

The Crisis At Cana

John 2:1-12

In 2007 most of the globe went through and continues to go through a major economic crisis. Experts tell us, “It is considered by many economists to be the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It contributed to the failure of key businesses, declines in consumer wealth estimated in the trillions of U.S. dollars, substantial financial commitments incurred by governments, and a significant decline in economic activity.”

And the bad news is, it is not over yet, and many experts believe it may even get worse, “A number of commentators have suggested that if the liquidity crisis continues, there could be an extended recession or worse.”

I saw the financial crisis firsthand when I worked for American Funds, a mutual fund company that manages 401K's and retirement plans. The average loss of shareholder's portfolios was between 40-50%. People lost half of their life savings in the financial crisis.

I'll never forget something one of my coworkers said to me during the economic downturn. "You can tell what people are made of when the pressure is on, when the heat is turned up. How do they handle crisis?"

A good definition of crisis is any unstable and dangerous social situation regarding economic, military, personal, political, or societal affairs, especially one involving an impending abrupt change. More loosely, it is a term meaning 'a testing time' or 'emergency event'. You can have a social crisis, a health crisis, financial crisis, family crisis, marital crisis, a national crisis, a personal crisis, and the list goes on.

The Gospel of John 2 records for us a wedding ceremony that was in crisis. The wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. We don't know the names of the bride and groom. We do know that Mary, the mother of Jesus, Jesus himself, and his disciples were guests at the wedding.

A serious situation had happened at the end of the wedding ceremony. There was no more wine left for the guests. You may be thinking to yourself, "why was it so important for enough wine to be served at

the wedding?” In a town like Cana, a wedding ceremony would have been a community celebration. To fail in providing adequately for the guests would involve social disgrace.

Therefore, the discovery of no more wine was a big problem. The bride and groom were facing a social and family crisis. What could be done? How could the crisis be avoided? What can we learn from the Wedding at Cana? The title of my message is simply, “Crisis At Cana.” There are four things I like to consider from the text.

1. The Occasion Of Crisis.

The occasion is stated for us in verse one, “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee.”

The time was the *third day* after He, Christ, came into Galilee.

Matthew Henry observes, The place was at Cana in Galilee, in the tribe of Asher (Jos. 19:28), of which, before, it was said that *he shall yield royal dainties*, Gen. 49:20. A reference to Christ’s miracles He performed during His earthly ministry.

The occasion itself was a marriage. Marriages were usually celebrated with festivals (Gen. 29:22; Jdg. 14:10), in token of joy and friendly respect, and for the confirming of love.

Things were running smoothly until the end of the celebration. A crisis emerged which had the potential of spoiling the wedding ceremony. There was no more wine to serve the guests.

Isn't this so true of how sin tries to spoil the happy times in our lives. Someone did not order enough wine for the wedding. Poor planning caused a crisis. Someone dropped the ball. We don't know whose fault it was. We do know someone's mistake caused serious problems for the bride and groom and their families.

Sometimes we find ourselves in a crisis because it was someone else's fault. The sin of someone else has the potential of jeopardizing our joy and spoiling our happiness. Sin has the power to effect the lives of many people. Don't think that sin only effects one person.

Look at how many people were effected by the sin of Tiger Woods. His marriage is ruined. His reputation is broken. His career looks spoiled. But how many

people did he injure? Don't think that your sin only effects you. It spills over into the lives of your friends, neighbors, and family.

Maybe you are here today and you are facing a crisis. Perhaps you are not saved! What a crisis to be in! Christ came into the world to save sinners. Cry out to Christ and He will save you from your sins.

2. The Faith In Crisis

When the discovery was made of no more wine, word spread quickly. There was alarm and stress at the marriage. Word of the crisis reached Mary, the mother of Jesus. How did she respond to the crisis?

Sometimes how we respond to crisis is more damaging and hurtful than the crisis itself.

I can remember a story about a man who attended a church and every Saturday he was outside working on the church building. Word spread among church members about this man's work on the church property. The time came for election of deacons in the church, and this man was elected deacon.

Several weeks later, an elder found out that this man was never a member of the church. Immediately, an elder board meeting was called to address the problem. After hearing what had happened, the pastor of the church suggested that the elder board act, and hide this problem from the congregation.

One of the elders wisely suggested that the pastor be honest and go in front of the congregation the next Sunday, and announce from the pulpit what had happened. That's what the pastor did and the matter was resolved, and the people appreciated the pastor's honesty.

Imagine if the elder board sided with the pastor and agreed to hide from the congregation what really happened. It might have resulted in damaging and splitting the church. How we respond to crisis can make things worst than the crisis itself.

At the Wedding of Cana, we read of Mary's response to crisis in verse 3, "And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine." Mary went to Christ in crisis. She trusted that her Son would do what was best and right at the wedding banquet.

Mary exercised faith. The crisis at Cana didn't blind her, engulf her, and leave her paralyzed to do nothing. She acted, and she acted in faith.

Do you respond to crisis in faith? Does the crisis dominate you or does Christ direct you through it? The temptation is allowing circumstances and feelings to dictate how we respond in crisis. Mary realized the bride and groom, and their families were facing a social crisis. Mary went to Christ and requested help. We must go to Christ in prayer.

We read in verse four Christ's reply, "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come."

Jesus' reply to Mary was not so abrupt as it seems. A Bible commentator writes, "Woman" was a polite form of address. Jesus used it when he spoke to his mother from the cross in John 19:26.

Notice Mary's persistence in verse 5, "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

We must exercise faith in crisis like Mary.

3. The Man Of Crisis

Mary asked Christ to help in the crisis at Cana. It was not the last time Christ would be asked to help in crisis. His public ministry was confronting one crisis after another. Christ was the Man of Crisis.

We read in Matthew 8:23-26, “And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.”

We read in Mark 5 of three major crisis one after another involving Christ. The first one involved a man from the country of the Gadarenes who was possessed of unclean spirits and how Christ drove the unclean spirits into swine and they ran violently down a steep place into the sea and they were choked in the sea.

Then, a ruler of the synagogue, Jarius came to Christ begging that his daughter be healed. At the same time, there came a woman to Christ having an issue of blood for twelve years, and spent all she had on doctors. She touched the clothes of Christ and she was healed. After that, news came that Jarius' daughter had died. But Christ still went to her anyway and he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, "Arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment."

Christ helped people in crisis, and He continues to help His people in crisis. Are you going to the Man of Crisis, Jesus Christ, with your struggles and burdens?

Christ faced his own crisis: in the Garden at Gethsemane where he sweated great drops of blood, in the judgment hall at Gabbatha where the soldiers scourged him and placed a crown of thorns on his head, and on the Cross at Golgotha where Christ was crucified, his hands and feet nailed to a Roman gibbet, and died, his side pierced with a soldier's spear.

Christ knows what it is like to experience crisis, and He knows about your crisis, and my crisis.

Christ knew before Mary asked him that there was a crisis at Cana. It didn't take Christ by surprise. Are you going to the Man of Crisis? He knows all about it.

Jim Elliot was a Christian missionary to Ecuador who, along with four others, was killed while attempting to evangelize the Waodani people.

He prayed, "Father, make of me a crisis man. Bring those I contact to decision. Let me not be a milepost on a single road; make me a fork, that men must turn one way or another on facing Christ in me."

Are you a crisis man? Are you a crisis woman? If people turned to you would you turn them to Christ? As we grow in our faith and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we will be empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit to help people in crisis.

Christ is the man of crisis.

4. The Miracle in Crisis

Christ turns crisis into blessing.

Matthew Henry writes, “The miracle itself was *turning water into wine*; the substance of water acquiring a new form, and having all the accidents and qualities of wine.

Such a *transformation* is a *miracle*; By this Christ showed himself to be the God of nature, who maketh the earth to bring forth wine, Ps. 109:14, 15.

The beginning of Moses's miracles was turning water into blood (Ex. 4:9; 7:20), the beginning of Christ's miracles was turning water into wine; which intimates the difference between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ.

The curse of the law turns water into blood, common comforts into bitterness and terror; the blessing of the gospel turns water into wine. Christ hereby showed that his errand into the world was to heighten and improve creature-comforts to all believers, and make them comforts indeed.

The wine which was thus miraculously provided was of the best and richest kind. It was the best wine. This wine had a *stronger body*, and *better flavour*, than ordinary.

We read in Psalm 34:8, “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

Has Christ changed your life from ordinary to extraordinary? From unclean to clean? From sinner to saint? Has Christ worked the miracle of salvation in your heart? Have you tasted for yourself salvation? Maybe you are here today and your life is in crisis. Christ works miracles in crisis. Trust in Christ and He will help you in your struggles.

The Wedding at Cana was in crisis. Mary went to Christ and asked her Son for help. Christ is the Man of Crisis and he helps His people in their time of trouble. The Lord turns crisis into blessing in the lives of His people. If you are here today outside of Christ, then the same miracle that Christ worked in Cana, changing water into wine, he can do in your heart today. Trust in Christ. May we all learn to go to Christ in our times of crisis. Let us pray.