

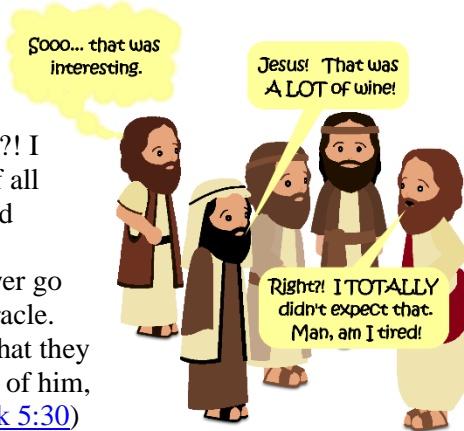
By: Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow

Rev. Wendy Depew Partelow is President of the American Baptist Churches of New York State Board of Missions.

Debriefing

In the Gospel of John, after Jesus performs his first miracle we are told “After this they went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.” ([John 2:1-12](#))

So, what did they do during those few days in Capernaum after that great first “sign” at the wedding? Did they ponder what just happened?! I mean really! Think about it. First, of all Jesus must have been completely and totally exhausted from this event. Remember, Jesus could *feel* the power go out of him when he performed a miracle. Even when someone *else* had faith that they could be healed, the power went out of him, and this was no small miracle. ([Mark 5:30](#))



And second, Jesus did not think his time had come, and yet look what power he had! They must have all been awe struck! His brain must have been racing!

Imagine going to a wedding and preparing to celebrate as a guest and suddenly find yourself having to be the caterer for the reception! You are planning to be ‘just’ a guest and have a good time, and then suddenly you have a big responsibility and job to do. That’s probably what Jesus’ experience at this wedding was like. Jesus came to the wedding with the attitude of a guest, not the “Anointed One of God”.

In the first chapter of John’s Gospel, John identifies Jesus as the anointed one, the Lamb of God (John 1:29,36). In spite of this shocking announcement, Jesus begins his ministry in a kind of leisurely fashion, John’s disciples approach him and they go spend the evening with him. The next day word spreads and a few more people decide to follow. Jesus is a bit more bold with Nathanael than he has been - perhaps trying on the role of which he has been newly identified. And the next day Jesus takes them to the wedding to which they have all been invited.

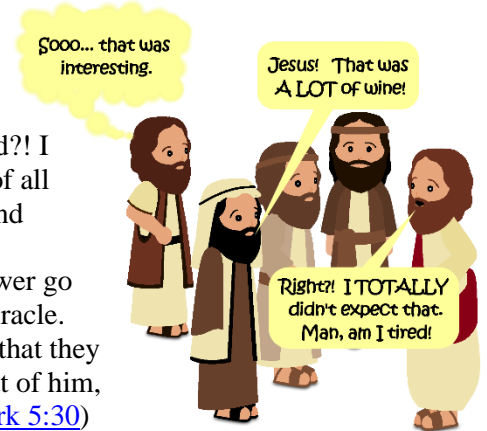
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Being invited to a wedding and attending as a guest was probably something that Jesus was really looking forward to; a little wine, a little socializing with family and friends... But then, his mom comes to him, "They have no wine." ([John 2:3-5](#)) I think at that point Jesus' response, "Woman, what concern is that to you and me. My time has not yet come." Is really Jesus saying, "Mom, I really don't think that's our business, and besides, I don't think I can. You really want me to produce *wine* at a *wedding*?" And so... he does. "Honor your father and mother..." That's what it says, that's what the commandment says, "Honor her wishes..." So he does. He gathers the servants together and it happens! But it's not what he was *planning* to do.

There is a mental *preparation* that goes into any event that we attend, or any responsibility that we have. Think of a paramedic. When they are "on call" they are on alert in their minds ahead of time even before a siren sounds. After they get the call and are on the way they prepare their minds and their emotions and their hearts.

But Jesus had prepared *his* mind for a *party*. He was *attending*, not facilitating or officiating! To suddenly and unexpectedly be called into action must have taken an extra toll on him. And so the text saying that he went home with his friends and family and "remained there a few days," makes sense, and it's an important life lesson for us.

We need down time, we need time away, we need to gather with friends and family. And when something major happens in our lives, we need to talk about it. We need to relax and just be able to speak what's on our minds - honestly and without judgement or recrimination. Just relax and share - and ask ourselves, "What just happened out there?" Firemen and ambulance personnel call it "debriefing." They talk about their fears, their anxieties, and the emotions surrounding what just happened, perhaps even what they might do differently next time. I think this verse 12 indicates a *debriefing* time for Jesus, his mom and his disciples.

Sometimes, as Christians, we strip Jesus of his humanity by thinking he took all of these gifts he had for granted. I think sometimes he was probably as amazed as we are at the results. Every time Jesus tells someone "your faith has made you well" it seems he is humbly acknowledging that he can do nothing if people don't believe. It's a two-way street - these miracles.

But verse 12 reminds us that *even Jesus* needed the time away from it all to debrief: to ponder and assess the events that had already happened, and to discern where to go next. If Jesus took remembered to take time to stop, reflect, learn, and recharge as he went through his days, we should remember to do the same.

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