

# The Man With A Water Pot

by Fred Tomlinson

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*This sermon delves into the narrative from Luke 22 about Jesus instructing Peter and John to prepare the Passover, highlighting the divine orchestration of events and the significance of being used by God even unknowingly. It emphasizes the deep desire of Jesus to share the Passover with his disciples before his suffering, showcasing the compassion and love of God towards each individual. The sermon encourages listeners to trust in God's sovereign plan, experience His unconditional love, and allow Him to cleanse and renew their hearts.*

**Scripture:** Luke 22:7, Isaiah 55:9, Ephesians 1:3, Zephaniah 3:17, Malachi 3:10, Psalm 51:2

**Topics:** "Divine Orchestration", "Trust in God's Plan"

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## Description

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## Transcript

It's Luke's Gospel, chapter 22, forgive me, Luke's Gospel 22 in verse 7. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said to him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when you are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you bearing a pitcher of water.

Follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room, furnished. There make ready.

And they went and found as he had said to them, and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer.

For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Amen. This is an amazing narrative here, isn't it? I mean, there are so many features in it that are quite amazing and certainly very challenging.

And I'd like to just pray before we go any further. Father, we look to you because this is your word. And we, Lord, are gathered together this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And we pray that by your Holy Spirit, you will have success in speaking your clear and vital word to each one of us individually. We're from many different places here, Lord. As you know better than we know, from around the world.

And we pray, Lord, that in our different circumstances and our individual lives, you will be able to say something to each one of us so that when we're all through in a while, Lord, we will be able to leave knowing that we've both been in the presence of God and we've heard his word to us individually. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. You know, when I look here at verse 8, let's just look back there. Jesus speaks to Peter and John, the two disciples.

And he says, go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat. And then verse 9, they said to him, Where? Where wilt thou that we prepare? When I read that, I can hear them thinking, I believe. I can hear them thinking to themselves, Lord, you must be kidding.

Because, you see, this was the Passover week in Jerusalem. And the city is teeming with a multitude of people who have come from many, many places for the celebration of this great Passover feast. The streets are just wall-to-wall people.

Many accommodations surely are full to overflowing. And there's just this seemingly matter-of-fact way that comes through in the text that Jesus instructs the two disciples, go and find the place where we're going to celebrate the Passover and enjoy this time together. And so when I see the word, where, in verse 9, I can imagine it.

I almost read it as though it's in capital letters and in red, like in a massive question mark. Where? How can this happen? And Jesus says to them, as we saw in the reading, but I must read it again to you, verse 10. He said to them, Behold, when you are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you.

Let me stop right there. You're going to go into the city, you're going to meet a man, and I want you to follow him. That's what Jesus said.

I wonder, can anyone tell me what the name of that man was? No, of course you can't, because there's no way that we could have an answer to that question. We don't know anything about this man. All we know is that on this particular day, he was walking in the city, walking down the street.

Yes, he was carrying a pitcher of water, and that would set him apart, we're told, because it was the usual and common thing for the women to carry the water in that kind of vessel. But in any event, there he is. He's just walking down the street doing what he was doing, if you like, if you'll excuse me saying it, minding his own business.

But the fact is, what he didn't know was that he was actually being used by God at that time. Yes, there would be another man that would be presented to us, quite vaguely, a little lower in the text. But this one man that we're looking at, first of all, he was the first in line, as it were, for the fulfilling of God's purpose through the Lord Jesus on this occasion.

And you know, earlier this morning, I was sitting here where I'm sitting right now, humanly speaking all on my own, and I read the text and I was thinking and asking the Lord to show me how I may find his word in it for this meeting. This is also being recorded for the Internet as well at the same time. And at this particular point, I have to confess, I may make someone blush, but no one can see here, and that's my wife, but I thought about my wife.

And I thought, praise the Lord for all those who tirelessly burn the midnight oil seeking the face of God for a fresh move of his Holy Spirit. I believe that these who engage themselves in this way, these are the hidden ones. They're not standing on the platform, they're not in the bright lights.

These are the hidden ones whose secret ministry, I believe, will garner the greatest reward in that day. We also praise the Lord and thank him for those who also serve God, those who, in the sphere of our own lives and our own ministry, those who selflessly support the work, those who engage in very practical things to make even this very event work for us, and also those who I could name, one or two of them anyway, who've been like doorkeepers. They've opened doors for the advancing of this ministry.

And don't let me lose you here. We're thinking about a man who doesn't really realise just how God is using him, but God was using him. And it reminds me of my mother.

Sorry, this isn't a family affair. My mother's long gone to be with the Lord, but I remember decades ago, my mother and father were not wealthy people. My father was an invalid, and it was a struggle after the war and so on.

But I'll never forget my mother saying this. She said, I can't preach, but I can make these aprons and these tea cosies, and I can sell them on the market to support my two sons who can preach. I don't believe my mother realised what a great work she was doing.

Those who pray, those who do mundane things, those who seek to support and make the work of the gospel proceed. Praise God for each and every one. It's so tempting to imagine that we're of no consequence or we're disqualified for one of a host of different reasons.

But I'd like to take an even different view of this man for a moment or two. I think as the two disciples go out to find that man, it had to be a particular man. I believe that there are many very sincere, professing believers in the Lord Jesus who make a mistake at this point in time.

It's as though they go out into the city. Let me tell you what I'm thinking about. They go out into the city of the internet these days.

It wasn't always like that. But they go out into the city and they follow a variety of men because out there there's a kind of smorgasbord ministry where you take a bit of this and a bit of that, whatever suits your taste, whatever seems to have its own unique attraction. I know there are a lot of people these days who are keen to listen to anything that's sensational, sort of wrapped up in the words of the gospel, something that sort of helps them to understand the news in today's newspaper or on the television or whatever it is.

But if we're not careful, we come up with the sort of conclusion, evidently, that those kinds of emphases are the most important things. And they end up in some kind of a shallow spiritual muddle and never really seem to arrive at that place where they truly know God, which is the most important thing of all, by far. It's the basis of everything.

If we miss that fact, we miss everything. So, Peter and John go out into the city and find a man carrying a water pot. You know, there's always something distinctive about the men and women of God, the authentic men and women of God.

There's always something. There are distinctive marks that set them apart somehow. I could illustrate this in many ways.

I could illustrate it from some scriptures. I could say, for example, I'm thinking of a young 17-year-old boy who went to a meeting and he saw and heard a true man of God. He went home and he said to his brother and his parents, he said that the man who was preaching in that meeting, he had white hair, but more than anything else in the world, I wanted to be like that man.

And that's not natural for a 17-year-old boy to say that. But he saw something distinctive. That man wasn't carrying a water pot, but there were identifying marks that he detected.

I'm thinking of another man, a medical surgeon who's gone to be with the Lord now, and he took time off from his medical work in order to carry the case for a beloved brother in the Lord who was going to preach in India. And when he came home and was giving a report on his experience, he made a reference to the preacher friend who he'd spent almost six months with in India. And he said, I want to tell you this about him.

His life is even better than his preaching. He carried distinctive marks. I remember myself kneeling with a brother who has been a great inspiration to me, and we kneeled together, I will never forget it.

And in the context of his prayer for us both, he said, Lord Jesus, make our lives impeccable. Amen. You know, I believe that if you're sensitive and you watch and you listen carefully, you will recognise the man or the one who is truly taught of God.

And here's some advice. I didn't originate it. It was Jesus who did.

You'll remember he taught this in the form of a parable. He basically said if you're out in the field, and in the field you find that there's a pearl there, a pearl of great price, he basically was saying he's a wise man or she is a wise woman who goes home and sells everything that they have in order that they can go out and buy that field so that they could have the pearl. Amen.

There's no price too high to be paid. When we recognise that God is leading us and whatever the particulars may be about the life that we could go on describing, the life that is the life of a true man, a woman of God, there will be that that we recognise. You know, there's a wonderful statement.

It's encapsulated in some other truths in 2 Corinthians chapter 6 in verse 4. The Apostle Paul makes reference to being sure that we are approved as the ministers of God. Isn't that a wonderful thing? Men and women who can actually minister the very spirit and life of God to men and women. That's God's plan for each and every one of you listening to me.

Amen. So Peter and John follow the man carrying the pitcher of water. And I'm sure that Peter and John, I think they've been looking at one another a few times already.

I think when they had Jesus telling them to go out and find the place, they probably sort of glanced at one another as they asked the question, where? But here now, they're following a man. They've met a man

that they recognise to be the man that Jesus had referred to and they follow him. What were they thinking? Eventually, the man in front of them arrives at a building.

I don't know what kind of a building it was, but he goes into the building. Excuse me, but I think Peter and John do glance at each other at this point in time and they're basically inaudibly asking one another, what now? How's this going to work out? And in verse 11, And you shall say unto the good man of the house, The master said unto thee, Where is the guest chamber where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? Now there's some people who believe that somehow Jesus had been there already and sort of booked the place and got it all lined up. I do not believe that for a moment.

But it is amazing that they go in following that man into the building, house, whatever it was, and there's the man of the house standing there. This is that other man I referred to in my comments earlier. This is the moment of truth because it sounds audacious.

Where is the room? You know, the teacher, our teacher, the master, he says unto you, where is the room where he can enjoy and eat the Passover with his disciples? It's further amazing because in the text there's just not the slightest hint of the man being surprised or taken with the audacity of the request. But he just simply conducts them to the place. They go upstairs to an upper room and I can only guess a door is opened and there's this room, a large room.

It's furnished. I may be entirely wrong, but I wouldn't be surprised if there were 13 chairs and a table there. But here's the question.

Verse 13 we read, they went and they found everything as he had said to them. Was it all a coincidence? Could it have been a coincidence? There were just too many features in this developing story for it to be just coincidence. It was utterly remarkable.

I think if we pause long enough we could come up with the conclusion that it's statistical, the statistical probability of this all working out just like this in the middle of a city teeming with people on that occasion. Well, it just doesn't add up at all. Anyway, the text doesn't tell us very much about what happened then.

They obviously go back to Jesus again when they've done what they were doing. I don't know, maybe I'm just a strange person, but I can almost, if I dare say it, I think I see a smile on Jesus' face. He would know full well that he sent them out on this utterly crazy mission, humanly speaking.

I think he probably just said, I know I've got some friends here who are from near Liverpool, very near Liverpool and Warrington as well. That's where I did my police training in Warrington. And in the sort of lingo of the area, I think I hear Jesus saying, how did it go boys? How did it work out? And I'm saying again, did I catch him smiling as he said that? But this is our Jesus.

In Isaiah chapter 55 and verse 9 we'll find these words, For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts. Amen. I think for Peter and John, just rounding this off with them, I think they would just reflect on this whole developing story.

I don't know the Aramaic word for staggering, but I think that could have been a word they used. Wasn't that just staggering? Wasn't that amazing how that happened? This was their Jesus. Amen.

You know, there was just a convergence of these different factors which made that event just be what it was, and so incredibly satisfying and fulfilling. And the Lord is working in my life and he's working in your

life in a similar way. He causes events and circumstances which, some of which, very likely seem adverse to us and unattractive to us.

In fact, they may be grievous to us. But we have a sovereign God and as he has set his heart upon us, he will cause all things to work together, all the issues, each and every one of them, to converge together according to his will, his sovereign will, and he will cause all things to serve his will and for his purpose. You know, it's as though we need to pray.

I do pray this in one way or another. Pity us, Lord. Pity us, Lord, when we insist that in the process everything sort of makes sense and we can see without any doubt that this is God working.

But pity us when things seem to have derailed and when things seem to be going wrong and it shouldn't be going this way. But that may be true, humanly speaking. But if God is who he is, if this Jesus is who he is, he is causing all things to work together for the purpose of the good, the good which is his will, not just to solve all our problems, but according to his sovereign good, his sovereign will.

Amen. We really need to trust him more because he is the God who once said, prove me now. Prove me.

Put me to the test. Prove me if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Malachi 3, verse 10.

Amen. In this particular case that I've been reading about in this text, what was the purpose of it? Well, the purpose of it is in the 14th verse, I suppose we could say, when the hour was come, he sat down with the twelve with him. And did you notice in the 15th verse, when Jesus speaks to the disciples, he says, with desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Another translation puts it, I have eagerly desired that we might be together to eat the Passover together. Let me remind you, it's hinted at right there in the text, that Jesus himself was only hours away from what we can only refer to as a catastrophic suffering, which was far more, far, far more than even the physical suffering that he would endure. But at this moment, I'm touched by the fact that he would say to these simple men, in the light of all that lay ahead of him, more yet than we can even begin to describe.

And he would say, brothers, it's with great desire that I have desired to be here with you. How tremendously human was this statement. And he meant the words, he meant everything that those words were loaded with.

And the event, of course, was so essential for them also. Beloved, you know, when God causes these factors to work together, that I've been trying to describe to us just now, it's for a purpose. And I believe that purpose is because he eagerly desires to be together with you.

That's what his suffering was all about. It's why he came. It's why he lived as a man.

It's why he went to Calvary. He eagerly desires to be with you. Hear me clearly.

He loves you. I happen to know that one or two people who are listening to me right now are carrying some burdens and the enemy is not far away from you. That may be true for others.

But let me tell you this, and hear it as though you are hearing it from the very mouth of God. He loves you. You are precious to him.

And what is utterly amazing for all of us is this fact that he has chosen each one of us in his great eternal purpose. Let me read some priceless words from the book of Ephesians. In the first chapter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will. I'd love to read more of that.

What a wonderful chapter that is. Read it again yourself. Ephesians 1. Those were the verses 3 to 5. But the fact is we're loved of God with desire.

I have desired to eat this Passover with you. Do you grasp that? He's chosen you. And so many of us say we're totally unworthy.

I've heard so many people say that when I've talked to them one on one. And of course we're unworthy. Of course you're unworthy.

But that's irrelevant. He's not looking for me or you to contribute anything to this relationship other than what you are. It has everything to do with who he is.

There's a line in a hymn that we have sung many times over the years. Nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling. Amen.

It's only when we come here to this place where we begin to appreciate just how loved of God I am and he's caused all these various events, circumstances and people to all converge to serve and contribute to his great plan and purpose to bring me into a relationship of union with himself and seal that union which will last for eternity. It's only when I come here that I really, really begin to understand what the whole Bible is all about and what God's purpose is for me. Yes, there's going to be all kinds of events and things that will happen in the world around each one of us.

But the most important thing of all, in fact the primary thing, is that I understand that I am loved of God personally, intimately, passionately and he has good in his heart for me and for you. You know this compassion of God is so astonishing. I'm drawing my thoughts for the next couple of minutes from the book of Zephaniah in the Old Testament, chapter 3. But let me just say this.

He, and I'm just applying the truths that are there to each one of us this morning. He will quiet you with his love. You know what that means? It suggests, like a mother, perhaps she's heard the child wake in the next room.

The child is brightened and crying and she rushes into the room and she says, It's okay. It's okay. Everything's okay, darling.

And the child sobs subside and she wipes away the tears. You're loved of God. This is our Jesus.

Do you know him? Remember the prodigal's father. You remember the story. As he returned, no speech was necessary.

God's not looking for a speech from me or from you. The father embraces the boy. It's as though I hear him saying, Let me see your face, boy.

My dear boy. Jesus invented the story to make the point. And he tells how the father fell on the boy's neck, stinking of the swine traps where he'd been and the ruin he'd brought to his life.

And the shame even on his father's name. But he embraced him. He fell on his neck and he kissed him profusely, is the Greek.

He kissed him and he kissed him and he kissed him. That text in Zephaniah says that he will be silent. In other words, he'll make no mention of your past sins.

Nor will he ever recall them. It goes on. He will rejoice over you with singing.

In this ancient story I've read to you from Luke 22, Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. Right now, he wants to wash your heart. This is your Jesus.

I wonder if you will today bow down before him. Will you give up trying to live the Christian life? And will you let him have his way in your life? This particular verse of him was, for some reason, my mother's favourite. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

And it goes on. Wonderful compassion reaching even me, bows my humble spirit in captivity. Let's pray.

And then my brother Bob, if he's back with us, can sing. Father, we thank you for the truth, for the reality, and for the experience of the love of God embracing our lives, washing our hearts. Lord, I remember those ancient words which were a response to this.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. Lord, we pray that you might bring each and every one under the sound of my voice just now to discover freshly the great compassion and love of God. Lord, cause them to release all their tension and their struggling and their resistance and fall into your breast, Lord.

Love them into newness. Love them into the freshness of your holy life, Lord, and start a completely new chapter in their lives, I pray. And I ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. If there are those listening on the internet and you'd like to know a little more about us, you can find us on a website which is very simply [mckenziefellowship.com](http://mckenziefellowship.com) God bless you all. Over to you, Peter.

Is Bob and your brother going to sing another hymn? Yeah. Good thing. Wash me, O love of God.

Wash me from sin. Find thine atoning blood. O make me clean.

Purge me from every stain. Let me thine image gain in love and mercy reign o'er all within. Wash me, O love of God.

Wash me from sin. I long to be like thee, all pure within. Now let the crimson tide shed from thy wounded side.

Feed to my heart. Apply and make me clean. Wash me, O love of God.

Wash me from sin. I will not, cannot rest till pure within. All human skin is vain, but thou canst cleanse each stain till not a spot remain.

Make holy clean. Wash me, O love of God. Wash me from sin.

Thy faith, thy cleansing blood now makes me clean. So near thou art to me, so sweet my rest in thee. Oh, let a purity save, save from sin.

Wash me, O love of God. Wash me from sin. Thou while I trust in thee will keep me clean.

Each day to thee I break heart, life, yea, everything save. While to thee I cling safe from all sin. Amen.

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