this story.
Why is it significant that:
 - Jesus' wine *replaces* the wine that has run out?
 - Jesus chose to turn the Jewish ceremonial water into wine for a wedding feast? (Consider **John 1:17** in your answer.)
 - Jesus' wine is superior to the wine first served?
 - Jesus made more than 120 gallons of wine (about 2400 servings), more than the family could use in months?
 - Jesus came as a guest to the wedding but actually provided as if he were a host?
 - Jesus performed his first miraculous sign at a wedding feast?
 10. Jesus entering a situation always causes change. According to **2 Corinthians 5:17**, what change does Jesus cause in our lives that corresponds to his changing water into wine?
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- ♥ In what areas of your life do you need Jesus to change *water* into *wine*?
 - ♥ How is the miracle of changing dirty water into wedding wine personally significant to you?
11. Read **John 2:12-24**. Does the scene described enhance your concept of Jesus or distract from it? Why?

- ♥ Why were sheep and cattle being sold and money being exchanged in the Jewish temple? (**Numbers 28:16-25**)

Passover is an annual festival celebrated each spring that retells the story of Israel's departure from Egypt during the time of Moses. The night before the exodus from Egypt, Israelite families were spared when the angel of death "passed over" the homes that had been marked by the sacrifice of a lamb (**Exodus 12**). Over the centuries Passover had become a pilgrimage festival in which Jewish families were expected to travel to Jerusalem and participate in sacrifice, a symbolic meal, and reflective study of Israel's salvation as a nation.

12. Look closely at **2:13-17** and state whether you think Jesus was upset because there were unjust profits made off the people by the selling of sacrificial animals and the exchanging of currency **OR** was he upset because these activities were being done in the temple itself? Explain your reasons.

- ♥ How does **2:17** explain why Jesus did what he did?
- ♥ Have you ever had righteous indignation over a cause or crisis to the point where you were overwhelmed with the desire to act? What action did you take?
- ♥ If Jesus were to arrive in your church or place of worship, would he build a whip out of pew rope or would he praise God for what is happening there?

The *temple* was the hub of Jewish life in the first century. It served as the center for government, law, religious life and taxation. It set the moral, religious and political tone of the country. *It was considered most sacred because it was where heaven and earth met and where Jews could come into God's presence.* The temple proper was surrounded by several courts. The innermost court was open only to Jewish men, the next admitted Jewish men and women, and the outermost court admitted Gentiles as well as Jews. The **Court of the Gentiles** was huge, about 500 by 300 yards. The Jewish temple dazzled visitors and it was a point of great religious and national pride.

13. Why would Jesus say "temple" in **2:19** instead of "body"? How does Jesus' body function as a "temple"? (You may want to consider **John 1:18** in your answer.)

- ♥ How does your body function as a temple (**1 Corinthians 6:19**)? What are your standards of holiness for your "temple"?
- ♥ Read **2:24-25**. What is it that Jesus knows about us? How does his knowledge affect the openness honestly of your prayers? Your relationships?

Response

John 20:31 - *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* Share with your group what *words, events* or *dialogue* in **John 2** you find most convincing in supporting John's dual purpose for writing this gospel?

Encounter with Jesus

If you compare **your life** to the **rooms of a house**, which room do you think Jesus might want to clean up: *Library* – the reading room? *Dining room* – appetites and desires? *Workshop* – where you keep your skills? *Recreation room* – leisure activities? *Family room* – where most of your relationships are lived out? *Closet* – where you keep your hang-ups?

Jesus is a gentle and humble teacher and he is willing to come in and help you "clean house", teaching you to live life to the full so that you may experience rest for your soul (**Matthew 11:28-29**). There is nothing in your life that he doesn't already know completely and there is no problem that he doesn't have the solution to. But you must open the door and let him in. He is a Gentleman and he won't make a forced entry!