



## Mom's Secret Cupboard

### What to do When You "Run Out"

~ John 2:1-11

Did you ever "run out" of something? I used to run out of gas. Gas was only twenty cents a gallon; but, I still used to run out. Sometimes, I just didn't have the money. Sometimes, I had the money; but, I was saving it for something else, or just didn't want to spend it. I was surprised that Gloria wanted to married me anyway. Maybe she thought she could fix me.

Mom used to run out of food for her family –but, she fed them anyway. Sometimes with “milk toast;” sometimes with 4X sugar over fried breadcrumb-noodles, sometimes lentils; sometimes cornbread and milk. Yet, we always knew that she would come up with something –and she did. She had a

secrete cupboard. She would go to her secret cupboard every morning at 5:30 to 6 and sing. You could hear singing at her secret cupboard, “I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses; and the voice I hear, falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.” From that secrete cupboard, she raised 6 children. She was often “to the last day,” “the last meal” in her secrete cupboard; but, she never entirely “ran out.” So where do you go when you “run out?” What do you do when you “run out?”

I remember one frightening experience. Dad used to send me up in the hay loft about February to count the bales of hay we had left. One year, the only way we would have had enough hay would have been if we could let the cows out to pasture on March 15; of course, we couldn't. This was 65 years before climate change. And yes, there was a time, when I still lived at home, that things were bad; we would run out of food. I used to feel sorry for Mom, who was expected to multiply the loaves and fishes. Somehow, she did.

I've run out of other things, like courage & spirit. There have been times when I ran out of hope. When you run out of hope, you turn into a sort of zombie, just going along doing your work, not feeling much of anything. If you're in depression you have run out of hope. People may say, behind your back, "What's the matter with him or her?" "Why doesn't he or she snap out of it?" "Why doesn't he or she just get with it?" They don't know that you're out of hope; you can't really blame them. Here is a story about somebody who ran out of wine at their daughter's wedding. I know one thing, if Gloria plans a dinner, you're not going to run out of anything; but, you might want to have a sale to get rid of the left-overs afterward. She has a phobia of "running out." It comes from growing up in such times as she did.

John 2 gives the first miracle that Jesus performed. It's the story of a wedding. Jesus' mother was there, and they invited Jesus and the disciples. Mary discovered that the wine had run out. In those days, some weddings lasted from seven to fourteen days. Samson's lasted seven days. We can expect that this wedding would have

lasted at least three days. Why wouldn't it run out? Now, the people didn't actually stay there for the full seven to fourteen days; they would come back after work.

Mary must have been helping one of her friends with her daughter's wedding. She is checking the punch bowl. Here is Jesus' mother, telling Jesus that the wine had run out. When the wine gave out, she simply turned to Jesus and said, "They have no wine." Don't you hate it when people do that to you? They just come and they said, "The washer is broke." I like what happens in the fourth and fifth verses. In verse four, Jesus replied with, "Why involve me? The time is not yet." I don't see an answer there from Mary; she was a real mother. Mothers don't have to answer their kids if they don't want to. So, without a reply to Jesus, she simply turned to the servants and said, "Do whatever he tells you." I get a real kick out of that, because she is so typical of Moms from the beginning of time --she didn't hear him. To Jesus she said, "They have no wine." Then she turns to the servants and says, "Do whatever he tells you." Mom, knew where to go when the cupboard was empty.

Verse 6 says, "Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons."

In other words, we're talking bathtubs here. Water to wash your hands and feet in. These were not kitchen utensils; they were bathroom utensils; bath-water pots.

Jesus had the servants fill the pots to the brim with water, then he asked them to take some to the "chief steward." The chief steward was a special person who was invited to be the master of ceremonies --usually a guest who was a public official, like a mayor, a judge, a prominent person, a professor from the Jerusalem Area Community College, something like that.

The servant took the wine to the master of ceremonies, and as everyone watched, he tasted it and said, "You have saved the best until last."

The people had run out of wine. Here are two interesting things:

*First*, Jesus provided more than they could ever need, - six pots that held 20 to 30 gallons each.

*Second*, It was better than they ever imagined.

*My question this morning is, "Has your wine run out?"* Maybe you're saying, "What do you mean, has my wine run out?" --I don't drink.

Has something gone, that used to be there? Ephesians 5:18 says this, "Do not get drunk with wine; but be filled with the Spirit of God."

Are the happy times gone for you? Has the Spirit of God "run out?" Is something gone that used to be there? Just the monotony and drudgery of everyday living will tend to do that. Taking care of new babies; taking exams, taking exams, taking exams, will do that. Going to work, going to work, going to work, going to work will

do that. The Spirit is "running out."

Ephesians 5:18 says, "keep being filled with the Holy Spirit." It is interesting to hear people talking about being filled with the Holy Spirit as if they've had an experience that makes them permanently and uniquely invulnerable to emptiness. And now, they've arrived at the ultimate in Christian experience. But, *here*, it is: "*keep being filled* with the Holy Spirit."

The correct meaning of the verb would be, "*Be constantly being filled* with the Spirit." The sense of the verb is to be "controlled by God's Holy Spirit" in contrast to being controlled by wine or something else. The interpretation, then, is "Be constantly, moment by moment, being controlled by the Spirit." This is not an incidental thing, it is ongoing and requires refueling.

Someone asked D.L. Moody, "Why do you always talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit?" Moody's reply was, "Because, I leak."

Like a kitchen cupboard, like a barn full of winter hay, like a battery, wherever something is being used up, there must be a renewing. We have battery chargers on our cars. You know what happens if the battery charging system breaks down, don't you? The car won't go. That's what happens to us.

The "one time fix" idea has cost the church more in terms of people growing and going than any other idea, and it's not just a religious idea, it's in every area of our lives. People get an education, then they are ready to do their job for the rest of their lives. They don't need to learn anymore. From there on everything will just take care of itself.

Just getting older, in itself, is not enough. People think that just "putting in time," will make them more spiritual, or make them smarter. They say, "I've been a Christian for 20 years." So has the roof been on the house for 20 years --that is exactly why it may need to be renewed sometime soon.

What Paul is talking about here is something we must "keep after." I don't know about you, but I leak. I have to keep going ahead just to stay even. The work of God's Spirit on me is a never ending job. My battery needs to be hooked up to a generator. Does yours? Well, sure it does!

### ***What happened to take care of the lack?***

How did the renewing come about? It is not that there never was any wine; there was. It is just that, after several days, it had run out. If you've "run out," you might want to watch what Mary does here. Watch what Mom does. Hear her voice, singing at the kitchen window.

*First*, we must come to Christ. That's what she did. That is right; the Christian must come to Christ, again and again and again. We must never stop coming to Christ; it is not that we come to Christ once, then that's it. The interesting thing in the passage is that Mary thought that Jesus might, in some way, renew the empty punch bowl. Of course, she was right. We do well to follow her lead if we want to be renewed. Sure! Mom has a secret cupboard!

She didn't know how he would do it, she just knew that he could. Isn't that enough for us to know? Each of our needs and our emptinesses are probably somewhat different. We don't need to tell him *how* to fill our empty jars. Too many of our prayers consist of explaining to God what he ought to do and how he might best do it. We just need to come, and he'll know how to recharge us. Though the Lord had not done a miracle up until that time, Mary knew about the miracle of his birth. Mary heard the words of the angel Gabriel concerning him. Mary knew that he was the Son of God. If anybody would have known, she would have. No one knew Jesus better than Mom; she knew what she was doing.

*Second*, listen to Mary's advice. She said to the servants, "Do whatever *he tells you* to do." We may never be renewed without listening. When will we learn to listen? Prayer is a refueling time for each of us. That is why prayer is meant to be mostly private. Nearly all public prayers are people making speeches to other people with their heads bowed. That is why *silent prayer* is important. People talk too much. Much of true prayer ought to be listening. People don't know how to listen. They bow their heads and the incessant chatter begins --and God says, Shut up and listen, I can't hear myself think. "Be still, and know that I am God." Do you ever think of prayer in that way?

In addition, notice she said, "Do *whatever* he tells you to do." Many people do *something* that he says, but fail to do **whatever he says** to do. Mary spoke these words with confidence. Mom does know these things.

It was too simple to work. That is why we don't do it; but, look what happened. A good time to go shopping is right after you've been out to dinner. Why? Because there's not nearly as much good food in the market right after you've been to dinner. In the same way, the trick of a good cook is to serve a hungry crowd. But, look what happened here. God gave them something **so good** that it tasted good **even after they had been out to dinner**. "Most serve the best first; but, you have saved the best until now."

*Third*, We all need to keep coming back to Christ. Never stop coming back to Christ. If you've "run out," you need to come back to Christ! Better yet, why wait? Why wait until you've "run-out." Look at the gas gauge and stop to refuel ahead of time.

As it happened, Gloria and I were out of gas (so to speak). So, we got up at 5:30 AM caught up on our business until 9 AM; then, we were off to Troy lunch for breakfast, then on to Packer Hospital; and some shopping for the churches. By one o' clock we were headed for Seneca Lake --where God would have a better chance to help us back up again. "He leads me to the still waters, where He restores my soul" (Psalm 23). It worked. (1) Come to Christ; (2) Listen; (3) and never stop coming back --or, you will "run out." We didn't get much done on our sailboat; but, when we left, we were in better condition than when we arrived. Give Christ a chance at repairing you. "He leads me to the still waters, where he restores my soul." So, there you have visited "Mom's Secret Cupboard."