**Series: What Jesus Would Say**

VBC

Pastor John Johnson

John 2:1-12

April 27-28, 2013

**“Jesus’ Curious Relationship with His Family”**

I shared this story some 7 years ago—posted on March 14, 2006:

It is every right-minded Englishman's dream: you stick a mug under the tap to purge the encrusted mold from the bottom

-only it's not water that issues forth, but beer

-this is what happened to Haldis Gundersen, a woman who lives in Western Norway. She told reporters she thought it was a "water to beer miracle."

-but it turned out to be a clumsy mistake in the plumbing—someone downstairs at the Big Tower Bar hooked the beer hoses to the water pipes to Gundersen’s apartment.

-asked if the turning water-to-beer was a blessing, she responded—not really—the beer was flat

In John 2, we read a similar story—only it was a miracle—and it was anything but flat-*read 2:1-12*

-right away we notice that it is the third day—the third day after the first conversation—with a skeptic (Nathanael)

-Jesus will now have a conversation with His family

-the book of John is essentially a story of conversations with all sorts of people—all of them are found in the church

-they are conversations ultimately with us

-in chap 1, Jesus opened Nathanael’s imagination—but it won’t be until the third day Jesus gives a glimpse of life under an opened heaven—He does this at a wedding

-Jesus and His disciples were invited—and so they go

-Jesus seemed at home at parties—Scripture does not present Him as some recluse in His monastic setting

-He always seems quite comfortable where there are lots of food and wine and time away from work

*-which might be a signal to enjoy life a bit more than we do*

-at His coming—the first thing He is going to do in heaven is throw a huge party for us

-but there was a problem at this wedding—after several days into the celebration—they were running out of wine

-which—in a culture where hospitality is everything—would have been an embarrassment, an occasion even for shame

-if not corrected, the wedding falls flat—the joy vaporizes—the party ends

It all prompted a conversation between Jesus and His family—*we in Christ are part of the family—it is a conversation also with us*

-the present tenses are intentional—they are used to bring us into the action—as if we are right there in the story—*read verse 3*

-her comment to Jesus seems odd—but then, she might have simply been doing what women seem really good at doing—*telling us we need to do something*

-Wednesday night—“You haven’t told your daughter happy birthday”

-last Sunday —my son comes home—“He has no money”

-have you called your parents?

-the neighbor is laboring with a garbage can—“Honey, she needs your help”

(there’s a reason Genesis 2 refers to Eve as a “helpmate”—obviously we’d be help-less without them)

-Mary was a Jewish mother—I’m told Jewish mothers especially like to be helpful

-she knows they are out of wine before they know they are out of wine

*-Someone must revive this rapidly wilting party!*

-maybe—or maybe this was a Jewish mother wanting to show off her son—as Jewish moms are prone to do

-my son is studying to be a doctor

-my son is an engineer

-it had to be tempting for Mary—hard to hold back—“My son is God”

-but Jesus is not so inclined to yield to human expectation—there is a hesitation in His voice—*read verse 4*

-Jesus is brief—lit. “What is it to Me? And what is it to you?”

-on the surface—it sounds a lot like indifference

-it’s their problem—I didn’t plan this wedding—are you the wedding coordinator—called to oversee the inventory?

-am I supposed to bail these people out—run to Safeway and find some cheap wine?

-this is the bridegroom’s dilemma—let him deal with his failure to plan

-but this does not fit the Jesus we know—who is anything but indifferent to life’s issues

-which is why Jesus’ language might be less a question and more a statement—

-what *it is* to you and what *it is* to Me are two different things

1. for Mary—it is about *expectations*

-and actually—they are good expectations—she sees a need, and her first response is to call upon Jesus

*-she’s smarter than most of us!*

-she knows He cares—she has lived with Love personified for 30 years

-she knows He is anything but unmoved by human need

-she knows He has never been overwhelmed—nothing has ever been too hard for Him

-she knows He loves joy, laughter—loves to give

-she knows calling upon Him should be our first response

1. but for Jesus—it is about *parameters*

-and these are good parameters

-not defined by our needs but by divine purposes

-and these sometimes create tension—especially with family

-we see this tension from the start

-when Jesus was twelve (remember He went missing)

-Mary and Joseph eventually found Him in the temple—and she said—“Why do you do this to us?”

-but Jesus made it clear that His first responsibility was to His heavenly Father: ”Didn’t you know that I had to be in My Father’s house?”—Luke 2:49

-at one point, Jesus’ family and friends will try to control Jesus—set out to “restrain”, seize Him

-seek an intervention—Mark 3:21

-He is not carrying out family expectation

-and Jesus’ family will find themselves on the outside

-at one point Jesus’ mother and brothers were “standing outside”

-seeking to have a word with Him, only to have Jesus respond—“who are My mother and brothers?”

-this is why the language of “WOMAN” is intentional in this story

-it is a term suggesting “polite distance”

-Mary can no longer presume on the family tie

-for “family” has been redefined to be His disciples

-those who are His mother and brothers are now those who do His will—Mk 4:34

-this is Jesus underscoring again to His mother that divine purpose always trumps family expectations

1. for Mary—it is also about the moment—the time is now
2. but for Jesus—He runs on a different clock

-in chapter 7, family pressure will challenge Jesus to break out, do something big

-and Jesus will use the same language to declare that He lives by His Father’s clock—not theirs—not ours

-His ministry will have its moment—His hour will come

-He will begin to reveal His identity, He will perform a number of miracles, and investigators will be dispatched, and religious leaders will be offended, and Jesus will be betrayed, and He will go to the Cross, and then on the third day will be the resurrection

-and eventually the gathering of all for a wedding in which He is the Groom marrying His bride—the church

-and wine —will drip from the mountains and flow from the hills—Amos 9:13

-but the clock hasn’t begun ticking—not yet—not today

-Jesus acts only when the Father gives the go ahead

-but Mary seems to press the issue—*read verse 5*

-maybe she is pressing the point—insisting upon her own will

-maybe—but more likely—this is Mary is giving the matter completely over to her son

-Mary acknowledging that He is in charge—yielding to divine parameters

-no longer her will—but His will

-from “what I would like” to “whatever He says”

-whatever He does—it will be right, it will be generous, it will be wise

-*“whatever Jesus says—do it!”*—her words must be our words

-it’s here the conversation ends—Mary’s voice will fade out of the story

-but the story continues—for Jesus responds to the need

-and here is where mystery takes over

-it was not because He must yield to His mother

-maybe the Father said—now!

-maybe this is Jesus doing what He loves to do—respond to faith

-once again—water does whatever Jesus commands—bear My weight when I walk on it—become wine when I command it so

-as one put it*—“The modest water saw its God and blushed*”

-and when Jesus makes something—as verses 9-10 tell us—it is always top shelf

-not some cheap, watered down wine served when people are less discriminating

-but the best Cabernet Sauvignon

-wine of incredible intensity and exceptional length

-the kind served at the beginning—when palates are most discerning and guests most impressionable—wine that was anything but flat

-Jesus underscores what is a kingdom truth—His resources are exceedingly abundant—*and the best is often saved for last*

-verse 11 declares—it all amounted to a sign—a display, a show

-not to prove or parade Jesus as superior

*-not a sign that Jesus should go in to catering*

-but to reveal His glory—a signpost that declares that the heavens are open

-that assault by the kingdom of grace has begun—the clock is ticking

-God is at work—the impossible is now possible

-He will do far and away more than we could have expected

-blowing away our traditions, outstretching our imagination

-the astonishing thing is that most were looking straight at the glory—and didn’t see it

-and maybe even Jesus’ own family missed it

-only the disciples saw it—God’s glory is generally seen only by those looking for it

So *what is our take away from this conversation*?

-John does not end with some suitable explanation or moralistic instruction

-he leaves it to us…two things:

1. There are times our expectations and divine parameters will collide

-and we must learn to yield—to His will, to His timing

-exercise—replace verse 3 with your words—she has no job; he has no health; we have no money;

1. there are times when family expectations and following Jesus will collide

-honoring family and honoring God will have certain tensions

-a parent may have his/her hope for your life

-and God will have His calling—a mission field

-and when this happens—human kinship does not transcend—but must submit to—the will of God

-when we begin to recognize our mission as followers of Jesus—human pressure must not obscure it—Matthew 10:35

One of famous saints, St Francis of Assisi, was the son of a wealthy businessman

-his father wanted nothing more than for him to pursue the same career—enjoy the same lavish lifestyle

-but Francis began to sense another calling—one incompatible with his present life

-it happened in an old church—a dilapidated chapel, where he knelt at the crucifix

-and heard a voice saying—“Go and repair My house”

-and Francis did with his wealth—living like a beggar

-it was not the calling his earthly father had in mind

-and this man from Assisi ended up on a collision course with his family—eventually disowned by his father

Some of you have a similar story—sometimes we have to tell a father, a mom, a brother, a sister we can no longer meet their expectations—there is a higher call