

When Supplies Run Low

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of inviting Jesus into our lives to receive the supplies we need during challenging times.

Duration: 31:45

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 14:30, Matthew 15:22, Luke 11:9-10, John 2:3-5, Philippians 4:6-7

Topics: "Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of losing joy while traveling in the subway. He then asks the audience how many have experienced running low on their supply, emphasizing the need for focus and asking Jesus for help. The speaker highlights Mary's simple yet powerful prayer when she informed Jesus that they had run out of wine at a wedding. He encourages the audience to not carry the burdens and anxieties of life without seeking God's help, reminding them that God has something better for them than running out of what they need. The sermon also touches on the sadness and longing for simpler times that some people experience during holidays like Christmas.

Transcript

Thanksgiving, not only is a time, a holiday we're all familiar with, but the shopping begins. I just learned yesterday that Macy's opens at six o'clock on Thanksgiving night and stays open without closing till midnight on what they call Black Friday. You shop till you, that's not in the Bible, but that's, that's what they say.

It's also the time, Thanksgiving and Christmas, where people of all ages, of all economic strata, of all races, of all backgrounds in America start getting depression and tempted to drink and get drunk or get melancholy or get introverted and isolated like never before. More suicides from November 15th to the end of the year than any other 45 day period in the calendar. I wanna talk to you today, briefly, just very practical.

We're gonna do it, we're not gonna just study it. When supplies run low. Because at the end of the year, although it can happen any time, you just sometimes run out of gas.

I'm not just talking about energy. You could work out and you should have a healthy diet and you can exercise and walk. But I'm talking about when you run out of patience, when you run out of joy, when everyone's saying peace on earth, but you don't have any peace.

When everybody's celebrating joy to the world and you don't have any joy. There are ebbs and flows in life, we're all aware of them. And God has something better for us than running out of that which we need.

And why a lot of people are sad at Christmas time, my understanding of it is, many wanna give gifts and they have no money. They're without a job, they're without proper funds. Number two, they remember back to simpler times.

Life has dealt them some punches. And when Christmas or Thanksgiving comes, you remember around the tree at nine years old, 12 years old, eight years old. It was simpler, you seemed happier then.

It was like, yeah, those were the good old days. But now, not so much. But this flies in the face of everything we know about Christianity in the New Testament.

When the Apostle Paul and Silas were arrested for preaching about Jesus in the Greek city of Philippi, they were thrown in jail after being beat and they were singing at midnight. We're not in jail, we don't get beat. And we're not singing at three o'clock in the afternoon, forget midnight.

So if you go by, you don't know what I've been through, that doesn't make sense because they were through more. They were through much more and they're hanging in. And some of those Egyptian Christians who were slaughtered by ISIS on the beach, I have heard reports, credible, that many of them were singing with the last few breaths they had.

They're ready to be decapitated and they're singing and you and I are depressed about, what was that that we were depressed about? They're ready to die. We're gonna have to now be challenged by the word of God and say, why is it that when they went through so much and they were victorious, more than a conqueror, they were more than that. And we're going through so much less, but we have this malaise, this depression, this victim mentality, no one knows the trouble I've seen.

And of course, the root of it is, is that God never meant for us to live off of our own resources. My grandson and I, Luke, we were talking about this, that the Christian life is a continual receiving. God never intended us to keep anything ever.

And nothing would be resident in us in the sense of the flow of grace. Grace, God doing for us what we can't do for ourselves. So whatever the lack is, whenever supplies run low, you have to understand the daily miracle that God wants to do, that Jesus wants to do in all our lives.

You know, you get flustered, you get in situations, you wanna blow up. How does this work? What are the simple keys to living this week, this Thanksgiving, so that when we're with our families and friends, we're not a bad advertisement for Jesus because we're ticked off at the world or upset or depressed. What kind of advertisement to our families is that gonna be for a Christian? We wanna shine for Jesus.

Are you with me? Say amen. We wanna live in such a way that it's attractive, like what's with her and her husband? Like why are they like that? Rather than mopey and drawing attention to ourselves. So the secret, of course, is in receiving from Jesus.

Not receiving Jesus as your Savior, no, receiving Jesus every day. And I just felt that came to the weekend here, wanting to preach about something totally different. God willing, I'll preach about it at 9 and 12, the Lord willing, next week.

But I just feel compelled to help somebody today so that you don't go through the season low on supplies when the supplies run out. And the simple formula for everything that we need today, I don't care if it's money, joy, peace, direction, name whatever you're lacking, name whatever you're short on, and I'm gonna give you the solution. Pastors and I and some of the men in the church that God has put his hand on, I'm meeting with them, and we're discussing preaching and handling the word of God and reading, studying, and we happen to touch on this passage, and it stayed with me, it came to me today, so let's look at it.

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, notice this five-word prayer or five-word request.

This was the entire request that brought the first miracle of Jesus. They have no more wine. Woman, why do you involve me, Jesus replied.

My hour has not yet come. His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you. Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, and each holding from 20 to 30 gallons.

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, first of the signs through which he revealed his glory and his disciples believed in him. So this is the miracle.

They ran short on something at a wedding, but it's a parable, it's a metaphor. It's a picture story. Not only did it happen, it's a lesson for us.

Please listen. I won't talk 15 minutes, 10 minutes. And then we wanna get to this.

I wanna help you. Listen, I have memories, bad memories of Christmas because my dad became an alcoholic and he started at Christmas time. The first time I ever saw him with a drink in his hand was at Christmas.

I was real little. That's before he became an alcoholic. But I had never seen him drinking hard drinks.

But every Christmas was, he's gone. You're not seeing my dad. If we're gonna open any presents, he won't be there.

So then we didn't even have Christmas celebration because he was on a bender. He was gone for days and days, just laying drunk, fighting with my poor mother, hitting her, me trying to defend her and all of that. So Christmas has mixed memories for me, some joy.

But Christmas to me when I was young, a nightmare. You're talking nightmare. Not on Elm Street, on Parkside Avenue in Brooklyn.

Horrible. We learn here the secret so that this holiday season, we won't go back to who we used to be and we won't run out of the supplies that are ample. There are ample supplies.

God's not short on one thing. Did you know that? Today, whatever Jim Cimbala needs, God's not short. He's not like, I didn't know you needed that.

Or, oh wow, look at the mess you're in now. Heaven's not surprised by anything. So God has ample supplies.

Whenever you and I are lacking anything, it's because we're either asking and waiting and it's coming or we haven't gone about this the right way. So let's analyze this and then end. So the first miracle he ever did was at a wedding.

My dad never made it to my wedding. He made it to my brother's who's older, my sister who's younger, but he never made it to my wedding. Where was he? Where he always was, drunk.

That's how he was. And everyone understood. Oh, Nick Cimbala's not there.

Jim's father is like that. Here was a wedding in Cana of Galilee and we have a miracle of supply. So listen, here's it, take it with you.

Whether you're 15 years old or 90 years old, for all of us, listen. How did the supply happen? The supply happened at a wedding. Who was at the wedding? Jesus was at the wedding.

Why was Jesus at the wedding? Because they invited him to the wedding. He only went to weddings he was invited to. He's a gentleman about the whole thing.

You don't barge into weddings that you're not invited to. That's not nice for anyone, amen? One Thanksgiving about 15 years ago, somebody, one of the musicians in our church who was a moocher for food, we never invited him. We had about 20 people there.

He just showed up at the door. And we greeted him and hugged him and then I turned to Carol and I said, did you invite him? And she said, no. Did you invite him? I said, no.

Then why is he here? He's hungry, he wants some food. He just showed up. Well we loved him and we're brothers and family so of course we were happy to take him in.

But the general rule is you don't go to a wedding you're not invited to the reception. Why was Jesus there? How'd the miracle happen? Because he was invited. So here's the first rule.

Do you want supply for your life, for your marriage? Do you want it for school? Do you want it for whatever? Invite Jesus into the thing. Invite him into the day. When you wake up, Jesus, it's Monday.

I invite you to be with me today. Well no, he's everywhere. He said I'll never leave you.

Ask him to be with you. Do you want to see supernatural supply? Invite him to be with you in a special way. I know God is omnipresent.

I know he's everywhere at the same time but you got to invite him. You're starting a relationship with somebody? Invite him into that relationship. You're planning your wedding? I just told a couple the other day.

Invite him into the wedding. Forget the gown and the flowers. Everybody will forget that.

What they'll remember is Jesus was at that wedding. We could feel his presence. Why was he there? Why is he at certain places more than others? Because some people invite him and other people ignore him.

Why does he bless some people? Because they're inviting him into every day of their lives. When you're making plans to move, making any decision, Jesus, we invite you into this decision because wherever you invite him, and when he comes, something great is gonna happen. Can we all put our hands together and say amen to that? You have a problem, finances, whatever it is, struggling against it and feeling depressed won't change anything.

Jesus, help me. Where am I supposed to go to school next year? Should I take this new job? Invite him into the decision. Don't you think he'll come? What do you think, say no? He'll say yes.

When he's invited, he comes, and then you watch. Things are gonna happen. You're gonna get direction.

You're gonna get supplies. Something good is gonna happen. Invite Jesus into everything.

That's what walking with the Lord means. What is walking with the Lord? How do you walk with the Lord? Well, how do you live your life? Day by day. Give us this day our daily bread.

You invite him on a daily basis. That's why reading the Bible and praying helps in the morning and at night or any other time you do it based on your schedule. Why? You're inviting him.

Lord, in more of my day, everything I say, I invite you into this conversation. When I talk to this person, sometimes I get upset. So God, I have to have an appointment with them.

Please, I invite you here. Be with me, and then you'll notice that your temperament will be different. Come on, do I get a witness to all of this here? When you invite Jesus into it, it can take 10 seconds.

Jesus, I invite you into this. When I counsel people, Lord, before they walk in the door, Lord, would you please help me in this counseling? I don't have the wisdom I need. Of course he's gonna help me.

He died for us. Of course, wherever he's invited, he'll come, and he'll help us, so inviting. Everybody say, invite him.

Say it again, invite him. Number two, when the problem came, what happened? They ran out of wine. Mary came and said a five-sentence prayer slash request slash statement.

They have no more wine, and that's all it took. Oh no, but I heard and I read, listen, the Spirit will guide all of us how to pray, and sometimes waiting on God can take hours, but I'm just telling you what the Bible tells us, and there were a lot of other healings that happened with just God have mercy on me. You don't have to write the Declaration of Independence when you pray.

In fact, I have found that many times when you multiply words, you lose focus. It's better just to say like Peter did when he was sinking, Lord, save me! That's a short one. They have no more wine.

Is it not amazing, brothers and sisters, I'll speak for myself, all the problems that we bear and all the pressure we take on and all the anxiety that's in our lives, all because we never stop and ask God to help us. No, it's amazing. We know, pray, we can say yes to verses, but in everyday actuality, in our everyday living, we have all kinds of things we need.

We complain to relatives. We get upset with this. We feel ourselves losing our peace, and instead of going to Jesus and saying, I am losing my peace, we don't do that.

I don't know what we're waiting for. What were we waiting for? Ask, and you shall receive. Seek, and you'll find.

Knock, and it shall be opened. And the terrible verse in John, a warning verse to us, you have not because you, it's not that he didn't see the need. These things don't happen automatically.

God wants to build faith in us. He wants to get glory, and the way he builds faith and he gets glory is we ask, we receive, and then we tell everybody, I asked him, and he helped me. That's what the Psalms are about.

In the day of trouble, I called upon the Lord, and he heard me, and he answered me. Other people will see what he did for me, and they'll rejoice. Asking, receiving, then others see what God has done.

That's how you become a testimony. But you can't have a testimony until you have a test. Oh, how many have enough tests to have a testimony? But how do you make it from a test to a testimony? You ask.

No, it's amazing. I have caught myself down through the years carrying burdens that God never intended me to carry. You have some right here, and you have this burden, and you love the Lord.

Do you think he's happy you have that burden? Let's talk straight. He loves you. You think he could be happy with you weighed down with that? No, he can't be.

Well, why is it still there? Have you talked to him about it? Just tell him. You don't have to use King James language. You don't have to pray around the world.

Just tell him. Don't pray like you heard in church. Pray like you pray.

Never copy the way another person prays. Do I get a witness here for that? Say amen. Never copy the way anyone prays.

Don't do that. Don't do that. That's artificial.

Talk to him the way you talk to him. I need help. Help me in this exam.

Now, you have to study, but even after you study, ask him to help you to bring recall back. If you don't study and just say, well, I'll pray before I go in. I'll see you in summer school if that's what you do, right? Just they have no more wine.

She never said another word of request. So what have we learned? Invite him. Ask him.

Say that with me. Ask him. You say, Pastor Simba, that's so crude and rudimentary.

What are you talking about? I just met with some beautiful people, couple here from the Billy Graham Association who are visiting here from Canada. They live in Calgary. And I was reminded, Dr. Graham about 10 years ago said at the end of his life, he's still living, but at the end of his ministry, active ministry, they said, looking back on your ministry, what would you change? What three things would you change most about all these crusades, all the travels, everything? He said, oh, I can tell you that quickly.

Here are the three things I would change. I would pray more. I would pray more.

And I would pray more. Now that I've walked with God, I realize everything comes by asking. So today, this Christmas, tell this to others.

Let's practice it ourselves. When supplies run low, and you can feel yourself during the day when you're losing it, can't you? Yeah, I just was on the A train a few weeks ago. I got on at 42nd Street, Port Authority, 8th Avenue, and I had the joy of the Lord.

I hadn't even gotten to the bridge, the tunnel to get into Brooklyn. I had lost all my joy. All the stuff that was going on in that thing, pushing, crowding, yelling, everything.

Why, am I the only person that's ever had that happen? How many have ever run low on your supply? Come on, lift up your hand, all right. So now, right on the subway, we can tell them. Luke can tell them, right, going into a class, I've lost my focus.

Jesus, help me with my focus. I've invited you into my school experience. Now, help me with my focus.

Last thing, Mary said these words, maybe her most important words in the Bible. There's an argument among experts or expositors. Mary said famous words we're gonna talk about probably at Christmas.

Remember when the angel came and said, so listen, the glory of the Lord will overshadow you, and you're gonna become pregnant even though you've never been intimate with a man. But the baby you're gonna have is gonna be called son of the most high. And the end of his kingdom will never happen.

And he will be great, and this and that. I mean, what teenager, she probably was a teenager. What teenager ever heard anything like that and believed it? Well, some people maintain that her greatest sentence was this.

To the angel, let it be according to your word to me. What you spoke, let it be. I believe you can do all that.

And I have no idea how that's gonna work out, but let it be according to your word. Pretty marvelous sentence, right? Full of faith, full of surrender. But some people say, no, what she said at the wedding is the greatest thing.

When she said, do whatever he tells you. All she had said is they have no more wine. She told them the need.

But then she knew something about Jesus. She must have had this instinct. Why would she tell the servants that? Do whatever he tells you, that's what I wanna say.

Invite him, ask him, and then do whatever he tells you. If he tells you to stop something in your life, stop it. I said stop it.

By the grace of God, let's stop it if he tells you that. If he makes some verse a lie. If he tells you to call someone, call him.

If he says pray for someone, stop what you're doing and pray for that person. Just do whatever he tells you. Invite him, ask him, then obey him.

Do whatever he tells you. And what's strange is that Jesus told them something that made no sense. He said fill these big jars with water and the need wasn't water.

And this is where a lot of us slip up. We don't listen for his direction and then when we do, it doesn't sound right to us because we have God in a box. This is how it's gonna work out.

When I was back in where I grew up, this is how I saw God work. Hey, you gotta throw out all of that and just say, I will do whatever you tell me. I will do what you tell me.

They didn't need water, they needed wine. But the water, he knew he would turn into wine. And sure enough, he did.

Invite him, ask him, do whatever he tells you. I tell you this story before God, it's absolutely true. I don't know if I've ever told this story.

Way, way, way back, I'm not in the ministry. I'm working in the business world. Working on 42nd and 3rd, between 3rd and 2nd, working for an airline, personnel.

But God's dealing in my heart. He's working in my heart, but I don't know what to make of it. But I invited him in like God, you know, guide me because I'm married and now we have a little baby but I'm not happy, something's missing.

So, my late father-in-law was coming into Manhattan. I loved him so much, and my pastor then, who I loved a great deal, they didn't know each other that well, or really hadn't gotten along that well. And I invited both of them to have lunch with me in the city when I would take my break for lunch.

And I wanted to buy it for them. Even though I was the youngest, the least established in life, I wanted to treat them. It's always good to treat people.

Are you with me on that? It's always good to, always treat somebody because it'll come back to you. Don't wait for the other one to pick up the check. Pick up the check.

And then I realized I didn't have any money. This was a while ago, you didn't have to spend that much but I just had a couple dollars. And I went, no, I can't believe this.

It wasn't to impress my father-in-law. I'd already married his daughter. I just, I wanted to do that.

And then, about 11 o'clock, we're gonna meet at 12, 11.30, someone comes and says, secretary comes and says, oh, Mr. Cimballa, so you gotta fill out your expense report. Shouldn't you get a reimbursement for that last trip that you took? Yeah. You know where I'm going with this, right? You can do a lot with expense reports.

You can get all kinds of reimbursement. You can make up anything because they weren't there. You took a cab, you did this, you did that, but I hadn't.

I had to fill it out and if I was honest, I would just say, no, I get nothing back. But then I wouldn't have anything for lunch. So I was thinking, is it right to lie if you wanna bless someone, you know? Gotta figure this out here.

Is cheating allowable if it has a good end? I was tempted, strongly, because my friends had always told me, everyone does that. But I had invited the Lord, not just as a Christian, I invited God, take me where you want me to go. I had asked him, you know, to help me day by day.

The battle went on and I said, you know what? I'm not doing this. This is wrong. Thank you, Jesus, for this trend to say no to this temptation.

I'm married about, you know, a year. So, felt better. When you resist temptation, you feel better.

Am I not right? I get out. I only was on the third floor, if I remember correctly. But I always took the elevator down, never took the stairwell.

I get out for the elevator, it's about five to 12, I'm gonna meet him downstairs. Well, I'm gonna have to just beg off and say, I wanted to treat you, but I don't have any money. I don't think I had a credit card then, to be honest with you.

I'm waiting for the elevator, elevator's not coming. And I figure, I don't wanna be late for them. Something just came in my mind, go in the stairwell and go down.

So I go down from the third floor to the landing, down to the second floor. Then I go down, I come to the other landing. No one's there, nobody takes stairwells in these office buildings.

And there on the landing is two \$20 bills. I look around, but not for too long. Picked it up, looked around, nobody.

I very quickly was saying, thank you Jesus. How many would have said it with me? Put your hands together. I never told them.

I was embarrassed to tell them how I was tempted. That's my pride, back then. But I had to fight back the tears during lunch.

Because that lunch was on God. Invite Him, ask Him. Do whatever He tells you.

Close your eyes with me. Anybody here running low as you get to Thanksgiving? You're low in some area of your life. Patience, faith.

You know it. You're not acting the way you used to. Why? You've run out.

That's what it is. Not you, not what anyone did to you. It's not the situations.

Don't be a child. Don't be immature. Be childlike, but don't be childish.

Short on money. Short on peace. Just get out of your seat quickly.

We're going to close in a moment. Don't anyone else move. Please respect the house of God.

Just get out of your seat and walk up here to the front. We've got all kinds of good people who will stand with you. But just get up and come up.

I'm short. My supplies have run low. Every eye closed.

Remember what we learned today? Invite Him. So those of you that are in front here, maybe you've never invited Him in your life to be your Savior. Going to church won't help.

You've got to have a personal relationship with Jesus. You know how it happens? Just receive Him. Invite Him.

Invite Him in. Say, forgive me of my sin. I confess it.

But those of us who are Christians, invite Him into your situation. It's a mess, but invite Him into your mess. Invite Him into your plans.

Invite Him into your problem. Invite Him into your decision. Invite Him into your finances.

Then ask Him. Tell Him straight now. In just one or two sentences at the most.

Just get it down to what you really need and you're going to tell Him. And then yield your heart to Him and say, I will do whatever you tell me. You'll have to give me the grace like you gave Pastor Cymbala that day.

All those years ago. Not to cheat, but to be honest. And remember this, He always saves the best for last.

You've yet to even imagine what God can do for all of us. So Father God, we come to you and we invite you into our lives, marriages, families, schooling, job, career, education, finances, marital difficulties, raising of children. We invite you.

We invite you into it, Lord. We ask you to help us. We invite you.

Come in. We heard you knocking at the door. So we open the door and now you're in.

And now we tell you what we need today. We tell you what we need. God, you know, listen to what they're saying to you, Father.

They're telling you what they need right now. You hear their hearts. They're not praying out loud, but you hear every every whisper.

You hear it. And now we say with Mary, we will do whatever you tell us. We will go.

We will stay. We will pray. We will rejoice.

We will speak. We'll be quiet. You are not just Savior, but you are Lord.

This was for all of us here. But we learned something today, didn't we? Everybody say after me. Invite him.

Ask him. Obey him. Praise God.

Lord, give us the best Thanksgiving we've ever had, Lord. Bless us. Keep us close together.

Be with us in Jesus' name. And we all said amen. Turn and hug somebody.

Hug a couple people.

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