

The Why in What

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon explores the significance of inviting Jesus into our lives and the transformative power of faith and obedience.

Duration: 28:22

Scripture: John 2:1, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his own struggles and frustrations in preaching the word of God. He shares a personal realization that he had to lay it all out to Jesus and ask for guidance on how to preach effectively. The speaker emphasizes the importance of telling Jesus what we need in our lives and trusting that he will not throw us away. He highlights the story of Mary's faith and obedience, encouraging listeners to do whatever Jesus tells them in the Word and see the miracles that can happen. The sermon concludes with a reminder that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and encourages believers to follow his instructions and make changes in their lives accordingly.

Transcript

I'm so happy my mom's here today. She has not been here in so long. I'm so happy for that.

She's been such a model to me growing up of someone who's faithful, who has God priorities in her life, and I'm just thankful for a lot of things. How many are just thankful for a lot of things today? Say amen. We're thankful.

Gotta be thankful. We're thankful. When you're a kid, you just are interested in what happens.

You run home from school and you tell your mother or father what happened at school. What happened at school today? As you get older in life, it's still mostly what, what happened? Oh, I saw this, that happened, this happened. And the older you get, and especially when you become a Christian, you start to understand life in a different way and you don't ask just what happened.

What did she do? What did she say? What went down? But you start to ask the question, why did that happen? Some people never grow up. They just ask what happened and they repeat things and they never get below that surface and say why. My father-in-law was a great blessing that way to me because we once had a long talk about that, trying to understand not what a person does and how they act, but

maybe why they act that way.

If they did something wrong, that's not to justify it, but it's why someone does something. And that goes with the things of God. I wanna talk to you about the first miracle Jesus did, but I just don't wanna tell you what happened and what he did, but I want you to probe into why it happened.

We're gonna take this summer off like we would at school on our study in 1 Thessalonians and for July and August, God willing, myself and other speakers will be just preaching from the word of God. And then in September, the Lord willing, we'll go back to our study. We're up to chapter four there in 1 Thessalonians.

But I wanna talk to you about the first miracle Jesus did and I want you to remember this verse, Hebrews 13, eight, which says, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and would you say that verse with me? Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today. One more time. Jesus Christ is the same.

Yesterday, today. So now we learn one Bible verse today in case you didn't know that one. And now here's the story which John relates to us.

It's not told in any of the other gospels. Let's look at it, shall we? John chapter two, verse one. On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee.

Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. And when the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, they have no more wine. Woman, why do you involve me, Jesus replied.

My hour has not yet come. That sentence is a touch cryptic. We don't know exactly what the Lord was referring to there, a seemingly almost abrupt answer to his mother, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.

Was it something to do with the wine and the symbol of his blood being poured out? The commentators do not come into agreement on that. My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you.

And nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from 20 to 30 gallons. Those are huge. Jesus said to the servants, fill the jars with water, so they filled them to the brim.

Then he told them, now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet. They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

Then he called the bridegroom aside and he said, everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink, but you have saved the best till now. What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him. So this Jesus Christ, who did so many miracles, this was the first miracle that he ever did.

And of course, it has significance because it seemed like then the disciples seemed to lock in and begin to really believe in him, that he was not an ordinary man. What their exact understanding of who he was,

we're not sure, because they went back and forth, it seemed, across the three and a half years that he ministered. But the Bible here tells us that in Cana of Galilee, which was fairly near where he grew up, in that province of Israel, the northern province, he did this miracle.

And of course, it has significance because it's not just the natural, he did something supernatural, but water, he turned into wine. Water would possibly be symbolic of just natural living, humanity, human living, the earth. Wine has a heavenly connotation, has a connotation of joy, celebration, salvation, and worship.

He took something that was just ordinary and he made it into something like, how did he do that? That's the what that he did. Let's just go over the what that he did. He was at a wedding reception, his mother was there, and he and his disciples, they ran out of wine.

His mother came to him and said, they have no more wine. Then she said to the servants, do whatever he tells you. And then he said, fill those huge jars with water.

They filled it with water, which is not what they needed, they needed wine. They filled it with water, and then somehow, that was brought to the master of the banquet and they began to give it to him. And some place in there, it had turned into wine.

And not only turned into wine, but when the man drank it, he called the groom and he said, you're the bomb because most people give the best wine first and then when everybody's feeling very happy, they bring out the cheaper wine, watered down wine, and they give it then. But you've saved the best for last. And that was the first miracle that Jesus ever did.

That's the what. This passage has always meant a lot to me because it brings me back to some simple things that I want to remind you of. Why did that miracle happen? What happened? It's possible deeper significance.

We talked about that, but why did that happen? Because I don't know about you, I need miracles in my life. I need Jesus to take water and turn it into wine in my everyday experience. How many get what I'm saying? Say amen.

I need Jesus to touch the situation that's overwhelming me, confronting me, inside of me, a lack of peace, a lack of joy, being perplexed, not knowing what to do. You know, you face decisions in life, they're not easy. You can say just pick anything you want, but come on, we've all learned there's a right decision to make.

There's one that wisdom would dictate, and if you don't get wisdom from God and you just do it to do it, you can end up in a bad place. So I don't know about you, but I need this Jesus every day doing something that only he can do. How many are with me? Just say aloud, amen.

Amen. That's what I need. So I don't know, I just don't want to know what he did there.

I want to know why so that I can learn and the choir can learn. How do you bring Jesus into your everyday situations, your family, your wayward daughter, your wayward son? Think of all the heartache that there is in life that we need help with. In this congregation, just think of what could privately be going on, battles, attacks of the enemy, temptations, discouragement, depression, inner anger, lack of forgiveness for other people, and we know it's there, and we can't stop it from being there, and we know it's wrong, but then how do you get past that lack of forgiveness? Otherwise, you're gonna end up bitter the rest of your life.

So we're taking this miracle and we're trying to bring it and apply it here to everyday living. Financial needs, every kind of need. Just making a decision about buying a house or an apartment, moving, a career change, going to school, what school, being trained in what.

I mean, you can just go out and do whatever you think is right, or you can come to Jesus and say, if you turn the water into wine, would you please come and show me what to do? Well, the first why it happened was, is right there in the text. The only reason the water turned to wine was that Jesus was at the banquet. If Jesus was not at the banquet, logic tells us, the water would have never been turned into wine.

Why was Jesus at the banquet? The text tells us he was invited, so we stop. Jesus comes where he's invited. If you don't invite him, there's no telling what might happen.

Don't believe this thing by just saying certain things that all work out, and like a Bible mantra, and just all of that. Christianity is not mental positivism. It's not practicing positive thinking.

We need our minds renewed, but the only reason Jesus was there is somebody took the time to say, Jesus, would you please come to the wedding, and you can bring the disciples with you. That's what brought him here. So that brings us to this.

Have you invited, have I invited Jesus, first of all, into our lives? If you're not a Christian here today, going to church won't help you alone. If you grew up in church, that is not what makes you a Christian. You have to come to the place where you invite Jesus into su corazon, into your heart, into your life.

You have to stop and invite him. You have to say, I don't wanna go on living without you residing in my heart and my life. Going beyond that, to the problems that we're talking about, I've invited Jesus into my life.

I'm a Christian, but as problems come up and situations arise, do we stop and invite Jesus into that situation? When you start to date someone, and you think, if you're single, and you start to have a little relationship with somebody, and there might be feelings there, do you invite Jesus into that situation so that he can guide you and lead you? When you're about to make a decision financially, do you stop and do you pray and do we invite Jesus into it? Lord, I invite you. I'm not that smart, Lord. Please help me.

I invite you into the situation. Help me to make this move. When you try everything with that son or daughter and it's not working out, do you stop and say, I am going sideways here.

Jesus, I invite you into this situation. It's overwhelming me. Would you please help me? Because everywhere he's invited, he comes.

Everywhere he's invited, and whatever you invite him into, he will come. He's a gentleman. Where he's invited, he will come.

When he's not invited, no telling what might happen. That goes for churches, do we invite? Why do you think we try to, we tell you the most important meeting all week long is the prayer meeting, why? What do we do in prayer, among other things? We worship, we praise, but we invite Jesus into the situation. Well, you say, no, he already knows it.

I'm his child, he already knows it. Yeah, the Bible says, you have not because you, you don't stop and ask Jesus, help me in this situation. The water was turned into wine because Jesus was there.

Why was Jesus there? Because he was invited. Now that sounds simplistic, but it's not. How many Christians carry all kinds of problems and they never ask Jesus? They never invite him into that situation.

Pastors don't invite Jesus into sermon preparation. Don't invite Jesus into what they should preach on. Churches don't invite Jesus into blessing their congregations.

It doesn't happen automatically. Otherwise, every church would be filled in America. I just learned that seven churches are closing every day now in America, seven churches every day.

Obviously, someone's not inviting Jesus in to help them because I don't care how secular and anti-Christian the world is becoming, greater is he that's in us than the one that's in the world. Can we say amen to that? But we have to engage, we have to engage. You're gonna have a chance to do that in a moment.

You have to engage and invite him in. I know this is true because I've carried stuff for crazy amounts of time without asking Jesus to help me. Maybe you have to.

You just, you carry it. You try to do the best you can. And the worse it gets, the harder you try.

And there's no answer to that. That's not gonna help because our strength is not sufficient to meet the challenges of life. And that goes together with the other reason why the miracle happened is they told Jesus what they needed.

Mary went and said, Jesus, they have no more wine. If she doesn't say that, things go on and nothing happens. Again, sounds simplistic, but if you analyze your life and my life, all kinds of people like us go on without telling Jesus what we need.

Look at me, everyone. What do you need today? Jesus said to people when they approached him, he would say sometimes, what do you want me to do? Did he not say that to people? What do you want me? That's how gracious, how kind he is. That's how loving and kind my Jesus is.

What do you want me to do? We lay awake at night, we stress out, we complain, we get bitter, we get negative. I met someone the other day, they were so bitter, they would make a lemon look sweet. This person was so bitter, bitter, bitter, bitter, and a believer, but bitter.

I don't know what happened in their life, but you gotta come and tell Jesus, Jesus, I'm bitter, I'm disappointed, I'm discouraged, the enemy's attacking me. Jesus, I need my mind renewed. Jesus, my money is this high, my bills are this high.

Jesus, and this is amazing. That verse we quoted before, you have not because you ask not, that happens all the time. We lie awake at night, we hyperventilate, we tell everybody, we call our friends, we complain to our friends, you can't believe what's going on in my life, but we never stop and just say, just don't pray, like our heavenly brother and all that, just tell him, Jesus.

Talk to the, look at the people that he helped in the gospels, they didn't make long oratorical prayers. They told him, I can't go on without this. I can't go on without you helping me.

At the lowest point, maybe, of my ministry, when Carol and I first began the Brooklyn Tabernacle, she was ahead of me, she's a pastor's daughter, perfect pitch, could play beautifully, and you know, she had been around church all her life, her dad and mom, godly people, but my dad was an alcoholic. My mother was a

battered woman. So now I'm in the ministry, and I was a basketball player in high school and college, so now I'm in the ministry.

And I remember two people on Tuesday night, Sunday after Sunday, the same handful, no breakthrough, no blessing, I knew what God had done, I read enough church history, I knew what God could do. My sermons were so bad, you've heard me tell you they were so bad that I fell asleep while I was preaching, and not just the people listening, that's true too. But I don't know what I was saying.

They were bad. I got so low, and then as walking alone in the auditorium one day, I realized, I'm fretting, I'm frustrated, but I never really laid it out to Jesus, and asked him, Jesus, would you please teach me how to preach, would you please make me what you want me to be? You know, brothers and sisters, look at me. This sounds simplistic, I'm telling you, some of you are missing what you need in your life, and you're one sentence away from having it.

Look at me, one sentence away, all you have to do is tell him, what's he gonna do? After giving his life on Calvary for us on the cross, you think he's gonna throw you away? Never, but the enemy just diverts us. We do this, we get frustrated, we get overwhelmed, we get negative, we wanna give up, we wanna quit. They told him what they needed, that's how the miracle happened.

He was invited, they told him what he needed. Let me close. Mary said to the people working there, the servants, do whatever he tells you.

I'm torn between Mary's greatest sentences in the Bible. When the angel came and told her when she was maybe as young as 16, 17, when the angels came and said, you're gonna have a baby, even though you have never had relations with a man, and he's gonna be son of the most high, and this and that, that she could believe that and say, let it be according to your word. I mean, that's an awesome sentence.

Am I correct or not? What 17, 18-year-old girl is gonna have enough faith to say, yeah, that's never happened, will never happen again, but let it be according to your word, here I am. I'm gonna be the mother of the Son of God, that's a great sentence. But this one is very strong.

Do whatever he tells you, and I want you to take it as we close, way past the wedding banquet in Cana of Galilee. The key to that miracle was they did. The why? They did what he told them.

Now, he told them an odd thing, and sometimes the Lord to carry out his purpose for us, he tells us to do a strange thing, it doesn't make sense. In other words, they needed wine. He says, fill that with water.

We don't need water, we need wine. If you have a stash of wine, we need your help. But don't be telling us to fill jars with water.

That's an exercise in futility. But Mary had told him, because she knew something about him, do whatever he tells you. And that's what I wanna close with.

Just do what he tells you. He tells you to get away from those friends, do it. He tells you to change your schedule so that you have, for the Bible every day, do it, do it.

Do whatever he tells you. Do whatever he tells you in the word, obviously, read the word, and do what he tells you. Put away that anger, put away that filthy speech.

Just do what he tells you, and see what will happen. The secret to a lot of miracles is they're being held back because we're not doing a simple thing. Just do it, believe.

Stop running around with those people. Stop putting your eyes on those images. Just do it, come on, you know he's saying it.

Just by the grace of God now, just do it, and see what God will do. Just do what he tells you. Go on that mission trip.

Start to give and tithe proportionally from your income. I don't know what he's saying to you, and this is, I already took the offering, so I'm not hyping for money now. I'm just saying that the key to what God is gonna do is to sometimes obey the simplest command.

For some of you, you haven't even been baptized. Be baptized. Get in the water, I don't like water.

Get in the water anyway, you won't die. We haven't lost one person yet. Been baptizing for years.

Just do it, what's it matter? Listen, do it, he said it. Believe and be baptized. Turn the other cheek.

Let it go with that coworker, let it go. Just do what he tells you to do. It could open up the windows of heaven.

Come on, let's put our hands together. Open up the windows of heaven. Do whatever he tells you.

Do what he tells you. Do what he tells you. Oh, in my life, the simplest little promptings, when I've obeyed them, oh, the amazing things God has done.

And when I disobeyed them, didn't have enough faith, got afraid, or too selfish, too self-indulgent, oh, who knows what I've missed. But when you just do what he tells you. And I can't apply it totally because I know he's talking to all of us all the time about do that.

Don't do that, just do what he tells you. And I just feel this again to say. Some of you, what he's telling you, you know what's holding you back from the water to wine in your life? Is that posse you're running with.

They're gonna drag you down and rob all of God's blessings from you because they talk wrong, they think wrong, they're wrong values, and you think you're gonna change them? No, bad company corrupts your morals, my morals. So just do what he says. I know, but they're from my island.

They're from where I am. I don't care about your island or your country or anything. I care about Jesus turning water into wine in your life.

Come on, can we say amen to that? Seen more people lose out with God because of the folks they run with. Whatever blessing they get, they dissipate it within a day. Just running around with people just talking smack, talking trash, wrong values.

And even if it's your own family, you be respectful, but you gotta keep a distance sometimes with your own family when they're a negative influence in your life. Oh, I've seen that. So he was invited.

They told him what they needed. Mary said, do whatever he tells you, and he told them a strange request. And they did it.

And the last word I have for you today, because this comes from my heart to you, here's what you will find. My mother's living proof of it. I'm living proof of it.

My wife's living proof of it. He will always save the best for last in your life. The idea that life is like this, look, go up, up, and then, well, I hit my peak.

Now I'm going down, and I'm gonna end with a whimper. That is never found anywhere in Scripture. The Bible says, remember the wine at the end was better than the first wine.

And that's a law with God. We go from glory to more glory. We go from faith to more faith.

We go from blessing to more blessings. Can we say amen to that? No, pastor, I'm too old. No, you're not.

He chose, he called Moses when he was 80. You're not 80 yet. Let's get it on.

He saves the best for last. You know what? Just because she's here, I never know from one Sunday to another Sunday or one day to another day with my mom. I wanna just treasure every Sunday she's here.

She has more joy, more peace. She knows more about the Bible now, reading it more than at any time in her life, although someone has to read it to her now. So you don't have to go up and down.

My late father-in-law stayed active and loving God all the way till when? When the Lord took him home. We don't have to go down. There's no bottom we have to hit.

Are you with me on this? Can you say amen? All right, God's gonna give my wife the better songs to write. The choir is, you know what? The choir is the best choir. There's a proof.

I say this, wait, time. I don't want them to get a big head, but they're good on that. This is the best choir she ever had.

No, not just they sound great. This is the best spirit she's ever had in a choir. And I talk to all kinds of people, say, yeah, 15 years ago, the choir, our choir was good in our church, but now it's just about disassembled.

No, no, not with God. Glory to glory to more glory to water to wine. One last time, let's just say thank you, Lord.

Close your eyes with me. How many need a water to wine situation? Rapido in your life, ahora, not mañana. You need it right now.

It could be inside of you. It could be in your family. It could be in your finances, in your spiritual life, most importantly, but you need to invite him.

Tell him what you need. Do whatever he says. And I promise you on the authority of God's word, you will enjoy more of his blessings than you've ever had in your life.

I don't care how he's blessed you in the past. It'll be better. It will be better.

You don't have to go out with a whimper. Don't have to go downhill. If you're in the choir and you need that, you stand up and you come and stand behind me on the carpet.

If you're in the balcony or downstairs, get out of your seat right now and come up to the front. Pastor, I need Jesus to enter into this situation and I need him to do a miracle for me. I need his touch.

I need his intervention. Get out of your seat. Come quickly.

Come on. Come on from the balcony. I'll wait.

We're not gonna close until you get down here. No one else moving. Even today, bring the answer.

For those time-sensitive situations, bring the answer today, tomorrow, before the holiday weekend is over, Lord. For those interior needs, bring it now. Bring it now.

Water to wine now, Lord. We need it now, Lord. Can't live one more day with that thing.

Send angels now throughout the earth. Move mountains. Cross rivers for us.

I've preached your word. It's here. Your promises are that you never change.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What you did in Cana of Galilee, do for us according to our need. Grant us more faith to believe in a living Jesus.

A living, miraculous Jesus. Not a dead creed, but a living Jesus. Thank you for your word.

Thank you for the spirit of prayer, supplication. We're gonna leave here expecting great things because the best is yet to come. Say it with me.

The best is yet to come. Say it with me. The best is yet to come.

One more time. The best. Let's hug one another.

Come on, ladies with ladies, men with men. Give a big hug to somebody.

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