

THIS MOTHER KNOWS BEST!

Today's Text: Jn 2: 1-12

Extracts:

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, *the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."* His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it" [Jn 2: 1-5].

Baerke van der Mey is an 18-month-old Dutch toddler who recently made news around the world for signing a "professional soccer contract" with the VVV Venlo Dutch club.¹ His father had posted a YouTube video of the toddler shooting three balls into a toy box that served as a goal. He shot with such precise aim and scored with such remarkable accuracy that the video soon attracted 900,000 hits on the web site. That prompted the Dutch soccer club to offer the toddler a 10-year "professional" contract. Although it is merely symbolic, it has drawn more attention and fans to that club, especially as the toddler was invited to take part in one of the club's practice sessions!

Even though the toddler's father has been given the credit for the YouTube video posting, you can be sure that the real hero is his mother who spotted the talent (while his father was probably away at work or elsewhere) and encouraged its development before informing her husband. She is the one who "watches over the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness" [Prov. 31: 27]. That is why mother knows best! In this week's Bible text, we read about Mary the mother of Jesus and how she used her maternal instincts to get her Son to perform His first miracle at a wedding in Cana. There are certain principles that we can learn from the story to help our mothers to develop healthy and productive relations with their children.

¹ Based on the following sources: Coney Nachman, "Dutch Soccer Club Gives A Contract To An 18-month-old Dutch Toddler," <http://www.businessinsider.com/18-month-old-toddler-inks-contract-with-european-soccer-club-2011-4#ixzz1LlKb1Een> , Apr. 29, 2011; "1-year-old signs soccer 'contract,' http://www.upi.com/Odd_News/2011/05/01/1-year-old-signs-soccer-contract/UPI-61061304277565/print/#ixzz1LlLchZt5 , May 1, 2011; and "1-year-old Toddler Gets Soccer Contract Over YouTube Video: Baerke van der Mey Scored Big!" <http://sports.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474979286830> , May 03, 2011

1. Background: Mother and Son are invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee

Today is Mother's Day, 2011. By coincidence, this week's study treats the relationship between Mary and her Son, Jesus. There is much that our mothers and mothers-in-Christ can learn there from to improve their relationships with their children and wards. Right now, some relationships are hurting. For example, some mothers and their children are not on speaking terms. Some children do not know where their mothers are and do not care. Some mothers have given up on their prodigal children who may be in jail or on drugs. That is not God's plan for you, dear mothers. Your children are expected to rise up and call you blessed. Also, your husbands are to praise you [**Prov. 31: 28**].

If you think you have had a rough time in life, it is nothing compared to what Mary passed through. She was a teenage virgin, espoused to a carpenter called Joseph, when her simple life was "invaded" by God's plan for mankind's salvation. Angel Gabriel came to her to announce that she had found favour with God to become the mother of the Son of God, Jesus, the true successor to the throne of David and He would reign forever because His kingdom would have no end [**Lk 1: 26-35**]. After seeking and obtaining clarification from the angel how a virgin could get pregnant without knowing a man, she accepted God's call, saying, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" [**vv. 34-38**]. With a supportive husband, Joseph, whom God had informed in a dream about his wife's situation [**Matt. 1: 18-21**], she did not have normal relations with her husband "till she had brought forth her firstborn Son" [**v. 25**]. Thereafter, she had for Joseph four sons (James, Joses, Simon and Judas or Jude) and unnamed daughters [**Matt. 13: 55-56**].

The last time Joseph was mentioned alive was when he came with his wife to look for Jesus, then twelve years old, in the temple in Jerusalem. On that occasion, He went home with them to Nazareth "and was subject to them" [**Lk 2: 41-50**]. Joseph presumably died before Jesus began His earthly ministry at the age of 30 [**Lk 3: 23**], when His mother was in her forties. Her first Son was "self-willed" while the rest were resentful of Him because they believed that He was "out of His mind" [**Mk 3: 21**]. So, it was Mary, the young widow and single mother that raised such a large household and kept everything together. We have so much to learn from her!

In this week's Bible text, we are told that there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Mary and Jesus and His disciples were invited. They ran out of wine sooner than expected, when many guests had apparently not been served. That was when Mary went to work. Let us follow the narrative from there:

- a) *"They have no wine"*

Mary came to her Son and said to Him, “They have no wine.” Jesus replied her, “Woman, what does *your concern* have to do with Me? *My hour has not yet come*” [Jn: 3-4].

As the closest to Jesus, both physically and spiritually, Mary knew what her Son was capable of doing. Of course, we all know that most mothers tend to show off their successful children! In their chat opportunities with neighbours and others, they easily share pictures of their children and how well they are doing at school or profession or marriage, etc. No one else will ever hear of children in prison or on drugs! Like any average mother, Mary was anxious for her Son to start letting the public know of His divine powers. The shortage of drinks at that wedding was a unique opportunity to begin! Remember that before that event, Jesus had not performed His first miracle [v. 11]. So, the reply that Jesus gave her, “My hour has not yet come” becomes clearer.

Mary showed us how to relate to a grown-up child. She did not come to Jesus with any air of authority over Him. She did not come to beg for a favour either. She simply said, “They have no wine.” The decision was Jesus Christ’s to make. Many mothers hardly realize that their children have grown up and are entitled to independent action. It is true that the 70-year-old son of a 90-year-old mother remains her *child* and we all tend to associate that word with infants! On the other hand, there are certain grown-ups who still want to be treated as children by their parents. They refuse to move out even when working and earning wages, and will hardly share in household bills or chores. Some mothers love that! Mary knew her boundaries and allowed her Son to decide what to do. That was the right call to make.

b) “*Whatever He says to you, do it*”

Mary left Jesus and went straight to the servants of the host. She told them, concerning Jesus, “Whatever He says to you, do it” [v. 5]. Mary was not a woman of many words! She knew what she wanted from her Son but she did not press it. She understood her Son enough to know that He would not let her down. Moreover, her response protected her Son’s possible negative response. In other words, whatever He said would be acceptable to the servants: yes, no or wait. Mary spoke words of faith and sat down for results.

Soon after, Jesus came to the servants and said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” They did so. He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” That they also did [vv. 6-8]. They did whatever He commanded them. But they did not know the significance of their obedience until the master of the feast had tasted the new wine and found it better than what had been served before then. He called the

bridegroom and told him that it was unusual on such occasions to keep the superior wine until after the guests had been “well drunk” [vv. 9-10]. He did not know that they had just witnessed a miracle, Jesus’ first. It symbolized the beginning of the new kingdom the membership of which you can only access through the new wine of Holy Spirit baptism [Jn 3:5].

We learn from that story that there was a bond of love and understanding between Mary and her Son. They respected each other. Mary knew the appropriate distance to place between herself and her Son. She knew the prophetic word concerning Him and His mission on earth. Like John the Baptist, she drew the limelight away from herself and put it squarely on her Son. As she told those servants at that wedding ceremony two thousand years ago, she is also saying to us right now, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” So, what has Jesus said to us concerning family?

2. What Jesus has commanded us regarding His family

Human beings are hero worshippers. We treat heroes as idols but idol worship is a sin! For example, in the island of Patmos, John fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that Jesus had used to bring the Lord’s messages to John. The angel said to John, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and *of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God*” [Rev. 22: 8-9]. Mary has told us the same thing that that angel said, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” Here are a few things that Jesus has said to us that we must do:

a) *Who are His family members?*

Ordinarily, a family consists of parents and their children. That is called the nuclear family. That can be extended to include grandparents, uncles and aunts and cousins. In all such cases, relationships are by blood. DNA tests would usually confirm such blood relationships. However, we also know of other family members that are brought in by adoption. Such members are family by law.

Jesus has broadened the concept of family. On one occasion, His mother and brothers came looking for Him. At the time, He was surrounded by a multitude of people, and they said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.” He asked them back, “Who is My mother, or My brothers?” Then, looking around in a circle at those around Him, He said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For *whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother*” [Mk 3: 31-35]. Clearly, membership of Christ’s family is defined by faith in Him [Jn 1: 12] that qualifies us to be called sons and daughters of God (by adoption) and joint-heirs with Christ [Rom. 8: 14-17]. As a result, “there is neither

Jew nor Greek ...slave nor free ...male nor female; for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus" [Gal. 3: 28].

b) *What is His mother's place in His kingdom?*

Given the new family as defined by Jesus, what is His mother's place in His kingdom? In every kingdom, the queen-mother is highly respected but she is not the king. For example, when Adonijah wanted to ask King Solomon for permission to marry Abishag the Shunammite, their late father David's youngest wife, it was through Bathsheba, the king's mother, that he channelled his request, saying, "Please, speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag as wife." As she came before her son, he "rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; so she sat at his right hand" [1 Kgs 2: 13-19].

Mary is blessed among women [Lk 1: 28] from generation to generation [v. 48]. However, unlike King Solomon, Jesus cannot put her on a throne by His right hand because it belongs to His Father [Rev. 4: 2]. On one occasion, while He was speaking to a crowd, a certain woman raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" Jesus replied her, "***More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!***" [Lk 11: 27-28]. Jesus has promised those who hear and keep His word that "In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, [those] who have followed [Him] will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" [Matt. 19: 28]. Therefore, Mary will have her honourable place in Christ's kingdom.

c) *What should be your own family priorities?*

Some mothers place their children above their husbands. Then, one day, those children grow up and let their parents know (in words or attitude) that they want their space. Some mothers see it as ingratitude but it is nothing but the arrival of the inevitable! Left with an empty nest with a husband that she hardly knows, there is a void which Satan may want to fill with divorce or other temptations. That is why you should know your family priorities as early as possible.

With her husband dead, Mary devoted the rest of her life to her Son's ministry. She was at the foot of the cross at His death. True to His new definition of family, Jesus committed His mother to the care of John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," not His immediate younger half-brother, James. He told Mary, "Woman, behold your son!" and to John, "Behold your mother!" From that day, we are told, he took her to his own home [Jn 19: 25-27]. The last mention of Mary in the Bible was soon after the

ascension of Christ to heaven, when she and her sons were among the 120 disciples and women that “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication” [Acts 1: 12-15]. Her son, James, became one of the pillars of the Jerusalem church (along with Peter and John) [Gal. 2: 9]. James and his younger brother, Jude, wrote epistles bearing their names, as proof that Mary’s children had all accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour before her death. Indeed, Mary knew her priorities and they were heaven-focussed.

Jesus has said, “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life” [Matt. 19: 29]. So, *when you raise your children in the fear of the Lord, you will have no fear of your future when they grow up*. Like Mary, you have fought a good fight for your family and God will uphold you.

3. Conclusion: Jesus is the focus!

In the words of Abraham Lincoln, “I regard no man as poor who has a godly mother.”² Mary was a godly mother and Jesus was rich. However, He became poor for your sakes that you through His poverty might become rich [2 Cor. 8: 9]. Mary said to the servants at the wedding in Cana, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” They did and He turned their water into wine. He has told you that He is the only way to the Father. Obey Him and He will turn your water baptism into the new wine of the Holy Spirit that will make you born again. Indeed, Jesus is the focus.

Thank you, Mother Mary for opening our eyes to the truth. This mother sure knows best!

² <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20081028215817AAK92kt>