

More About Jesus, Week 24: Jesus focused on his true purpose

(John 2:1-4)

by Paul Hammons

The first miracle we read about in the book of John takes place when Jesus attends a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, when after prompting from his mother, he turns water into wine after the host's provisions ran out.

But there's more going on than Jesus simply helping an unprepared feast master:

When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." - John 2:3-4 (ESV)

The address of his mother as "woman" would not have been considered a rude way to address a woman, but at the same time, it's also not how a son would typically address his mother. And his response to her, which would literally be translated "what to me and to you?" indicates a disconnect: "Why are you involving me in an issue that is yours and not mine?"

Jesus is telling Mary, "You and I are focusing on different things." Mary is thinking about the wedding. Jesus is thinking about the coming Kingdom and his mission to establish it.

John doesn't specifically tell us why Jesus chose to perform the miracle at his mother's request, but John makes a connection for us between Jesus' initial reaction ("what does this have to do with me?") and his description of the action in v. 11: *"This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11).*

A sign is distinct from a miracle in that it is performed specifically to illustrate a truth. Jesus' purpose in performing signs wasn't to use his power for selfish or material reasons (see also **Matthew 4:1-4**), but as with the story of Lazarus and the story of the bread and fishes (**John 6**), Jesus used an opportunity to not only show compassion, but in doing so to show his glory to his disciples and anyone was willing to see.

This verse includes one of seven instances in which Jesus references "his time" or "his hour," referring to the ultimate purpose in his life on earth, which was to die on the cross in fulfillment of the law and the prophets, and to be raised on the third day according to God's plan of salvation for mankind.

And that's one of the many themes that John emphasizes in his gospel: Everything Jesus did in his life - all the signs and discourses - all of them had specific purposes according to God's plan to bring Jesus to the cross, and ultimately back from the dead. Man did not put Jesus on a cross apart from God's willingness to send him there!

"For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." - John 10:17-18

Jesus was constantly focused on that mission, and every action and every decision was intended to lead to that point.

When Jesus' brothers basically dared him to go with them to the feast in Jerusalem and proclaim his identity to the world, Jesus responded, *"You go up to the feast. I am not going up to this feast, for my time has not yet fully come" (John 7:8).* As it turned out, Jesus DID go to the feast, but not for his brothers' purpose, and not on his brothers' timeline.

When the disciples asked Jesus about the blind man in the temple, and whether he had sinned or his parents to cause his current situation, Jesus linked it instead to his own mission:

Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." - John 9:2-5

In the very next chapter, Jesus sees the impending death of his friend Lazarus not as an event to be mourned or an evil to be prevented, but instead *"for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4).*

One of the great lessons we can take from Jesus' life is our own need to order our decisions and our plans around God. Whether taking a job, going to an event, selecting a church, entering a relationship, or any other endeavor in this life, our question should always be: "Does this fit in with God's purpose for my life? And how will I use this time to ensure that God is glorified?"