

The Miracle Mom by Jeff Strite

John 2:1-2:11

OPEN: We opened with a Youtube video entitled “An Open Letter To Moms from Kid President”, a cute presentation by a young boy citing “10 things Every Mom Needs To Know”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ4Rnba85o8>

(Start fading out about the 2:49 minute mark)

He’s a cute kid isn’t he?

And it’s obvious he loves his mother. But as I watched that video I noticed that he was very clear on one truth: His mom was not a perfect mother.

- “Put down your phone” he says
- “Stop cleaning”
- “Cool it on the meatloaf”
- “Have fun for once”
- “Hug more/ shout less”

This little boy obviously loves and respects his mother, but even he understands that there’s no such thing as a perfect mother.

And that brings us to the story of Mary and Jesus at the wedding. It’s kind of hard to think of a woman who was more honored than Mary was. She was chosen by God to be the mother of the Messiah. And she is an impressive and almost intimidating woman in Scripture. In fact her life is so central to the ministry of Christ that one church even teaches that she never sinned. This particular church believes she NEVER sinned.

(Pause) But she did.

Mary DID sin.

She was chosen by God for a special task... but she was a mortal woman. And when Romans stated that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” – that meant Mary too.

But before we get into that part of Mary’s story we need to understand the scene from our text this morning.

The 2nd chapter of John describes a wedding party.

Now Jewish weddings were far more elaborate than ours are. Our wedding ceremonies

may last the better part of the day. But as fancy as American wedding can be... they still don't match the vibrancy that the Jewish culture invested in this event.

It usually started with a time of feasting. And then late in the evening, the father of the bride would take his daughter on his arm and parade her and the wedding party through the streets of the village so that everyone could come out and congratulate the bride.

Finally the wedding party would arrive at the home of the groom. The wedding actually took place in the front door of the groom's house.

After the wedding ceremony the wedding party would light torches and parade the bride and groom thru the streets of the town again - always taking the longest route through the village so that as many people as possible could wish them well.

And that's when the real celebration began. For nearly a week after this, the newlyweds held an open house. And they were treated like royalty. They dressed in fancy clothes and many times actually wore crowns on their heads. And the groom's family was expected to provide all the refreshments for this week of festivities.

And that's what this wedding in John 2 was all about... except they ran out of wine. Running out of wine at such a feast was really embarrassing because a good host always made sure there was plenty food and drink available. But they ran out – and now there was a crisis.

(borrowed with some changes from a sermon by Richard Hall on sermoncentral.com)

ILLUS: Now, just so we understand each other here, this was not wine like party-goers today would drink. Back then, drinking wine like folks drink it nowadays would be considered barbaric. Wine was rarely drunk "straight from the bottle".

According to John MacArthur "In ancient time, wine was usually... mixed with water". There are numerous references in Greek and Romans literature that speak of wine as being watered down. Sometimes the ratios were anywhere from 2:1 to 20:1 (water to wine ratio).

The Jews had a similar attitude to the Greeks and Romans.

In II Maccabees 15:39 (a Jewish history book written about 200 years before Christ) it says:

"It is harmful to drink wine alone, or again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment."

According to MacArthur, "Only barbarians drank (wine) unmixed, and the mixture of wine and water of equal parts (1:1) was called 'strong drink' and frowned on."

Thus, because it was the common custom to water wine down by at least a 2:1 ratio.

Most wine that would have been drunk at weddings and other social gatherings would

have had an alcoholic content of no higher than 2.2-2.75 %... well below the 3.2 % that is considered necessary today to classify a beverage as alcoholic.

So this wedding feast wasn't anything like a drunken party. You'd really have to really work at it just to get tipsy.

So, with that out of the way, let's get back to Mary.

Some believe that this wedding was the marriage of one of Mary and Joseph's daughters. Others believe it was another of her relatives... or perhaps a close friend. But whoever it was that was getting married Mary considers this a personal issue for her... and Mary KNOWS there's only one man who can fix this problem.

Who do you think is the only man that can fix this problem? (Jesus)

That's right, only Mary's son can come to the rescue here.

Jesus may be 30 years old... He's still her "boy." And so she doesn't ASK Jesus to fix the problem. She pretty much TELLS Him.

Verse 3 says "When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'" (John 2:3)

There's something in her eyes, or perhaps there's an inflection in her voice. But there's no question what she's saying to Jesus: SON... FIX IT!

Now, her meaning is obvious, and Jesus knows exactly what she's saying.

And He's more than a little annoyed. His words almost sound harsh:

"Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." John 2:4 (ESV)

The time isn't right.

This isn't how things are supposed to be handled.

I personally love the "Message" Bible's version of Jesus response:

"Don't push me."

Because that's what she was doing.

She's pushing Jesus.

You see, Mary's a nice woman, and she's probably been a great mom. And she was chosen for this role in Jesus' life because she was a woman of faith. AND God chose her because He knew she'd do the job right.

But she wasn't that much different from other moms that you and I've known.

She's a bit on the pushy side.

He's 30 years old and she's still trying to run His life for Him.
After all, she's a mother. This is her boy.

And I'm sensing that her request is more than just asking Jesus to solve a problem at a marriage ceremony. I personally think she's impatient for Jesus to begin showing off. He's the Messiah. It's time He began doing some Messiah kind of things. After all - He's 30 years old – He needs to start impressing people. And what better place than here at a family gathering... where everybody can see Mary's son show off a little bit.

She's trying to take control of Jesus' ministry here - possibly for her own benefit.

And this doesn't appear to be the ONLY time she's tried to take control of Jesus' ministry.

Just this last week a friend pointed something out to me in Mark 3.

There we read of Jesus picking out His 12 apostles and then sending them out to preach, and giving them authority to cast out demons.

Then it says: Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." Mark 3:20-21
(see FOOTNOTE at end of sermon)

And a few verses later the family gets to the house and it says:

"Then Jesus' MOTHER and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.

A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, 'Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.'

'Who are my mother and my brothers?' he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.'" Mark 3:31-35

Did you catch that? Something Jesus had done or said didn't set well with Mary and the rest of family and so she and the other boys show up to "take charge of him".

You know what that means don't you?

It means they're going to kidnap Him and take Him home and feed Him some chicken noodle soup and make Him rest in bed. And they are not going to let Him go until He promises to behave Himself.

I don't know if this was necessarily Mary's idea. My guess is that the boys had been sitting around the dining room table talking about their half-brother. They're convinced He's going hurt Himself or get Himself in trouble... and their concern begins to effect Mary.

"My son in danger? Why of course we need to do something!"

She's a momma. She knows what is best for Him even if He doesn't. And Jesus is NOT behaving like SHE thinks He ought to. He's going to get Himself hurt unless she intervenes.

Now, my point is this:

Here at this wedding, Mary was NOT a sinless saint... she was a meddling mother. And there were times, as a mother, when she just couldn't keep her hands to herself. She had to fix things for Jesus, because He wasn't doing it the way she wanted.

Does that mean she's a bad woman?

Oh no.

Let me be very clear: Mary was a nice lady, a great mom and a woman of faith. God would not have chosen her if she wasn't.

But she was mortal and had the same weaknesses we all have. And there were times when she made the wrong decisions.

Have you ever made bad decisions?

How many of you have made bad decisions?

Have you ever done something you've regretted and wouldn't want others to know about?

So did Mary.

And that's what makes her story that much more powerful because she was just like us.

Think about this: even when Mary was "meddling" at the wedding, she went about it in the right way. Yeah she was pushing Jesus to FIX the problem she had no business asking Him to fix. And she didn't even worry about the fact that He hadn't agreed (Look closely, Jesus never said He'd do it).

She simply spoke and expected it to be done.

But notice... she didn't try to tell Jesus HOW to fix the problem.

She simply said to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you"

Now here's my point: mothers, you will make mistakes once in a while.
You'll get angry when you get tired.
You'll yell when you shouldn't
You'll fail more than you'd like to admit ... and you'll feel terrible.
Just like Mary you will NOT ALWAYS do things right.
But you'll never go wrong by telling your children: "Do whatever Jesus tells you."

Mary had faith that what Jesus would instruct the servants to do would be the right thing to do.
She had faith that if she asked He could do whatever needed to be done because He could do anything.

And if you have that kind of faith in Jesus you'll never go wrong in saying:
"Do whatever Jesus tells you."

Because you will be wrong sometimes.
And I will be wrong sometimes.
But will Jesus ever be wrong? (NO)

And her faith in Jesus was well founded.
This was her most powerful trait.

ILLUS: Just because she wasn't without faults doesn't mean she wasn't a great woman of faith. Abraham was considered the great man of faith... and yet we know of at least 2 or 3 times in his life when he made bad choices. But God still held him up as THE man of faith.

In the same way, Mary was a great woman of faith, and her potential for faith was the main reason God chose her for this role in Jesus' life.

Mary was Jesus' earthly mother. That was her great honor and role in life.
And because God had given her that place of importance, she now had the right to call upon Jesus to do what she wanted done at this wedding feast. Because, you see, even though Jesus was God in the flesh, even though He'd stepped down from heaven and took on human skin... even though that was all true, Jesus was bound by the very Law He had decreed for the rest of mankind.

Do you know what Law Jesus had to obey for Mary?
That's right: "Honor your father and your MOTHER."

She was His mother. And He was bound to honor her request.

- She wants a miracle... He would give her a miracle.

He literally made water into wine in front everybody. And it was publicly known what He'd done because it says that because of this miracle: "He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him." John 2:11

- She wants wine... He'll give her wine. She gets more wine than anybody at the party could possibly drink. One estimate is that the 6 stone jars held between 120 & 180 gallons. That's a lot of wine. There was no way those present could drink all that Jesus had supplied.

- And she doesn't just get wine. She gets the BEST wine. The steward complains to the bridegroom: "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." John 2:10

She wants a miracle, He gives her a miracle.

She wants wine, He gives her in abundance.

And He gives her the best wine.

Because nothing is too good for His mother.

She asked and He gave her more than she could possible imagine, because she asked in faith.

Mothers, faith is when you trust Jesus enough to tell your kids, your grandkids, your nephews and your nieces: "Don't try to tell Jesus HOW to fix your problems... just do whatever He tells you and you'll be ok"

You can mess up in countless ways in your life, but if you drive home that one simple truth you'll have done more for your family than the best of mothers.

And a Godly mother not only believe that - she also believes that if SHE has enough faith God will meet the needs of her family. As Philippians 4:19 promises us: "... God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

That's the promise to everyone who has faith.

CLOSE: And - you see – Mary had faith.

She BELIEVED in Jesus.

Granted, she overstepped her bounds at the wedding. But even then, she did what she did, because she BELIEVED Jesus could do anything.

And women - for that reason alone— she ought to be your heroine. She ought to be a heroine to all of us. Because as a woman of faith Mary believed Jesus could do anything

And Mary had that kind of faith because she knew WHO Jesus was and she had a pretty good idea WHAT He'd come to do. Her faith was why God chose her. And her faith was ultimately proven – not by what she said – but by what she didn't say. It was her faith at the cross, when she stood by quietly and never said a thing that is her greatest witness.

Mark Lowry had some thoughts on Mary's silence I wanted to share this morning:
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4S_WnDSzpY from 7:45 through 9:24)

Mary was NOT a sinless saint.

She was faithful mother and a faithful servant of God.

She was a woman who knew Jesus was the virgin born Son of God who had been sent from Heaven to die for the sins of the world. Your sins... and my sins... and the sins even of Mary herself.

That's why we give an invitation at the end of every service:

FOOTNOTE on Mark 3:21. As I prepared this sermon I noted that there was a difference between the KJV and other translations. The KJV says: "when his FRIENDS heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself."

The ESV and others translate it: "when his FAMILY heard it"

The NKJV renders it: "when His OWN PEOPLE heard about this"

Naturally, this begs the question, was Mark 3:21 referring (at least in part) to Mary and her sons, or was this someone else. Three of the commentaries I often look at explain it this way:

John Gill comments: "'When his friends heard of it, &c.].' Not his spiritual friends, his disciples and followers, that believed in him; but his KINSMEN, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the words, who were so according to the flesh."

Adam Clarke: "His friends Or, relations. On this verse several MSS. differ considerably. I have followed the reading of the Syriac, because I think it the best: oiparautou signify merely HIS RELATIVES, his brethren, {#Mr 3:31}; and the phrase is used by the best writers to signify relatives, companions, and domestics. See Kypke in loc."

Robertson's New Testament Pictures: "(oi par autou). The phrase means literally 'those from the side of him (Jesus)'... the idiom most likely means the KINSPEOPLE or FAMILY of Jesus as is common in the LXX The fact that in verse #Mr 3:31 "his mother and his brothers" are expressly mentioned would indicate that they are "the friends" alluded to in verse #Mr 3:21. It is a mournful spectacle to think of the mother and brothers saying"