

Welcome to Christ Fellowship. My name is Rick and I serve as the lead pastor here. If you are a guest with us for the first time today, I want to especially welcome you here. We believe that you are not here by accident, but we believe that God has brought you here, all of us here, because He wants to speak into our life, and God always does that through the Word of God. I also want to take a moment to welcome all of our campuses joining us across Dade County, as well as all of you who are joining us online today. We are so glad that you are with us. Today we are going to launch a brand new series, a mini-series, a two-parter, that we have entitled “Water to Wine”. This is going to be coming right out of John, chapter two, in the Bible. If you have your Bibles with you, I want to encourage you to go ahead and open them to John, chapter two. If you don’t have a Bible and you want to use one, there is one on the back of the seat in front of you; or you can just follow along by watching the screens because all of the text, the narrative, will come up there, and you can keep track with us that way. By the way, this is all a part of our ongoing study of the gospel of John which we started, really, all the way back in January. It has taken us basically a year to get from John one, and that is because we kind of moved in and out of that study. But I promise you it is going to be a lot quicker now as we move on into John’s gospel.

I want to kind of set this series up by sharing this with you. Early Friday morning I walked from our downtown condo all the way down to Biscayne Bay. Here is why: I wanted to see this amazing sight that happens every morning down there. Folks, I am talking about the presence of the sun rising up over Biscayne Bay. I’ve got to tell you, this Friday morning it was an absolute show stopper, because as the sun crested the horizon, it just destroyed the darkness. It began to transform all of this grayness into a world of deep blue skies and rich blue waters, and I’ve got to tell you, I was just blown away by that. Stay in the moment with me because as I stood there looking at this sun, I started thinking about the power of that sun. Think about it: Our sun is fueled, it is powered by nuclear fission. You know what nuclear fission is. It is a reaction that occurs inside the core of the sun when four hydrogen atoms are fused together, not split, but fused together to form one helium atom. Check it out: That reaction occurs inside the core of the sun one hundred million quadrillion quadrillion times every second, and as it does, it converts every second seven hundred million tons of hydrogen into six hundred and ninety-five million

tons of helium. Folks, this nuclear reaction releases the energy, releases the power of $E=mc^2$, powering our sun up to fourteen million kelvin, or twenty-seven million degrees Fahrenheit. You talk about some power. The sun has got power covered. This is true power.

Stay with me on this, because as I stood there, I didn't just think about the power of the sun, I started thinking about the provision of the sun. I don't even have to tell you that our sun provides us with light. It provides us with life. Life on the earth could not even exist without the sun. It provides us with warmth. But I also started thinking about the presence of the sun. You know, every morning it is present in the east. You don't have to get up and say, "I hope the sun comes up today. I hope it shows up." No, it is faithful every morning, and every morning it brings with it the hopes and the possibilities of a new day. I just love that. I love the power of the sun. I love the provision of the sun, and I love the promise of the sun to be present, to be there, because the sun is a gift from God. But check this out. As powerful as the sun is, I can take a penny like this, which is exponentially smaller than the sun, but if I bring this penny up too close to my eye, I can actually block the presence of the sun. In other words, by bringing the penny so close to me, I lose perspective between the size of this penny and the size of the sun. In fact, by bringing the penny up so close, I make the penny appear to be bigger than it really is. In fact, by bringing it up so close, I can make this little, tiny penny appear to be bigger than the astronomical sun. I don't even have to tell you that is really a distortion in my mind of what the true facts are.

Now, let me turn a corner and bring all of that imagery, and I'm going somewhere with that, all of that imagery over to our study of the book of John. Get this: The purpose of the gospel of John is to reveal that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of the Almighty God; not the sun but the Son. He is the Son of the living God. The purpose of the book is to put on display His power, His provision, His presence, and His promises in our lives every day, which are huge. But, I want you to check this out. As powerful as the Son of God is, we can take our problems, which are exponentially smaller than the Son of God, but we can bring them up so close that we block the sight of His presence. In other words, by pulling our problems up so close and worrying about them, and fretting over them, and freaking out over them, by bringing them up so close we lose perspective

between the size of our problem and the size of our God; between the power of our problem, and the power of our God. In fact, we can bring our problems up so close - and I don't even have to tell you this - that we make our problems appear bigger than they really are. They just get bigger and bigger and bigger. In fact, we can pull them up so close that we make our problems appear in our mind to be bigger than our God; to be more powerful than our God. But I don't have to tell you this. You know this. That is a distortion of the facts, isn't it? That is a distortion of the truth.

So, this is my proposition today. This is what I want you to walk out the door with. When we are faced with problems of life, and I'm talking about the stuff that all of us deal with, and everybody came in here with a certain amount of stuff, problems, that you are dealing with. But when we face those problems, God calls us to focus our mind on the power of His Son. and to push back our problems out of the sight for being so close, so that we can see the power, so that we can see the provision, so that we can see the presence, and so that we can see the promises of our God and experience that in our life. You might be saying, "Okay Rick, that's a cool thought, the penny and the sun, pushing it out of the way, but Rick, you don't know the stuff that I'm dealing with. Rick, you don't know the problems, the Goliath problems that I am facing in my life right now. I just don't know how to push that out of the way so that I can experience and see the power, and the provisions, and the promises of God in my life. I just don't know how to do that." So, we are going to find out today as we crack open John, chapter two, how to pull that off, how to push back our problems and focus on the power, the presence, and the promises of God.

Now, with all of that in mind, I want to give you two thoughts. How many of you have your listening guides? Wave them in the air. Two thoughts: I hope you will take notes on this.

Number one: Stuff happens. By stuff I simply mean the stuff of life: job loss stuff, bad economy stuff, bad medical report stuff, broken relationships stuff. You can add your stuff that you came in with. Marriage ceremony stuff, gone bad stuff: You might be saying, "Rick, how can you mix marriage ceremony with my bad medical report?" Well, I'm glad you asked. Look at verse four: Look at what it says. It says, "On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus

mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.” Now, stop right there and let me give you the backdrop of what is going on here.

To begin with, you can see that the scene is a wedding that was taking place, that took place, in a small village called Cana up in Galilee, northern Israel. I’ve actually been there. But put your history caps on for a moment, because in ancient Israel, wedding ceremonies were a huge occasion, and they always tended to follow a very exacting format, a very exacting plan. In fact, Jewish tradition laid it down that Jewish wedding ceremonies would take place in the late afternoon. Once the wedding ceremony was over, everybody who was at the wedding would lead the marriage couple and escort them to their house, to their home. So you can kind of picture what is going on here. The wedding ceremony had happened. It is over. It would have been dark when it was over, by the way, so all of the people would have these fiery torches, and they would lead the couple through the village. They would also cover them with an ornate canopy, holding it over their heads. They would guide the couple home, through the streets by the longest route possible, so that as many people as possible could wish them well on the way.

But when they got home, when they got to the house, folks, the party would start up. What do we call that today? The reception: They would have the reception. For them it would be a huge party. What I love is that the couple would actually wear crowns on their heads, and the people would address them for this day as king and queen. So it was a heck of a lot of fun. This was a time and this was a place of great poverty, so this day was designed to be a day of supreme happiness. In fact, it was designed to be a day of supreme fun. Folks, here is what I love, love, love about this scene. Jesus was present in the fun. Watch this: “Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.” Guess what; they went. Jesus went to take part in the fun. Don’t miss this because this is a huge distinction between Jesus and religion, because you see, religion tends to be suspicious of all fun, as if God is anti-fun. In fact, to the religious crowd, God is all about dark robes, lowered voices, and no fun. This was the Pharisees of Jesus’ day. They were the religious crowd, and for them, they had the disposition of a grave digger. They had the happiness of an undertaker. Let me tell you what we learn from this. When it comes to religion,

run! When it comes to religious people, run! Why? Because this was not Jesus, and this is not Jesus. In fact, if you study the gospel narratives, you will find this. You will find that there was something about Jesus that attracted people to Him. It wasn't His looks. In fact Isaiah said there was nothing about him that was physically attractive. And yet, Jesus created this culture about himself that attracted people to Him, especially the non-religious crowd. Jesus ran from the religious people. He ran from them. The people that liked Jesus were the non-religious people. People were tired of religion. They liked being with Jesus, and Jesus liked hanging out with them. One of the reasons they liked hanging out with Jesus was because He enjoyed himself. He enjoyed it when other people had fun.

Listen to this. One of the biggest lies that Satan has sold the human race and he continues to sell it to this day - In fact, I think this is the biggest lie that he sells to us - that is this: If you follow God you are going to miss out on all the fun. Doesn't he sell that lie to people? If you go with the God thing, you can kiss fun goodbye. If you go with this God stuff, you can say goodbye to the fun. Why? Because God is anti-fun. God is boring. God is a stick in the mud. God is a kill-joy. Listen, this is why for some of you, it is why you have stiff-armed God. Listen, I kind of not blame you. Because you think in your mind that if you let God into your life, fun goes away. You think in your mind that if you don't keep God at bay, if you let God get close, you are going to miss out on the fun. But listen: Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, God wants you to have fun. I'll take it further than that. God wants you to be fun to hang out with. Why? Because you represent Him. He made you. You are bad press for God; bad publicity for God when you are miserable. God actually wants us to be happy. But here is what God knows. God knows you can never experience real happiness apart from a relationship with Him. God knows you can never experience real fun, the kind of fun that He wants you to have. I'm talking about happiness and fun that is expended, that will last after the party is over. God knows you can never experience that kind of joy and happiness and fun apart from a relationship with Him. So what I love is this couple invited Jesus to the party because the word was out on the Son of God. This guy likes to have fun, They would not have invited Jesus if the word was out that He was a

kill-joy; he's a stick in the mud. No. They invited Him because He enjoys it when people have fun.

So, let's go back to the wedding, because Jesus was present in the fun, but here is what I really love. Jesus was present and is present when stuff goes wrong. He is present, not just in the fun, but when stuff goes wrong. Look at verse two. "Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine'." Stop right there and slip back into the scene. Jesus was hanging out with everybody, enjoying the crowd, and enjoying the couple when something went wrong. Namely what went wrong was they ran out of wine. Now I know to us, that doesn't sound like a big deal, but in ancient Jewish weddings, wine was an essential part of the wedding. Now, don't get me wrong. It was not that they were getting drunk on the wine. In fact, the word "wine" there in the New Testament is a translation of the Greek word oinos. I always tell you, the New Testament was originally written in what is called koina Greek, and translated from Greek to English, Spanish, French, whatever. That word wine there is the Greek word oinos, and oinos means mixed wine. It means diluted wine. They would mix it three parts to one. At any rate, for this couple to run out of wine at the ceremony would look like they were ill prepared for their own wedding. Not only that, hospitality in the ancient Middle East was considered a sacred duty. So folks, my point is, for them to run out of wine would have been a disgrace. It would have been a humiliation to them before the village. So to them, this was a big problem.

So watch what happens. With that in mind, let's pick it up again in verse three. "When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him: 'They have no more wine', to which Jesus responds: (4) "Woman, why do you involve me?" Stop right there because for Jesus to refer to his own mother as "Woman", seems a bit rude. It almost sounds disrespectful. But the truth is, it really wasn't. You have to realize folks, that at this point, Jesus was moving into his mission, as the Son of God, and by calling Mary "woman" was a gentle reminder to her that their relationship was changing. It was no longer Mom and son anymore. Jesus was assuming his ultimate identity, as the Son of the Almighty God, and listen, Mary knew that. Mary knew that day was coming,

because the angel Gabriel told her when she was pregnant with Him that she was going to give birth to the Son of God. Mary knew that. She knew He was God in the flesh which is why she reached out to Him with this problem. She knew the power of her son. So, look at verse 3: “When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to Him, “They have no more wine. “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied, “My hour has not yet come.”

Stop right there and put your thinking caps on, because all through the gospel Jesus incessantly refers to His hour. His hour! He talked to God about His hour. He talked to the disciples about His hour, His hour. When Jesus referred to His hour He was referring to the hour of His crucifixion. By that I mean that hour when He would hang on the cross That hour when heaven and hell, when God and Satan, when good and evil would go to war, and the stakes would be the eternal life or the eternal death of the entire human race. But folks, it was against that approaching epic hour; that hour when Jesus would take on the problem of sin; that hour when Jesus would take on the problem of Satan; that hour when Jesus would take on the problem of hell. This problem of this couple running out of some wine is contrast. So Jesus says, “Woman, why are you involving me in this.” But listen. Here is what I love. This is so important. Jesus asked this question, “Why are you involving me in this?” to set up the answer, and here is the answer.

Our problems matter to our God. Your problems matter to Him. Your fears, your worries, your insecurities, those things that make you stay awake at night; those times in your life when things go wrong, and maybe you are in here with all sorts of fears. In fact, I would dare say that we all have them. We all have our fears. We all have our worries. We all have things that are going wrong in our life, but I want you to know God cares about that. What I love in this scene is that Jesus did not delegate this couple’s problem to irrelevant, to insignificant in contrast to what He was about to do. He didn’t relegate it to non-essential. No. To the contrary, Jesus waded into what looked like a little problem to you and me, and even what He was up against. He waded into their problem with all the power of the Almighty God, and He literally took water and

transformed it into wine. We are going to talk about that miracle next weekend, so you've got to be back for that.

For now, here is what we learned to do when things go wrong in our world, and stuff goes wrong. Here's what you've got to do. It is so crucial. Focus on His presence, not the problem. Focus your mind on His presence, not the problem. Verse four: "Woman, why do you involve me", Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants; "Do whatever He tells you." Stop there because here is what we learn from Mary to do when stuff goes wrong. Don't pull the problem so close. Folks, I love it, because Mary doesn't ignore the problem. She doesn't do that, but on the other hand she doesn't wring her hands and go, "Oh, my God, what are we going to do. This is awful. We're out of wine. The couple could be so humiliated. They are going to have to buy another house. They are going to have to get out of the village. People are going to start talking about them. This is awful." She doesn't do that. Put another way. She doesn't pull the problem so close that she can't see the presence of the Son of God standing right beside her. Put another way: She doesn't bring the problem up so close and worry and fret and fear to the point that she makes her problem bigger than the God who is standing right beside her. But we can do that, can't we? I can do it. You can do it.

You know, if you get a bad medical report, you can spend hours searching the internet and find ten prognosis to make you worry even more. You can call a friend and say, "You know, I've been feeling these symptoms." Your friend will say, "I knew a guy that had that symptom and he didn't last for two days after he had that symptom." All the time your problems are getting bigger and bigger. You can spend your day at work worrying. "What if I don't make that sale?" "What if I lose that client?" "What if I don't get that promotion?" "How am I going to ever get out of debt?" Your problems are getting bigger and bigger because you spend your days obsessing over what somebody said about you, and you just pull it up closer and closer and it gets bigger and bigger; or you can do what Mary did. Mary took the problem and pushed it off to the side and she focused on the presence of her son, and not just her son but the Son of the living God, which is why she said this. "His mother said to the servant, "Do whatever He tells you."

You see, for Mary, Jesus was present, and that was all that mattered. This is what she knew: She knew that Jesus would do something about this problem in His own time. We already know that He was going to turn water into wine, but she didn't know that. She knew that He would do something in due time, and she knew that whatever He did would be the right thing. She was at peace with that. But more than that, she knew that when it came to this problem that was right there around her, she knew that with Him there, she was not alone in this problem. But Child of God, listen because this is so important. Neither are you alone with your problem. I don't know if you came in here today with. I don't know what fear is sitting right beside you; what dread is sitting right beside you, but here is what we need to remember and say to ourselves. When things go wrong and problems and fears rise up, here is what we need to remember. Remember, "His presence is with me and I am not alone." "His presence is with me and I am not alone." You may think you are, but you are not. Say it again: "His presence is with me and I am not alone." Again: "His presence is with me and I am not alone."

Listen: Don't forget the promise that God made to you. We talked about it last week. Galatians 4:6: "Because you are His son, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." That means the moment that you accepted Christ as your Savior, however you said that. You may have said, "Jesus, come into my heart", or "I open the door of my life", however you put it, let me tell you what. He took you up on that deal, because He has literally now taken up His spiritual residence in your body. He has taken up His abode in your body, and do you know what that means. That means you are never alone in this world. You may think you are, but you are not. Get this. The Bible says, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." Let me put it to you another way. Greater is he that is in you than that problem that you are worried about. Greater is He that is in you than that fear that you are concerned about. Greater is He that is in you than that "what if" that dominates your mind. Greater is He that is in you than anything you could do. Folks, that recognition of that truth is abillitating,- I don't know if that is a word, probably not, but it is the antithesis of debilitating. Right? When you pull your problems up and you stress and you worry it debilitates you to the point that you can't go and attack the problem. But when you take your problems and push them off to the side and focus on the fact that the Almighty God is not just

with you, but He is in you, and everywhere you go, He is going with you, and all the power and all the provision and all the promises that God brings with that. That is abilitating.

In fact, think of David. Remember David's Goliath problem. You know the story: Goliath shows up in all of his massiveness. The guy was about ten feet tall, literally just overgrown. His arms were bigger than my waist, and he had those bulging biceps. He walked out to the Israeli army and he starts to taunt them. He said, "One of you come fight me. You're cowards. Can anybody out there take me on?" If that wasn't enough, he starts mocking God, their God to the point that they start talking to each other. "He is so huge, we could never kill him." They have taken this overgrown dude and pulled him up so close that they can't see the power of their own God. David on the other hand shows up and does the exact opposite. David walks up and basically pushes the size of Goliath out of the way and zeroes in on the size of his God. By the way, do you know that David never called Goliath a giant? He pushed the size and the worries of Goliath out of the way and he zeroed in on the power of God that he knew that God was with him. With that confidence in his heart, he attacked the problem.

Again, when you've got this pulled up so close that your worries are stressing and freaking out, it debilitates you. When you remind yourself that God loves you; God cares about you; God has a plan for your life; that He is with you. When you remind yourself of that, it abilitates you to the point that you can now attack the problem. Watch what David does. 1st Samuel 17:41 says this: "Meanwhile, the Philistine with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David". So the problem is getting closer and closer and closer. Verse 42: "He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and Goliath despised him. He said to David, 'Am I a dog that you come to me with a stick? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here", he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals." You see, Goliath thought David was alone out there in that field. But David knew that he was not alone, that the Almighty God had walked out into that field with David, and watch what he said. "Then David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of

Israel who you have defied.” Then he said this: “This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I will strike you down and cut off your head.” I like that, don’t you? You talk about confidence. Why was he confident? Not in his own ability; the Lord was there with him, the Lord Almighty was with him. Then look at verse 48. As this Philistine moved closer to attack him, David quickly ran away because he freaked out. He was so worried. He didn’t think he could do it. Is that what happened? No. It says, “David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.” You can kind of picture this. Goliath started marching toward David, thinking David was going to start backing off, but David started marching right toward Goliath. Then it says this: “Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead and he fell face down on the ground.” So, David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone.

Folks, I love it. David didn’t Google, “What are the odds of defeating a man twice your age. Can I survive this?” He didn’t pull everybody together and say, “How big is he?” “How tall is he?” “What do you think I’m going to need?” He doesn’t talk to anybody about the giant, about Goliath. He just talks to the giant about his God. Folks, stop talking to everybody else about your problems, and talk to your problem about your God who is with you, who is always there for you, who loves you. What David did was David cast this situation, he cast this problem, he dumped this problem, if you will, on God. ‘I’m going after him, God.’ “I’m dumping this on you to take care of me.” That is exactly what God challenges you to do.

Listen to First Peter 5:6. It says this: “Humble yourself, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.” Child of God, God will lift you up in due time. He is going to take care of you. So what do you do? ”Cast all of your anxieties on Him because He cares for you.” That doesn’t just mean He cares about you. That means He takes care of you; that He will care for you. Do you know what that means you can do, knowing that God’s presence is with you; that He loves you; that He cares for you; that He has a plan for your life, and that in due time He will lift you up? Do you know what you can do? You can go ahhhhh, and let me tell you what: This is what you can remind yourself of. Whatever you are worried about, whatever you

are afraid of, it is going to be okay, and you can rest in that because in due time, in God's time, He will lift you up and whatever you are afraid of, He is going to take care of it. So, what do we do? What do we do with our problems? You remind yourself that "I am not alone with this problem. He is in me. He is with me."

I want you to take your penny and do this with that penny. I challenge you to keep the penny and save the penny. When you go to bed at night and you take your watch off, and your purse and your wallet and you do all of that kind of stuff, put that penny with it. Every morning when you get up, put the penny in your pocket. When things start to go wrong in your day; when you start to face those problems, what somebody said, what you start to freak out about, and you start pulling it up so close, and you start to lose perspective, you start to see this problem as bigger than your God, and you start losing sight of God's presence, pull that penny out and say "I'm going to take my problem, which is exponentially smaller than my God, I'm going to push the penny out so I can embrace His presence, so I can embrace His provisions; so I can embrace His power, and so that I can experience His promises in my life. Here is the promise. Romans 8:28: "And we know that in all things – everything you are going through - God works for the good of those who love Him." We don't know how it is going to work for the good, but it says we know it will work for the good. So remember that God is with you, loves you, cares for you, will take care of you, and in due time, He will lift you up, and whatever it is that you brought in the door, it's going to be okay. Do you believe that, Child of God? If you believe that it is going to be okay, would you say Amen! Amen.