THE WEDDING AT CANA

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Category: Observations

Letâ€™s just think about what happened for a moment. Jesus was at a wedding. This wasnâ€™t a genteel, refined high-society event; it was a rowdy, boisterous fun-filled celebration. People were enjoying themselves so much that they finished off all of the booze long before the party was over. As for Jesus, he was at the party. In his first chapter, John introduces us to all sorts of important and high sounding theological issues. He tells us that Jesus is the eternal word who created the world, but here in chapter two we find him at a party â€“ and the wine has run out.

People have funny ideas about Jesus. They see him as some sort of ethereal figure. Dressed in a white nighty without a hair out of place, he floats above the world being extremely spiritual, dispensing blessing on the people around him. But John makes it clear that Jesus wasnâ€™t like that. The whole village would have turned out for the wedding, there would have been lots of music and dancing, tons of food and, sadly, not enough wine. Jesus was right there in amongst the singers and dancers, joining in the celebration. Whatever else he was, Jesus was a real human being and shared in the joys and sorrows of human life.

For the family who were hosting the party, running out of wine was a real humiliation. It would be the talk of the region for a long time to come. It was even worse for the married couple; this could be seen as a real bad omen on the marriage: all in all, everyoneâ€™s day was ruined. So Jesus fixed it. Simply and quietly he turned a large quantity of water into an equally large quantity of extremely good wine. The day was saved.

It is easy to draw lots of metaphorical and highly spiritual lessons out of this story, but the main point is simply that Jesus was at a wedding and that he cared enough to stop the party being ruined. The story of Israel shows us that God is an earthy God, interested and involved in his creation. Jesus is just the same; he gets stuck in with the people around him.

That being said, John does throw in a couple of little twists. The water that Jesus turned into wine was in jars that were used in religious purification rituals. It is as if John is telling us that Jesus was replacing the Jewish purification ceremonies with something very different and much better. Another little idea that John sneaks in to the story is the fact that wedding took place on the third day. This is the first miracle, or sign, that John mentions and already it is pointing us to Jesus resurrection.