

Go And Gather The Empty (Video)

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the importance of believers stepping out of their own limitations and pouring out God's love and Spirit into the lives of others who are empty and in need. It highlights the power of simple faith, prayer, and obedience in bringing about spiritual awakening and revival in a society marked by wickedness and godlessness.

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Scripture: 2 Kings 4:1, Psalms 12:8, Proverbs 1:23

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Description

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Transcript

Father, I thank you for the touch of heaven this day. Thank you, Lord, for the anointing of your Holy Spirit. Thank you, God, that you are doing something, Lord, and you are inviting us into something that only you can accomplish.

Would you give us the grace, Lord, to look away from our own littleness. Give us the grace to look away from our own thoughts and ideas. Help us, Lord, to embrace your kingdom the way you have clearly revealed it to us.

You've shown us the pattern of your kingdom. You've shown us your heart. Help us, Lord, not to turn away from you when you're speaking to us.

Give us the grace to go into this place of promise and power that you're now setting before us. And I thank you for it with all my heart. Give me the anointing of your spirit, Lord, for I recognize that without you I can do nothing.

If you don't build this house, my labor is in vain. This is your church. These are your people.

Lord, you have to come and speak. You have to bless. You have to strengthen.

You have to guide. You have to guard. You have to lead.

Father, I thank you with all my heart this day in Jesus' name. I gave this message a title, Go and Gather the Empty. Go and Gather the Empty.

2 Kings chapter four. I'm going to start with just verses one and two. A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha saying, your servant, my husband is dead.

And you know that your servant feared the Lord and the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves. So Elisha said to her, what shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house? And she said, your maid servant has nothing in the house, but a jar of oil. Now here's the situation.

This particular woman had lived at a time, at least when she was surrounded by the word of God, where the word of God was preached, where there was power behind the word of God, there was provision, there was a hope and a future. And for whatever reason, the word of the Lord seemed to have been taken away from her household. And one day an evil man, I call it because only an evil man would come and take somebody's children.

An evil man arrives at the door and says, your children belong to me from this day forward. You don't have the resource and you don't have the power to stop me from taking your children. And so she did what any mother would do in a moment like this.

And she cried out to the closest representative, I suppose, in her generation to the real heart of God, which was Elisha, who was the protege in a sense of Elijah the prophet. And she shared her distress. And he said to her, now he had the power to do a lot of things.

You know that Elisha could raise the dead. I mean, he had the power of God, but he turns to her and says, what's in your house? What do you have in your house? And she responds by saying, I have nothing. All I have is a jar of oil.

You see, she was unaware of what she had. She was unaware of the power that was available to her if she would be willing to use what she had. She was so focused on her distress.

And this is the way it is today for many people. We are so focused on our distress that we are in danger of forgetting what we have, what God has already put into our hands. Well, we're living in a moment in America today where wickedness is rising and vile.

Men and women are lifting themselves up to be admired as leaders among the people. Psalm 12 and verse 8 says, the wicked prowl on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men. And who can rationally debate but that vileness has raised itself up to be the standard of behavior in our modern day society.

From killing children in the womb, to gender confusion of our young children in grade school, to lying about the existence of God, to forbidding our sons and daughters to pray in high school, to radicalizing our young people against both God and their country and our colleges. Who can deny but that we are in a similar situation today than this woman was in, in her time. The wicked are prowling on every side, vileness is being exalted as righteousness.

And that which is good and holy and right and true is being cast down as evil and bigoted and given names, derogatory names. Now, violence by definition, if you go to Psalm 10, verse 2, it talks about who these vile people are. Verse 2 says, the wicked in his pride persecutes the poor, let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

In other words, and verse 9 says, he lies in wait secretly as a lion in his den. He lies in wait to catch the poor. He catches the poor when he draws them into his net.

In other words, the wicked use the poor to their own advantage. They have no desire to ever alleviate the suffering of the poor. They would rather the poor be poor so they can be used for their own rising up and retention of power.

In verse 4, it says, the wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God. God is in none of his thoughts. The wicked man, the wicked woman denies the ways and the right of God to rule.

Verse 6, he said, he has said in his heart, I shall not be moved. I shall never be in adversity. The wicked is fixed on his or her goal, believing that there is no power available any longer among the populace to stop him or to stop her.

Verse 7, his mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression, and under his tongue is trouble and iniquity. Not hard to identify the wicked in our generation simply by the cursing. Whether they're from Hollywood, whether they're in politics, they cannot speak without cursing.

They cannot speak without using derogatory four-letter words, curse words, because they cannot come outside of the bounds of scripture. They are what God says they are. Their mouths are full of cursing and deceit and oppression.

Verse 8 says, he sits in the lurking places of the villages. In the secret places, he murders the innocent. His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.

The wicked will fight for the right to murder the unborn in the womb, considering it a right, but God's word defines it as wickedness. There is no debate. There is no argument.

It started with just maybe an abortion in the first few months, and then it progressed now to a child is being partially born before scissors are rammed into the back of its skull. Now there's discussion about post-birth abortion. That's in our colleges, folks.

Just look it up yourself. That means if a child is born and it looks like there's a deformity, a defect, or some kind of deficiency, that child can be aborted after it's already alive and already born. When you start killing, there's no end to what society will become.

When you start justifying evil, there is no end to the evil in a society. He sits in the lurking places of the villages. In the secret places, he murders the innocent.

In other words, in a place that's not visible to the eye, his eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless. There's no way of getting around this. Verse 11, he has said in his heart, God has forgotten.

He hides his face. He will never see. The wicked lives in denial of the reality of God, does not understand the danger of his or her position, that there is a point in history where God says, enough.

There is a point, yes sir, where you have entered the fields of the fatherless and the Lord himself says, now I'm going to arise and defend them. In America today, we're facing our own Goliath moment, where each day menacing voices challenging the reality and the power of God are taunting the nation saying, you will serve us. If you don't think you will serve us, then come and fight with us and see who wins.

We are in exactly the place where the children of Israel were with the Philistines on one side of the valley, with Goliath their champion coming out and challenging the armies of God every moment. We are exactly in the same place today that they were in their generation. The question we ask ourselves today, how do we meet this challenge? What do we as the people of God do when we are being told we live in a post-Christian society? In other words, the gospel used to be preached, used to be believed, used to be obeyed, but that's yesterday.

They're telling us we're in a post-Christian society. Well, I was in Seattle a week ago and there are new churches rising in this part of the country. And if you saw the pictures on Facebook, there are thousands of young people there hungrier for God than I've ever seen in my lifetime.

Nobody told them that we're in a post-Christian society. To be in a post-Christian society, God has to be dead and God is not dead. God is omnipresent in our country.

If you understand the teaching of scripture, God is everywhere. There's nowhere that God is not. He's omnipresent in this country.

God knows everything. We call it omniscient and God is all powerful. He is able in a moment of time to sweep away the refuge of lies.

He is able to bring a spiritual awakening, even if we look like we're dead and in a tomb and behind a stone. He's already proved it in scripture. He can stand up in heaven this moment, even as I stand in this pulpit and cry out, roll away the stone one more time.

Roll away the spirit of death. Roll away the sense of hopelessness. Roll away the rot and the decay that has so permeated this society.

And one more time he can call out to a fallen nation. One more time he can call out to a backslidden society. One more time the voice of God can call out to you and to me to make a difference in our generation.

This is who God is. In second Kings in chapter four, that's where this woman is at this time in her life and that's where the nation is at this point in its history. The word of God that used to be preached is gone.

This woman finds herself alone. She has a heart for her children, but a creditor and I call him an evil man. As I said earlier, only the evil man would come into somebody's house and demand a person's children.

The creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves. And Elisha said to her, what shall I do for you? Tell me, he said, what do you have in the house? And she said, your maidservant is nothing in the house, but a jar of oil. I don't have, if God were to come to us today and we were to cry out and say, Lord, they're taking our children.

Lord, the wicked have come and they're demanding our sons and daughters. Just last week, a major consultation firm in America that's used as a resource for a lot of our organizations and our planning

declared Christian parents, a hate group, a hate group, Christian parents in America, a hate group that should not be consulted when it comes to the education of our children. A hate group that should not have the right to say, my son, my daughter is not being put in a class where they are going to be deliberately gender confused.

A hate group. This is the voice of Goliath. This is the creditor coming to take our children.

And this woman said, I only have a jar of oil. In other words, Oh God, I have so little to fight this. I have only my own salvation.

I have just a little bit of light and a little bit of life. And yet this opposing force seems to be so powerful and it's coming to take our children. It's taking our hope.

It's taking our future. It's taking the presence and sense of God out of the nation. And I don't know what to do.

I feel like a widow. It's been so long since as a nation, we heard the piercing word of God. It seems to us that when the day Billy Graham stopped preaching the word of God left our nation and so many could say this, where's the voice? Where's the conscience of the nation gone? Where's the hope for our future? How do we get our children back? How do we stop this creditor from coming and taking our sons and daughters and making them slaves to unrighteousness? Oh God, how do we do this? And I can hear in my heart, the cry of this lady as Elijah is passing by.

I can envision in my mind, he's just passing through town and she just comes out of her door. And it's almost like one of those moments where my final hope is passing by and she begins to cry out to the only thing she knows of God to be left in the nation. Of course, for us today, the only thing left of God is God himself.

Thanks be to God. Thanks be to his Holy name. And he says to her, what do you have in your house? What have you got to fight against this creditor taking your children? And she starts up by saying, I've got nothing, which isn't true.

She doesn't know what she has. And we've been talking about that in this church for so long. When the Lord came to Esther, she had the same sense of understanding and said, you were born who knows, but you came to the kingdom for a time like this.

A decree of death has been passed over the nation. The people of God are about to be plundered. Their children are about to be taken or killed.

And this girl is now approached by a message that was sent by God himself. And she is swallowed up almost entirely by a sense of her own littleness, but she had forgotten that she was the bride of the king. We might not have a lot of strength.

We might have only a little bit of power left in our lives as a church age, but we mustn't forget that we are the bride of the king. We have access to the throne of God. We have access to the one who has all power and all knowledge and all authority.

And similarly, Gideon, when God appeared to him, he felt like he was the least of the least of the least. And God called him a mighty man of resource because he had sent him to do something that God himself

alone is able to do. Elijah says to this widow woman, go and borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors, empty vessels, do not gather just a few.

And when you've come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons and pour it into all those vessels and set aside the full ones. So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons who brought the vessels to her and she poured it out. Here is the plan of God.

Gather every person, you know, who's empty. Listen to me, gather your empty friends, gather your empty neighbors, even send your children out to gather them. You live in a housing area in New York city.

You're a single mother. You've got two kids that you're worried about. Tell them to go and get all their friends they're hanging out with and tell them to bring them to your apartment and tell them to tell their friends, God is going to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

God's going to pour his Holy Spirit into you. I'm going to take the little bit of oil that I have and I'm going to lay hands on you and we're going to pray. And we're going to believe that you're going to be filled with the spirit of God.

This is the promise for our generation. It's you and I in our littleness, you and I having in a sense, no plan, no power. And we have almost nothing but our own salvation and the little bit of oil that we have trying to give us sustenance and give us light.

God says, here's my plan. I want you to take the little bit you have and I want you to start to pour it into the empty. And you're going to see that inside of you, I am a river of life.

We sang it today. I have a river of life flowing out of me. Makes the lame to walk in the blind as he opens prison doors and sets the captive free.

I've got a river of life flowing out of me. Jesus himself promised you come to me and out of your belly, out of your inward parts will flow this river of living water. You don't wait for this divine moment.

Don't wait until you're on top of the world. Don't wait until you've got a hundred million dollars in the bank. You take the little bit you have and you call your empty neighbors and you start pouring that into them.

Do it now. Do it now. And the scripture says she went out and she gathered she and her sons and gathered them all into their house.

And when all these empty vessels were gathered around, she, she, she got as many as she could get and started pouring into them. That's what a spiritual awakening looks like. That's what a revival is.

It's when the, the littlest, the least, you and I in the house of God, we simply believe God. And with the little bit of oil we have, we start pouring into our neighbors. We start pouring into the kids in our neighborhood.

We start pouring into others around us. And when she began to do this, the oil just kept coming. It never, she thought she had just a little bit of oil.

She didn't realize she was connected to a supply that never runs dry. It says now it came to pass when the vessels were full, she said to her son, bring me another vessel. You watch what God will do.

You watch what God will do. You watch the permitting that will erupt in your home. You watch the children.

They are so hungry for God right now. This is a divine moment. There is an emptiness in our present society, perhaps like none other than we've ever experienced.

You watch when you, by faith, just start to pour into their lives. When Pastor Teresa and I first got saved, we didn't know any better. So we just started laying hands on people and they started getting filled with the Holy Spirit.

I remember one time Pastor Teresa had a Tupperware party. Has that still happened today? In our home. And a lady came with her husband and this lady was really hostile to the gospel.

And so, you know, I didn't want to be around this Tupperware thing. So her husband and I went upstairs and I started talking to him about what God had done for me. We're brand new Christians, brand new babes in Christ.

And he suddenly turns to me and says, I want that. I want that in my life. So I laid my hands on him.

I start to pray. The next thing I know, he hits the floor, bang, really hard. He just, I didn't know it was going to happen.

And he's laying on the floor and he's speaking in tongues. Now downstairs, the ceiling had literally shaken. He'd hit the floor so hard.

They're in the room right underneath us. And Pastor Teresa goes, oh no, my husband is at it again. So she runs upstairs, opens the door, the room we're in, and sees this guy laying on the floor speaking in tongues.

And his wife is starting to go upstairs. She says, what's going on up there? There's nothing, nothing. Everything's fine.

Everything's fine. We didn't know any better. So we just reached out with the little life that we had and we started, and that man is walking with God still today.

That's many years ago. He's walking with the Lord. Actually leads a men's group in his church.

And so I just thank God for the simplicity of faith. You know, no wonder Jesus told the church of Ephesus, I believe in Revelation, he said, you're testing and proving. You got your theology all down.

You got a lot of teaching and you know, who's real and who's phony, you know, who's an apostle and who's not. And you're doing a lot of works and even more than at the beginning. But he says, I have something against you because you've lost your first love.

You've lost the simplicity of walking with God. You've lost the joy of, of just being a vessel through whom God pours his life into others. And I want you, he said, to get back because if you don't get back to that, you'll lose your candlestick.

You'll lose your testimony. You lose your light. If you don't use the oil, you'll lose it.

You'll lose the light. Yes, you'll still have your salvation. Yes, you'll still end up at the throne of God one day, but what could have happened, won't happen.

Gather the empty. Now I'm not, I'm not making up a message today. God spoke this to my heart.

This is the plan for this country. Gather the empty and pour into them what you have and then pour into another one and pour into another one and pour into another one and pour into another one. And you will see that the supply of life does not diminish.

This is the essence of victory. And when she did this, she came and told the men of God what had happened. And he said, go and pay your debt and you and your sons live on the rest.

In other words, this is all you need to pay your debt for her in her particular case and to preserve your children. This is all you need. Church in America, would you listen to me? This is all you need to do now.

The rest is up to God. You have only a little strength, but he says, I've set before you an open door and no man can close it. All it's required is you walk through that door and by faith, by faith, by faith, you begin to pour into empty vessels all around you by faith.

You believe that I'm going to do what only I can do by faith. In the book of Acts chapter two, there were 120 people gathered in an upper room emptied of themselves. And realistically, all they possessed was the oil of their own salvation.

You might say there were empty vessels, empty men and women, empty of all of their sense of strength, empty of all the promises they'd made to God, empty of empty, knowing that their generation was about to be taken captive as they saw it by the godlessness of that moment. It doesn't get any more godless than in season where they've just killed the son of God. Do you understand? It's a godless moment in history.

And it's threatening now them, it's threatening their children, it's threatening their families. And they were just empty vessels. I have no doubt about that in this upper room, knowing their own limitations, knowing their own sense of fear, but they began to pray.

And I see God the father borrowing these vessels from his son to fill them with the oil of his Holy Spirit. And this is where the church started. Just empty people in an upper room belonging to Christ yet, but having no strength.

And God says to his son, may I borrow these? Remember he said, the father will send you the comforter. May I borrow these son? May I borrow these empty vessels that have gathered in your name? May I borrow them and do something through them? And the son would say, father, you're more than welcome to them. You can borrow them.

And the next thing you know, this oil is pouring down into these lives of these 120 who had no strength in themselves, but there was something other than themselves was going to be given them. And then they left that upper room and walked out into the marketplace and began pouring that oil out first into 3000, then into another thousand. Then soon the Bible bears witness.

There was about 5,000 new believers in Christ, just from those 120 that started pouring out. They didn't have the new Testament. Do you understand me? They didn't have the Bible we have.

They were the new Testament. They were the Bible of that time. It was God's spirit in them.

And they were simply being used as vessels to pour into empty people. It started with 3000 empty people coming back from a great religious celebration that left them empty. Coming back from a seeking of God that never satisfied, suddenly encountering 120 people who are willing to be poured into these empty

vessels.

The next thing you know, these people are on their knees. There must've been an incredible water baptism service shortly after that. Must've been something that gathered people from everywhere.

They learned that it was not in their strength, but in their weakness that his power would be made known. Go and gather your neighbors. This is our hope now as a nation.

This is our hope for this church age we're now living in. Gather them. You will be shocked at how hungry they are.

Tell them that God will give them his Holy Spirit. Don't debate theology with them. Just say, let me pray for you and let God pour into your life what he wants to pour into your life.

And as you begin to pray, you watch what God alone will do. That's where the prayer meetings are going to erupt in this country. That's where they're going to start in this city.

It's going to be ordinary folks like you and I calling our neighbors together and say, I'm going to pray for you and God's going to fill you with his spirit. It's single mothers calling all your children's friends into the house, no matter what they're doing or how they're living. Say, listen, God has seen the hunger in your heart.

I'm going to lay my hands on you and God's going to fill you with his Holy Spirit. He's going to touch your heart. He's going to cleanse you from the wrong that you have done.

He's going to give you a brand new life. Pour into them. Pour unreservedly.

You have more resource than you know you have. You watch what God will begin to do. This church of 10,000 will turn into 20 and 20 will turn to 40 and 40 will turn to 80 and they'll have to start filling buildings all over the city.

You watch what God will do in this generation. Now I can either sit at home and stare at my little jar of oil and try to survive and, and eat it out little wee bits here and there trying to survive, hoping that nobody will captivate my children or I can do what God says. God said to get your neighbors.

God said to go find them on the street corners. God said to start pouring into the empty. You can do it today.

When you leave this church, you can start on the street today. You can pray for somebody. You can pray.

People are not as closed as you'd like to think they are. There's a cry in the heart of this generation for something of stability because wickedness is exalting itself and the children of our generation are being taken captive. Proverbs 1.23, God himself says, turn it my rebuke and I will pour out my spirit on you and I will make my words known to you.

The rebuke is just simply this, there's a better way to live your life than this. There's something of God that he wants to give you. Let me pray for you.

You watch what will happen as you begin to pray for people. May God give us the grace to move and to put this simple message into practice. This is the word of the Lord for us today, the little bit of oil that we

have.

So I want to give you an altar call today and it's going to be real simple. God, give me the courage to do this. Give me the courage to be poured out.

Give me the courage to look away from my own littleness, my own lack. God, use me as a vessel to pour life into the empty. You watch.

You watch what God will do. This is a divine moment. This is a moment where this darkness around us can be pushed back by the simplicity of faith in God.

So Father, I thank you, Lord, for just allowing me to speak from your heart this morning. Help us, Lord, to break through this paper wall that tries to keep so many sitting at home crying, thinking they have nothing, when you've already put the solution in their hands. Help us, Lord, to get our children back.

Help us to push back the creditor and to see a spiritual awakening in this nation one more time. Give us the grace and the courage that we need. Deliver us from the fear of man that causes us not to reach out to our neighbors.

Help us to be bold and to make a declaration, God will fill you with his spirit. And Father, I thank you for this with all my heart in Jesus' name. We're going to stand in a moment, simple altar call, God use me to pour out life to others.

For the last season, I don't know exactly how long, but it just it dawned on me as the Lord gave me this word for this morning that he has been encouraging us to step out of a sense of our own littleness and inability. I see it now, the Lord has been inviting us to be people who walk with him and begin to know his power. Just in simplicity, just the simplicity of prayer, simplicity of saying, I know you're empty, but God will fill you.

I'm going to pray for you and God will fill you. And the boldness, you know, the boldness not to draw away, not to draw back, so God will fill you. He's going to touch your life.

I'm going to pray for you. He's going to touch your life. He's going to give you a reason to live.

He's going to give you a new mind, a new heart, a new spirit. That's the promise of God. And don't make it complicated.

And don't shout at the people when you pray for them. Just pray for them. Just reach out.

We must we have to now reach out and escape our own littleness. All through history, Mary had to believe she was going to have a child even though she'd never known a man. Elizabeth had to believe she was going to bear even though she's past childbearing age.

Esther had to believe that the king would move in her favor, even though she seemed like she was so small now in his sight. Gideon had to believe that a great battle could be won, even though he had really no resource other than he had the word of God and he chose to obey him. And you look all through scripture.

That is the pattern of God. That always has been the pattern of God. He doesn't go to the strong.

He never has. It doesn't go to those who have plans because the plans of men are worthless. And one more time, one more time, we find ourselves in the very same position that they were all in.

And one more time, the Lord comes down to people just like you and I. We just have a little bit of oil in our house, in a sense. You know, I got a little bit of light and I'm just hanging on to it. The Lord says, don't hang on to it.

Pour it out. Pour it out. You watch what I will do with it when you start pouring it out.

Before you know it, you'll have a prayer meeting in your house. Then you'll have a time of discipleship. You'll be able to open the word of God and help people to find it.

They'll be inviting their friends and you do the same thing. This is, this is always what spiritual awakening looks like. It comes in simplicity and in power.

So father God, I just pray for my brothers and sisters at this altar this morning, Lord. These are all vessels Lord that you put oil in. God, you have a supply in every life that doesn't ever exhaust itself.

And it increases when we pour it out to others. Help us Lord to believe that this is a divine moment for this nation. Help us to believe God that our lives can make a difference even for our city.

Help us God to escape our own littleness and our sense of worthlessness and to be able to reach out in your name. Give us a compassion that we need in our hearts Lord for people who are empty. Lord help us to care enough to be vulnerable before them.

Give us faith to believe that as we simply obey you and we pray for them that you will fill their hearts. You will wash away their sin. You will give them your Holy Spirit and a new reason for living.

God almighty. God almighty. God almighty.

God almighty. God almighty. Be God almighty to us and through us Lord for our generation.

Help us Lord to escape our own sense of smallness. Don't let us stay there with our doors closed, but send us out to gather as many empty vessels as we can find and help us to pour into them more. God stun us, astound us Lord with what you will do as we simply obey you.

Lord we thank you for this with all of our heart this morning. We praise you in Jesus name. Amen and amen.

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