

# John 2v1-11

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Preacher: Chris Roberts

[ 0 : 00 ] Great, so we're carrying on, looking through John's Gospel, we started a couple of weeks ago, and we're thinking quite specifically about how John teaches us about faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

And in our study of belief in John, I want us to see one particular thing this afternoon, that genuine Christian belief is both humble and it's bold.

And really, we're only going to scratch the surface in the time that we've got in this passage today, but I want to notice two things about the miracle that Jesus does here.

I want to notice the location of the miracle and the guest list at the party of the miracle. At this wedding party where Jesus turns water into wine, Jesus blesses the humble and he blesses the bold.

So first of all, Jesus blesses the humble. Just look at the location of this wedding party that we read about here. See the geography first of all.

[ 1 : 20 ] Do you notice in verse 1, the wedding is in Cana of Galilee. And why does John mention that in verse 1? It's not just a kind of note for historical accuracy, although it does give that, doesn't it?

Because he mentions it again at the end in verse 11. Jesus did this miracle, this sign at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory.

John wants us to realise that the geography is part of the theology here. Because Cana of Galilee was the last place you'd expect something like this to happen.

It was the last place you'd expect the saviour of the world to begin his ministry. If you read earlier on in John's Gospel in chapter 1, you might remember and you can look at it later.

There's a conversation that Nathaniel, one of the disciples, has with Philip before he meets Jesus. And Nathaniel, he's slightly snobbish. He doesn't quite believe that anything good can come out of Nazareth, which is Jesus' hometown.

[ 2 : 34 ] It's only about 5 to 10 miles up the road from Cana. It's in the same region. It's the last place you'd expect anything good to happen.

Anything really good. It's on the opposite end of the country from Jerusalem, the spiritual capital. It's the centre for the rich and prosperous Gentiles, the non-Jews.

So spiritually, it's a kind of visitor destination. It's where the non-believers are. It's where the outsiders are. It's where the tourists are.

But here's Jesus. He does this miracle, doesn't he? He performs this miracle. He blesses the wedding party in a town, in a region you'd last expect him to be.

I knew a guy once whose nine-year-old girl went to a birthday party of a friend of hers from school. And she came back from the party and the dad asked, you know, how did the party go?

[ 3 : 39 ] And she said, well, it was kind of a run-of-the-mill kid's birthday party. There was games and all the rest of it. Nothing unusual. Until the dad of my friend, when we were playing Pass the Parcel at the end, didn't use the stereo, but picked up a guitar and started strumming along.

And she said it got even stranger when, while we were playing Pass the Parcel, the dad started singing instead of playing on the stereo. It was kind of old-fashioned. And the dad, prying a little more, asked, well, do you know what her dad's name is?

And the girl said, I think it's Mick. Yeah, it's Mick. And the dad smiled to himself, knowing who it was. Mick Jagger had just played a gig at a kid's party without her knowing it.

The nine-year-old said, wow, wow, dad, Mick Jagger. Is he as famous as Kylie? It's a stupid story, but here's the point. The party that Jesus decides to liven up.

The first place that he works and does a miracle in John's Gospel is the last place you'd expect him to be. It's completely off the radar. For the religious types, Cana is child's play.

[ 5 : 00 ] And he's blessing them. He's blessing the nobodies and the non-believers and the tourists. Not the spiritual elites.

He goes to the people who least deserve and expect him to appear. The people who'd probably have the humility to say, wouldn't they, Jesus wouldn't be interested in us.

Do you believe that people like that can believe?

We're challenged, aren't we? Remember Cana. Do you feel I am the last person Jesus would want?

The last person who could believe in him? Remember Cana. Maybe you'd have felt right at home there, away from all of the religion.

[ 6 : 08 ] But if you were there, you would have been the first person that Jesus came to. To seek and to save the lost.

He blesses the humble, first of all. The location. Secondly, Jesus blesses the bold. Jesus blesses the bold. As we think about belief in the Gospel, the kind of obvious place to look at is in verse 11, isn't it?

Where the disciples see the sign of water turning into wine and they believe in him. And that verse is important as we think about the role of the disciples as apostles.

They need to be eyewitnesses of these signs to give us a clear testimony. But actually I don't want to look at the most obvious place for risk of missing another important character here.

Where belief and faith is coloured in a lot more fully, I think. It is the belief of Mary in this passage.

[ 7 : 17 ] John gives us the guest list as well, doesn't he, as the location of the party. We know that among those who are invited were Jesus and his disciples and his mother.

But did you see on the guest list, he puts the mother of Jesus at the top. She appears first. And then Jesus comes along with her. It's as if to point to her, isn't it?

And what she does at the party. Because in her we see an example of bold faith. Of an active, bold belief in Jesus' ability to fulfil needs.

And it's really intriguing when you look at it. When the wine runs out at the party, it's Mary who starts it all off, isn't it? In verse 3. They have no wine.

And she's not kind of just pointing out the obvious there. She's effectively saying to Jesus, What are you going to do about it, son? Jesus comes back with a negative, doesn't he?

[ 8 : 23 ] Woman, what does this have to do with me? What's the reason for the no? No, it's not that Jesus doesn't care. Or that he can't be bothered.

Or he can't do it. No, he explains in verse 4, It's a no, mother, because my hour has not yet come.

He said, My ministry, the blessings that I give, Are not a question of if, but when.

It's a question of timing in God's plan, he says. And here we see, don't we, Attention, that true belief has to grapple with.

Attention between what Mary asks for now, And what Jesus says is not yet. The hour that Jesus talks about is his way of referring to his death, And resurrection, and his glory.

It's his finest hour. And he's saying, isn't he, That even his own mother can't urge me to do things in that way, To go outside of my father's plan.

[ 9 : 36 ] My hour is not mine to grasp or seize whenever I like. I am not on some kind of one man bandwagon. I'm not riding solo.

But all I do is in response to my father's plan. To the plan of the timings of how my ministry works. Mary, belief is not expecting Jesus to do what you want when you want it.

She says now, but he says not yet. But this is the thing that I want you to get this afternoon.

Because even after Jesus has said the not yet, Mary still expects something. Can you see the boldness of what she says in verse 5?

It's the kind of thing that we just kind of glance over. His mother said to the servants, Do whatever he tells you. Jesus has said, Mother, my blessings will come, but not yet.

[ 10 : 44 ] But Mary sees in the negative answer a nugget of promise. She hears, So it's not a no then.

It's just a not yet. She has to wait for the right time. She's got to stand back. She cannot enter the hour herself. She must let God do things in his plan.

Nevertheless, that waiting does not condemn belief to inactivity. Genuine belief doesn't just shrug its shoulders.

This belief urges Jesus towards his hour. It presses him to fulfil his promises. Having heard the not yet, Mary entrusts the situation to Jesus.

Do whatever he tells you. And in that, She's a model of patience, isn't she? Because true patience isn't just passive. True belief, True Christian faith isn't just passive.

[ 11 : 53 ] It hopes. And it holds. And it grasps onto God's promises. And what is really staggering here, Is that suddenly, In this moment, The not yet, Changes.

Jesus gets them to fill the water jars, Doesn't he? And then look at verse 8, What he says to the servants. He says to them, Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.

At the beginning of what Jesus says there, There's a big, big word. It's the word now. The not yet has become a now. And it's happening.

The wine is coming. The blessing is coming. And it's coming almost, Kind of prematurely, isn't it? Because Mary's belief was bold and daring.

Go ask the question, Would any of this have happened, If Mary hadn't have said, Do what he tells you? Big question, isn't it? She doesn't say to Jesus, Well, fair enough.

[ 13 : 06 ] What will be, will be. But do whatever he tells you. Because he is going to do something. Even if it isn't what we expect.

The story goes of Luther, Martin Luther, The 16th century reformer, Who went to see one of his dear friends, Philip Melanchthon.

And Philip Melanchthon was near to death. And he went to visit him. And he got there, And he got to Philip's room. And he was in bed, And he was days, If not hours away from death.

And in that moment, Luther stood up, And made a bold plea, To God. He gave a bold prayer, For the life of Philip Melanchthon.

And it was an audacious prayer. Given that Luther, Nor anyone else in the room, Knew the timing, Of when God wanted to take Philip home. The prayer, In its boldness, Took many people by surprise.

[ 14 : 09 ] It was as if he was putting pressure on God, If I can put it like that. There was a boldness, There was an audacity to it. So much so, That afterwards, Luther had to kind of explain, What he was doing, To people in the room.

He said, Our Lord God, Had to stand there, And take it from me there. For I threw the sack at his door, And rubbed his ears, With all the promises, To hear and answer prayers, That I could recount from Holy Scripture.

So that he had to hear, And answer me. Philip did actually, Get well, In that case. This is belief, This is Mary's belief here.

It is taking God's promises, And it's rubbing his ears with them. It's bold, And it's audacious. It's not that Mary changed the plan, Or that she could manipulate God, That she could manipulate Jesus, With her prayers.

But it is that, The prayers of God's believing people, And the faith of his people, Are the means, By which Jesus' blessings come, And Jesus' hour comes.

[ 15 : 33 ] It's incredible. Mary's faith, Her prayer, Her belief, Is the means by which, A little bit of the not yet, Becomes the now.

The apostle Peter, Speaks of our lives, Speeding, And hastening, The coming of, The Lord Jesus. Because, According to his promise, We are waiting, For the new heavens, And the new earth, He says.

It is the belief, That is pictured, As the Bible ends, In the very last words, Of the Bible, In the last words, Of the book of Revelation, Not knowing the day, Or the hour, Of the return of Jesus, Nevertheless, The church prays to him, Come Lord Jesus.

Amen. It's the prayer of the humble, And it's the prayer of the bold. This week, As I was preparing, I was really aware, More than usual, Of the things that haven't been said, About this passage.

We've not even broached, The subject of purification, Of the salvation, And of the richness, Of the wine, That Jesus provides, Or the significance, Of the fulfillment, Of the law, In Jesus, That is all another sermon, Isn't it?

[ 16 : 59 ] Being quite focused here, To focus on the character, Of belief, In the one, Who ministers, In unexpected places, You know, The next time that, John mentions Cana, Is in chapter 4, But he won't mention it again, Then, For another 17 chapters, He mentions it, One last time, In chapter 21, Where, Nathanael, And some of the other apostles, Are about to see, The risen Jesus, In John

chapter 21, Verse 2, It's a great little, Addition, That John slips in, Ironically, That we learn there, That the slightly, Snobby, Nathanael, Is himself, From Cana, He was a Cana man, Even though he was a Jew, He was associated, With Galilee, The one who doubted, Whether anything good, Could come from Nazareth, From Galilee,

Is the one who lived in Galilee, Maybe, Reflecting on himself, He doubted, That he would be part, Of anything good either, That he was the Cana man, Who ended up seeing, The risen Jesus, The true believer, Was the last you'd expect, To believe, And maybe, You think of your past, Or you think of your, Nervousness around, The Bible, Or Christian things, Or the church, Maybe even today, You feel like a bit of a tourist, Well remember Cana, Remember Nathanael, If you're a person, Who says, Jesus has not come, For a person like me, Well, Let me say to you, That that means, You're exactly the kind of person, That Jesus has come for, And it was Mary, Whose blessings, Came by sovereign plan,

But also in response, To bold prayer, This belief, That we see here, It is the practice, Isn't it, Of hope, Against hope, It is saying to God, I know I don't deserve, Anything from you, I'm a Cana man, I'm a Cana woman, And it's humbly, Accepting that, But it's boldly, Rubbing his ears, With his promises, Lord, You've said, That if I trust in Christ, You will forgive me, You've said, That if I receive, Jesus Christ, You will give me the right, To become your child, You've said, That you will cleanse me, From every wrong, And every sin, And so it's holding God, To his promises, It is throwing the sack, At God, The prayer, Of the humble, And of the bold, Let's pray,