
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

May 29, 2016

Doing What We Can (Location: Cana)

“His mother told the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’”
John 2:5 (Common English Bible)

Jesus’ first miracle was in Cana, on the occasion of a wedding celebration. David A. Redding, a Presbyterian pastor, declares that this one miracle is a masterpiece to love.¹ Jesus makes an unforgettable impression that he knew how to laugh and have a good time. Though it goes without saying that moments of grief need God’s help, says Redding, this miracle demonstrates that gladness needs it, too. What is dominant in this story is not the miracle, or the wine, but Christ’s presence. Jesus showed-up when people were celebrating and having a good time. This says a great deal about Jesus. Jesus came to live with people and to love them – both in the midst of sorrow and loss, as well as in times of gladness and celebration.

From this miracle we make another discovery about Christ; Christ has both the power and desire to help people, even ordinary people like you and me. It is important that the wedding couple is never identified by name. Their name is irrelevant. They are, perhaps, ordinary people like us, busy celebrating their wedding with family and friends when something embarrassing happens – they simply run out of wine before the celebration has concluded. So, Jesus’ own mother comes to him and asks for his help. It is the most basic pattern of prayer; simply asking God for help.

Naturally, Jesus does help. Jesus performs the first miracle of his ministry. But to read this story swiftly, without careful attention to how John, the evangelist, tells the story, is to miss a most powerful dynamic of how Jesus works miracles. Notice, Jesus never touches the six stone water jars mentioned in the story. Jesus turns to servants and asks that they do the work of filling them with water. Notice again, Jesus doesn’t draw water from the six jars. Jesus never touches the water at all. Jesus simply asks the servants to draw some water and deliver it to the headwaiter and they do. When the headwaiter tastes what has been drawn from the jars he comments that it is the finest wine of the celebration! The miracle of Jesus, the miracle of turning water into wine, follows when others first do what they can.

When there is a need or a problem in our lives, Jesus is concerned and stands ready to help. But this story teaches that we are expected to participate in our own miracle. Before Jesus fed the thousands, Andrew, one of Jesus’ disciples, first brought a little boy, with his lunch, to Jesus. Before a sick woman was healed, she touched the hem of Jesus’ garment. Before a blind man could see, he obeyed the command of Christ to go and wash his face in a pool. To receive a miracle from Christ, each one of us must do what we can. No person’s situation is so bad that they can’t do something. But it is after we have done what we can, that Jesus does what he needs to do. It is then that miracles happen.

Doug Hood

¹ David A. Redding, *The Miracles of Christ* (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming Hl. Revell Company, 1964), 3.