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**Message Series: Ever After****Message Title: When the Wine Runs Out****Scripture: John 2:1-11**

Every marriage begins with celebration, but what happens when the joy fades, and the wine runs out? In John 2, Jesus is at a wedding, and the wine runs out.

Somehow, somewhere, someplace, sometime, and in some circumstance, the wine in your marriage has run out or will run out. You know when the wine has run out when relational distance seems like an ever expanding chasm that separates you from your spouse. When an argument turns into a multiple-day standoff over who will give in first. You know your wine has run out when your life reaches a place where you are reduced to saying, "What happened? How did I get here?"

Cultural and Historical Context of John 2:1-11

- As opposed to our private, one-day wedding celebration, a first-century Jewish wedding was a multi-day, public, communal celebration. In a small Galilean village like Cana, everyone would likely attend. Marriage was covenantal and communal.
- The wedding celebration included a feast with wine. Hospitality was a sacred responsibility, and running out of wine would have brought public embarrassment and social shame. The groom's family's reputation could have been damaged, and relational damage was a potential outcome. In an honor/shame culture, hospitality revealed honor, and running out of wine could have brought shame.
- The ceremonial jars used for Jewish purification were made out of stone. Each held 20-30 gallons, meaning Jesus miraculously provided 120-180 gallons of wine.
- Wine in the ancient Mediterranean world was a daily staple and symbol of joy (Ps 104:15). Wine was diluted with water, and its consumption was not primarily about intoxication. Wine at a wedding ceremony represented a joyful celebration and God's favor.
- Normally, the best wine is served first because, over time, its taste dulls. But the master of the ceremony declares Jesus' wine as "the best until now."

In today's culture, we approach marriage as a contract, a mutual agreement between two parties based on terms and conditions designed to protect individual rights and to be dissolvable if the terms are violated. The biblical view of marriage is a covenant, a sacred promise designed by God, rooted in faithfulness and intended to reflect the glory of God in the world. A contract is performance-based, while a covenant is promise-based. The goal of a contract is personal happiness, but the goal of a covenant marriage is holiness and oneness. Contracts have exit strategies, while covenants commit to endurance.

In John 2, we learn three actions to take when the wine runs out in your marriage:

1. Turn to Jesus.

- So what do you do when the wine runs out? Do you ignore the problem, consume more, or work harder? When it does, the answer is simple: turn to Jesus.
- Turning to Jesus requires humility and admitting you cannot fix the problem on your own. Mary, Jesus' mother, turned to Jesus because she knew only he could solve the problem.
- Jesus' desire is not just to be a part of the wedding day, but to be at the center of your marriage.
- Ecclesiastes 4:12 talks about the strength of two together and the great strength of three. "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."

2. Do what he says.

- Jesus' mother told the servants to do whatever Jesus told them. However unorthodox Jesus' request was, the servants obeyed, even though they did not know the outcome.
- Often, we need to obey Jesus and do what he says when we cannot see the outcome. Jesus won't have you fill up stone water jars with water to fix your marriage, but he will ask you to be obedient to his word: to love God and love others; to humble yourself, to forgive and extend forgiveness, to confess sin and apologize, to seek oneness with your spouse. Together turn to Jesus by seeking him through his word together and through prayer.

3. Taste the transformation.

- When you turn to Jesus and obey what he tells you, you will be able to savor the miracle of marriage, the continual transformation of the two of you becoming one flesh.
- Like a good glass of wine, the flavors are subtle and must be savored. The same is true in your marriage. A godly marriage grows in complexity of flavor as you savor the subtle notes of love, respect, kindness, gentleness, selflessness, sacrifice, forgiveness, and patience.

Martin Luther, the 16th-century Reformer, commented on this story, "Jesus did not get rid of the water. Nor does he get rid of the struggles and vexations of our lives. But he turns the water into wine, and they only know how sweet it is who have tasted it" (paraphrased from a 1525 sermon of the Second Sunday after Epiphany).

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Us in Mind Class | March 3 - April 7 | 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Do you find yourself asking, "What does it take to have a great marriage?" Research shows that happy couples think differently from unhappy couples. What if you could ensure your thoughts were setting you up to love well? You can. We encourage all couples to join us for a fun, life-changing six-session series where you will discover through Scripture, research, and neuroscience a simple way to rethink your marriage and focus on five thoughts to help you love well, even when it is not easy. Be assured, this series is not a bunch of stuffy lectures. It's full of humor, real-life examples, and practical application. You can change your marriage by changing your thoughts, and it's simpler than you think.

