

Rev. Dr. Yugo Suzuki's Sermon

9/5/10 **"Miracle in Cana: What Does It Mean?" John 2: 1-11**

Jesus performed many miracles. In order to understand them correctly, we need to focus our attention on their symbolic, metaphorical meaning. Without understanding what they point to, those miracles are nothing more than magical acts with no lasting significance.

With that in mind, let us examine the episode of a wedding in Cana reported in the Gospel of John that was read this morning for our scripture lesson.

Jesus, his mother Mary, and his disciples were invited to a wedding in the village named Cana. Wedding banquets were one of the most festive occasions in the world of first-century Palestine especially in the peasant class. Obviously, Cana was a peasant village.

Wedding banquets commonly lasted for seven days. They featured dancing, wine, and vast quantities of food.

But what made a wedding banquet truly festive was high quality grape wine. On normal days, the peasant could afford only low quality, sour grape wine. But at a wedding banquet, high quality wine was a must. If it ran out, that brought shame to the families of both the bride and the groom.

Now Mary, Jesus' mother, noticed that the wine was running out. Even though she was just an invited guest, Mary was panic-stricken. She whispered to Jesus, "They don't have any wine left." Jesus calmed her down and transformed 30 gallons of water into the best quality wine.

What does this miracle story mean?

It declares that with Jesus, wine never runs out. That means that when we are panic-stricken, when we become discouraged, when we fall into deep despair, Jesus never leaves us alone.

He comes to us. He encourages us. He empowers us. He makes our human life truly human. He is the source of our life. "Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest." Jesus is our rock, our true help, our redeemer. This is what the episode of a wedding in Cana means.

So the miracle in Cana happens again and again here and now. Whenever we feel Jesus' presence, water is transformed into wine. Whenever we find solace in the midst of sadness, water is transformed into wine. Whenever we rise up and sing praise, water is transformed into wine.

We are guests of the wedding in Cana today. We are witnesses to Jesus' astounding miracle.

This morning, there are tens of thousands of Christians worshiping in New York City. There are millions of Christians worshiping throughout the world. Indeed, we are guests of the wedding in Cana. We are witnesses to the astounding miracle. Jesus transforms water into wine.

Thanks be to God.

