Exploring the Bible—Gospel of John (2)

Changing Death into Life

**Scripture Reading:**

1And the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2And Jesus also was invited, as well as His disciples, to the wedding. 3And when the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no wine. 4And Jesus said to her, Woman, what do I have in this that concerns you? My hour has not yet come. 5His mother said to the servants, Whatever He says to you, do. 6Now there were six stone waterpots lying there, according to the Jews’ rite of purification, holding two or three measures each. 7Jesus said to them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8And He said to them, Draw some out now and take it to the master of the feast. And they took it to him. 9And when the master of the feast tasted the water which had 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 10And said to him, Every man sets out the good wine first, and when they have drunk freely, then that which is worse; you have kept the good wine until now. 11This beginning of signs Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed into Him. (John 2:1-11)

**Ministry Reading:**

THE LORD COMING TO WEAK AND FRAGILE PEOPLE

John 2:1 says that the Lord came to Cana of Galilee. The word Cana means “reed.” In the Bible reeds signify weak and fragile people. Isaiah 42:3 says, “A bruised reed He will not break.” Hence, reeds refer to weak and fragile people who cannot withstand pressure. Therefore, the Lord’s coming to Cana signifies His coming to weak and fragile people.

People in the world are weak and fragile by nature. Both physically or psychologically, we are weak and fragile. Our physical body cannot withstand a little blow. An infectious disease forces us to lie down. The slightest injury can be fatal to us. Our psychological being also is weak and fragile. Concerning our psychological being, a little difficulty can cause us pain, and a little sorrow can cause us much grief. We shudder and are terrified by something that is slightly unknown. It is difficult to find someone who has no physical weaknesses or who is absolutely sound psychologically. Most people today have some psychological imbalance, but the condition of some people is less serious than the condition of others.

People are also weak and fragile in their undertakings; hardly anyone is happy and content with his undertakings. Most people have aspirations that cannot be realized, because of their human weakness and fragility. Those who are cautious and conscientious may have some achievements, but these achievements cannot withstand even a slight blow. We will not consider serious blows, such as the chaos brought in by wars, natural disasters, and man-made calamities. If there is a little change in the environment or in human affairs, everything that a person has spent his whole life achieving can disappear in an instant. How weak and fragile human beings are!

Thus, man’s condition is portrayed in John 2: a group of weak and fragile people dwelling in Cana, Nevertheless, our Lord Jesus came to weak and fragile people so that they would receive Him as their life. People need the Lord Jesus to be their life because they are weak and fragile.

The Bible says that those who believe in the Lord Jesus receive eternal life. The term eternal life refers not only to a life that is eternal but also to a life that is strong. It is called eternal life because it is unchanging. This life is unchanging because it is strong. The nature of this life is the exact opposite of the nature of the human life. The nature of the human life is weak and fragile, but the nature of the divine eternal life is strong. Therefore, the Lord Jesus as the strong divine life comes to the weak and fragile people in a low and mean place in order to take care of, to resolve, the problems of human weakness and fragility.

THE LORD COMING INTO HUMAN LIFE WITH ITS PLEASURES

The Lord came to a wedding feast (John 2:1-2). A wedding feast signifies the pleasure of marriage. Marriage is a great event in human life. Without marriage human life has no continuation, and without a continuation human life will cease to exist. Therefore, human life depends on marriage. Marriage is a symbol of human life because it is the center and the focus of human life. Furthermore, the wedding feast is a symbol of the pleasures of human life. The Lord’s coming to the wedding feast signifies His coming into human life and also into the pleasures of human life.

THE HUMAN LIFE “RUNNING OUT”

The Lord Jesus came to the wedding feast, but the wine ran out (v. 3). Wine is the focus of a wedding. A wedding depends primarily on wine. In those days the Jews drank wine made from grapes, which is the life of the grapes. Hence, wine signifies life. A wedding feast depending primarily on wine signifies that the pleasures of human life depend on life. If there is no wine, a wedding feast becomes meaningless. When life comes to an end, man loses his pleasure and enjoyment. The pleasures of human life disappear when life ends. Therefore, when life is terminated, the pleasures and enjoyment of human life are also terminated.

The wine in the wedding feast ran out. This signifies that human life is limited and will end. Human life will reach an end. When a person’s life comes to an end, the pleasure of his human life also comes to an end. This is true not only of the joy of human life that exists between a husband and wife. It is also true in respect to the many other aspects of the joy of human life. We all understand that the aspects of the joy of our human life will eventually end because our human life is limited and will end. Man may be feasting and living an “enjoyable life,” but the Lord Jesus knows that human life will reach an end one day; it will be finished. Therefore, the Lord comes to man in order to meet such a need.

THE LORD CHANGING MAN’S DEATH INTO LIFE

After telling the servants to fill the six waterpots with water, the Lord asked them to draw out some water (v. 8). When the master of the feast tasted the water that had been drawn out, he did not taste water but the good wine, the best wine (vv. 9-10). This signifies that the Lord changes the death in man’s natural life into the best life. That which was water was changed into the best wine. All that we have is death, but after the Lord Jesus comes, our death is changed into life; it is even changed into the best life. When the master of the feast tasted the water that had been changed into wine, he was surprised and could not imagine that it had previously been water. Through His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus has done such a work of changing death into life in many people. Others are surprised and amazed at the condition that these ones manifest and the “flavor” that they emit. Formerly, these people knew nothing but death in the various situations of their human life. However, after the Lord Jesus did the work of resurrection in them, these conditions of death were changed. These conditions prove that the death within them was changed into the best life.

The most crucial need in human life is not this thing or that thing but a change of life. Originally, our condition is one of death. This condition can be resolved only by the eternal life. Only this life brings about a radical change within us, changing our death into life. Only the Lord Jesus can accomplish such a change within us. Only He as the resurrected Lord—the Lord of life and the Spirit of resurrection—can change all our death into eternal life.

Reference: Changing Death into Life, Ch. 1.

Question for Discussion: Have you felt fragile of human life? And how do we experience changing death into life under this kind of circumstances? Please share with one another.