

**Terry
Virgo**

**Life
Tastes
Better**

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1. The Day the Wine Ran Out



¹ A wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, ² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'

⁴ 'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.'

⁵ His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from eighty to a hundred and twenty litres.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water'; so they filled them to the brim.

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⁸ Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.'

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, '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.'

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John chapter 2, verses 1 to 11



None the wiser

I was once speaking at an event for approaching 15,000 people, which was organised by the church network I'm part of. Shortly before I was due to give a Bible talk at the evening meeting, as I was sitting at the back of the massive platform and waiting to be announced, I opened my Bible, where I keep my talk notes, just to look at them for the last time before speaking from them. As I looked at them, I realised with a horrible, sinking feeling that they were the wrong notes. I started flicking desperately through my Bible, hunting for the

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right notes, turning my Bible the other way round, flicking again...

They weren't there.

I remember looking out at these thousands of people and thinking, "Oh Lord, what do I do?" And I just very quietly and (outwardly) calmly got off the platform, walked outside... and ran as fast as I could to where I was staying, where all my stuff was. I grabbed the notes. I ran back. I took my seat, very quietly and (outwardly) calmly and slightly out of breath... just as I was introduced to 15,000 people. No one was any the wiser. No one had any idea of the crisis that had just unfolded and had narrowly been averted. No one knew how close they came to being able to say, "I was there when Terry Virgo stood up to speak, and didn't say anything".

Most of the guests at the wedding you've just read about had no idea how close they came to being able to say, "I was there at that wedding where the wine ran out". As you read, you were reading about a crisis that was about to break. It hadn't broken yet—there was a wedding party going on and everything looked fine, everybody was enjoying themselves, everyone was having fun—but under the surface there was a crisis. They were running out of wine, and this was a crisis. This would be the wedding that would always be remembered for all the wrong reasons. I've had the privilege of going to Israel

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a couple of times, and I've been to Cana. It's a bustling little town now, but in those days when Jesus visited it 2,000 years ago, it would have been a tiny village, and I guess most of the village would have been there at this wedding. But it was in danger of becoming the one that was remembered as "The one where the wine ran out!" Someone just whispered to Mary, the mother of Jesus, *We're running out of wine*. On the surface everything was fine... but underneath there was a crisis.

Under the surface

Here's one reason why I think this episode is included in the Bible. It's to help us understand that Jesus can help when you're running out—when you're running out of answers, you're running out of hope, you're running out of options... We've all been there. Maybe you're there right now, as you read this. Everything on the surface looks fine. People meet you and would be none the wiser. But underneath, there's a crisis. Under the surface, you're in trouble. Maybe it's a relationship that is floundering, or a relationship that you can't find. Maybe it's money—it's running out, and no one else has noticed but the crisis is looming. Maybe it's that you got the job, the family, the house you were hoping for, and there's still a nagging feeling that this isn't really all you hoped life would give you. Maybe you're just spread too thin and you look at each day with looming dread rather than a lightness and a joy.

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We hit times when everything on the surface looks fine, but under the surface it's not going fine at all. Maybe no one else knows; maybe you've only shared some of this with one person you know very well, just as someone had clearly come over to Mary and said, "We're running out". Maybe you've only spoken to a close friend, or just yourself, and said, "I'm really burdened, I don't know if I can keep this up. I don't know if I can get through. I don't know what to do. I don't know if I've got what it takes."

And the Bible's written to help us. Here's my big claim: Jesus can come and help us in those sorts of situations—and he wants to do so.

Stepping into the light

John, who wrote this Gospel, was one of Jesus' closest friends. He followed him around for three years and later wrote down some of what he saw and heard. And at the end of his Gospel, John leaves us in no doubt why he wrote it:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

(Chapter 20, verses 30-31)

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John chose seven miracles of Jesus to include in his historical account of Jesus' life, and what happened at this wedding was the first of those. Jesus "performed many other" miracles, but John chose these seven. And he calls them "signs". He's saying that the miracles are pointing to something more. Each one is not just an amazing event; it's a signpost, a pointer. So at one point, Jesus fed thousands of people with a boy's packed lunch, and then he stood up and said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6 v 35). The miracle of feeding thousands pointed to who he is and what he offers—all that we need to live for ever. Another time, Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man and said, "I am the light of the world" (John 9 v 5). This guy receiving his sight was a signpost to the truth that Jesus is the only sure and safe guide through this world. Each of his miracles came with a message.

And the reason John records these seven miracles is so that "you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God". *You*. John wants to give you the evidence, so that you're able to believe that Jesus is the Messiah—that is, the King whom God had promised to send, to rule and change and restore everything. Jesus proved who he was, and is, by what he did—the Son of God, God himself walking around on earth, the Creator living as a creature.

Faith is not a step into the dark; it's a step into the light—and it comes through knowledge and awareness of what Jesus has done.

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But there's more. Believing is not just about knowing. I know Julius Caesar really did live. OK, but that doesn't change anything for me. Maybe you know Jesus the Messiah really did live. But believing is about discovering that that truth changes everything. Something supernatural happens when you come to believe in Jesus: "by believing you ... have life in his name". When you believe, things start happening to you on the inside; spiritually speaking, you step out of the dark, into the light. You come into his kingdom. You are set free from all sorts of fears. And John says, *That's why I've written these things—that's why I chose to tell you about these seven miracles, of the many things that happened in Jesus' life. These are the things I've chosen to write about so that you might come to believe in Jesus and find that your life is changed by Jesus.*

That's the claim. Jesus can come and help us in those under-the-surface crises, worries and tensions that we all go through—and he wants to do so. Maybe you feel you're running out right now. If not, I am guessing that that time will come. And it's into that moment that God, through this sign, wants to speak to us—to you.