

“Running On Empty”

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You rush out of the house to go to make an appointment on time, start up your car and realize the ‘get gas’ light, which has been on for the past four days as you’ve travelled, is still shining brightly. *“Running on Empty.”* You’ve been to the doctor many times and no one seems to know what’s wrong and you’re not getting better and you’re losing hope. “Running on Empty.”

Open to John 2. The first miracle of Jesus took place in a town called, Cana of Galilee. The event was a wedding. Cana was an inconspicuous little town just outside of Nazareth. It really wasn’t very important in Jesus’ time at all. In fact, it took Biblical scholars 1,800 years before they could figure out just where this town was!

Mary, the mother of Jesus, Jesus, and His disciples had all been invited to the wedding. Because social standing was so important in the Jewish culture of that time, we assume that this was a “peasant” wedding. Otherwise, Mary, being a peasant, wouldn’t have been invited. It’s interesting to note that Jesus’ ministry, just like His birth, began in a small, unimportant town.

Weddings were, and still are, a big deal in the Jewish culture. There’s a certain procedure that was to be followed. If the bride were a virgin, the wedding occurred on Wednesday. If the bride was a widow, the wedding came on Thursday.

The wedding ceremony would take place late in the evening after a time of feasting. The father of the bride would take his daughter on his arm, and with the wedding party in tow, would parade 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. It was no short ceremony. In fact the festivities lasted for days! It was a time of great celebration.

The groom’s family was expected to provide all the refreshments for this wedding week! That’s where we pick up our story in verses 1-3, *“On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.”* **The Wine Ran Out.**

The host discovers that they ran out of wine. They had more guests than they anticipated. It would have been improper in the culture of this time to not have wine. Jews didn’t get drunk at these celebrations, but the host could have actually been sued for a breach of hospitality to his guests. Evidently they didn’t have the money to go and purchase more wine.

Jesus’ mother comes to Jesus and says, *“Son, we’ve got a problem here, and we need your help. The groom’s family ran out of wine.”* The fact that Mary came to Jesus with such a problem is a reminder that Jesus is concerned with the everyday things in life that we face!

To the Jewish people **Wine Symbolized Joy.** The Jewish rabbis’ had a saying, *“Without wine there is no joy.”* **At the wedding in Cana their Joy had Run Out!** It’s a

reminder that **There's Emptiness in Life Without Jesus.** This statement by the mother of Jesus goes beyond liquid refreshment at a wedding. It's symbolic of our lives. It's a scary thing when you're "running on empty." When you're empty, joy is dry!

Families that began with exuberant joy are now ending in the pain of divorce. Why? There's no more joy in the relationship. There are those who haven't gone to that extreme, but they're just enduring life. They drift from one day to the next with no joy. You and I have no resources inside ourselves to replace the joy. Only new wine that comes from Jesus Christ can!

When the wine runs out, and we're running on empty. Only **Jesus can Turn the Water into Wine.** Mary sees the problem and she knows Jesus can take care of it. Look at verse 5, "*His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."*" I love her instructions to the servants. "Whatever He says to you, Just Do It!

Jesus took the water jars used for handwashing. When a guest arrived, someone would pour some of this water over their hands in a symbolic purification. To eat with unwashed hands would have been wrong. It still is! Jesus took this water and made approximately 180 gallons of wine. What a wedding gift! Frederick Buechner once said, "*A miracle is when the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A miracle is when one plus one equals a thousand!*"

Jesus took the water for purification and used it for His first miracle. The water in those pots was merely for an external cleansing, but Jesus' ministry over the next three years would teach people about an inner cleansing He was bringing!

If we look at the first miracle of Jesus, we see this truth, **Jesus isn't Just the Giver of Joy, He's the Giver of Abundant Joy.** He not only met their immediate need, but He gave an abundance! Jesus didn't just make some ordinary wine, He produced wine that was better than the wine they started with! Look at verses 9-10, "*When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now."*"

The water in those jars was transformed into the finest wine the people had ever tasted! The truth for you is this, Jesus isn't going to just doctor up your life a little bit. He won't just put a Band-Aid on your needs. He wants to give you the very best! He wants to transform your life!

Jesus is all about transformation! He turned water into wine; He turns frowns into smiles, whimpers of fear into songs of hope, sorrow into joy, sin into grace, and death into life! **Jesus is All About Transforming People.** Changing people is why He came to earth!

In His first miracle, Jesus offers an abundance of new wine. **His abundance is a Story of Grace, Love, and Forgiveness.** There's no measure to grace. There will always be enough grace to meet our needs! As you walk by faith, there's nothing you can do that will cause God to diminish His love for you. You and I sin each day. God saw this in the Garden of Eden. That's why He promised to send His Son to suffer and

die in your place, and take your penalty! God isn't just a God of the required, He's a God of the abundance!

So the wine's poured out and all the people present rejoice at the richness of this "*new wine*". Normally, the best wine was always offered first! But isn't that just like Jesus? His best always comes at the end! Jesus came and has poured out in you the richness of His grace, love, and forgiveness. **Jesus Wants to Transform You!** Eternal life is yours!

What do you do when you're running on empty? Mary gave us an example. She told the servants that if they would just do what Jesus commanded, they would see a miracle! A miracle that not only met their immediate need, but a miracle of abundance.

Are you running on empty today? Bring your needs to Him, and He will fill you, not just a little, but to overflowing!