
Man's Hour of Darkness is God's Hour of Power

By David Wilkerson

November 9, 2009 In John 2, Jesus and his disciples were invited to a marriage supper in Cana. Evidently, the Lord's family received the invitation, too, because Jesus' mother was there. Mary came up to him with a request: "The hosts have run out of wine."

Jesus' response to his mother seems a bit strange. He told her, "My hour is not yet come."

What was this "hour" Jesus was referring to? He wasn't talking about the moment of darkness he would face three years later, before his crucifixion. At that time Jesus did say, "My hour has come."

But here at Cana he was speaking of a different hour. The fact is, Christ's ministry was just beginning. This is what he was referring to when he told his mother his hour hadn't yet come. Indeed, soon after he performed a miracle; he miraculously turned six large pots of water into wine.

Let me ask you: Have you ever wondered why Jesus waited to do this miracle? He waited until every bottle was dry, every glass was empty, even as the worried host wrung his hands.

I tell you, Jesus waited purposely at that wedding for all human resources to fail. He waited until nothing could solve the problem short of a miracle. *That was when God's hour came.*

Here is an important truth for every believer: The hour of Christ's power is manifested at the very point of our helplessness. I believe Jesus was giving his disciples — and his church to come — an illustrated sermon. Our Lord never did anything or spoke any word that wasn't eternally significant. Everything that Scripture records about him points to the unshifting nature and workings of God. And there is a divine principle meant for us in this scene at Cana.

Jesus' "hour" had to do with *something that was happening at the feast*. That is, his hour of power comes when there is no wine left in our bottles — when we're empty of solutions, when all our human efforts are in vain — and only a miracle can answer our problem.

We find this principle at work throughout the Bible: In man's darkest hour, the Lord has a history of manifesting his power. When we come to our wit's end, *God has already prepared a great work of deliverance on our behalf.*

Scripture gives us abundant examples of this principle. We find two such examples in Judges, a book that contains some of the darkest periods in ancient Israel's history.

In a dark hour, God had a marvelous deliverance prepared for his people through lowly Gideon. Judges 6 finds Israel in a period of awful impoverishment. Year after year God's people were rendered helpless by a marauding enemy that kept them in poverty. When the vicious Midianites arrived, God's people fled to the hills for safety, hiding in caves. Meanwhile their enemy stole their crops and herds and destroyed everything they'd built. They left Israel completely "without sustenance."

What an hour of darkness. And Israel's impoverished condition continued year after year. This speaks of spiritual death. Their cry was, "Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles...?" (Judges 6:13).

Yet *it was in this dark hour that God manifested his power on behalf of his people*. Indeed, the Lord

performed his deliverance by choosing the poorest man from the poorest family in the poorest tribe in Israel: Gideon.

You're probably familiar with the rest of the story. God sent an angel to Gideon. Along with three hundred other men, using only trumpets and torches, they broke the power of the Midianites. Israel was miraculously delivered!

Their hour of darkness became *God's hour of power*.

We find the same principle at work in the story of Deborah. Judges 4 tells us, "The Lord sold (Israel) into the hands of (the) king of Canaan" (Judges 4:2). Because of rampant sin, Israel fell into deep darkness for twenty years. During that time God's people were oppressed mightily. Yet that same dark hour for them became God's hour of manifested power.

When Israel had come to the end of all hope, God stirred a prophetess named Deborah. This woman saw clearly through the darkness of the hour. Everyone in Israel moaned in fear except this godly woman. Scripture says she "dwelt under the palm tree...in Mount Ephraim" (4:5), where she held open-air meetings to encourage the people.

Deborah proclaimed, "Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered [the enemy] Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?... And the hand of the children of Israel prospered and prevailed" (4:14, 24).

Deborah refused to let the darkness overwhelm her. She knew that God is never surprised by the darkness of the times. So she spoke faith to God's people, calling that dark hour in history *the very hour of God's deliverance*.

Another example occurs with King Jehoshaphat when God's people were under severe attack. In Second Chronicles we read that Jehoshaphat received a frightening message: "There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria... And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast" (2 Chronicles 20:2-3).

Terrified, Israel's king called together a great prayer meeting: "Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord" (20:4). As the people came together to seek God, Jehoshaphat prayed, "Lord, we don't know what to do. But our eyes are on you!"

Here was perhaps the darkest hour for Israel. They were facing annihilation with no way to stop the invading enemy. What was God's answer to his people in that hour? "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's" (20:15).

When the people heard this, something stirred inside them. *They had heard a word from the Lord*. Now, during their darkest hour, faith rose up in their hearts — and they began to praise.

The Spirit of the Lord appeared in the midst of the congregation. And as the people's praises ascended to heaven, the Lord sent a powerful angel to ambush the approaching enemy. One angel of God slew that entire army!

In a single, swift moment, victory was theirs. What seemed to God's people a dark hour became for them *God's hour of deliverance*.

Isaiah brings this principle closer to home when he prophesies Jesus' appearance on the earth in the last days. Isaiah prophesied, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isaiah 60:2–3).

This prophecy speaks of the last days, a time that began when light — Jesus Christ the Lord — came into the gross darkness. Isaiah was speaking of a great, widespread outshining of the glory of Christ into the darkness. Multitudes throughout the whole Gentile world would come into his light.

Think of it: There was no darker time in history than at Jesus' birth. The great Roman Empire had become a materialistic, covetous, greedy society. Sexual perversions abounded, and drunkenness and gluttony were the norm. Books have been written about the gross sins that brought down the Roman Empire. Indeed, the whole known world at the time was shrouded in darkness.

Also during this time, a horrible darkness had fallen over Israel. Hypocrisy ruled the day. Priests robbed widows of their houses, and the lowly and uneducated despised their so-called spiritual leaders. Simply put, the blind were leading the blind.

It was into this gross darkness that Jesus came forth as a shining light. And we know that since that glorious day, multitudes have come into his light.

You may say, "But look around today. Gross darkness still covers the earth." Yes — and in my opinion, this present hour is the worst in human history. The darkness hovering over all nations and peoples can actually be felt. Nuclear threat, genocide, wide-spread sex trafficking — it all wreaks havoc on the heart. Could there be any darker cloud than the one covering the earth right now?

Yet Jesus is still the light of the world. And the grosser the darkness, the brighter is his light! As Isaiah saw down to the darkness of our day, he cried out like Deborah: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1).

Once again, in the world's darkest hour, the Lord is going to manifest his power. And I believe he will accomplish this by drawing in a significant ingathering of lost souls in the days ahead. Let me give you three reasons why I see this happening.

First, there is a growing witness of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Hebrews 2:4). "Where-of the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us" (Hebrews 10:15).

You may ask, "What is the Holy Spirit bearing witness to?" The next verse tells us: "This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them" (Hebrews 10:16). Simply put, the Holy Spirit is witness to *an outpouring of mercy upon this last-days generation*.

"It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.... He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5:6, 10). The Holy Spirit bears witness to all of God's workings and moving, to prepare us for what he is about to do. Right now his church is being stirred again, showing us that a sovereign move of the Holy Ghost must come. Out of this gross darkness, the Spirit is going to lift up Christ and draw multitudes to him.

We are also experiencing a time of darkness in the church. Some denominations are affirming same-sex marriages and an entire generation of youth is turning away from God. Yet in this darkest of hours, the Holy Spirit is awakening all who seek him. If you are walking in the Spirit, you hear the same witness from the Spirit that I do. That is: The hour of man's darkness is *the Holy Spirit's hour of outpouring*. It has always been that way, and so it will be now.

In this hour of bad news, the Spirit is witnessing good news: "I have saved the best wine for last!"

Second, a spirit of prayer is taking hold of God's people. Right now prayer meetings are being resurrected in churches throughout New York City. Who could have believed this would happen in "Sin City"? Last month over 50,000 believers gathered in Times Square to pray. And Christian conferences worldwide are becoming impromptu prayer meetings.

When the Spirit stirs — when sinners are coming to Christ, when the Spirit bears witness that now is the time to pray, when God makes a promise and begins to move — you can't just sit back and say, "God promised it. I'm just going to 'take it by faith.' I'll sit back and watch him fulfill everything he says." No! When the Spirit moves, it is a time for *pressing in with fervency and faith*.

When Daniel read Jeremiah's prophecy, he calculated that Israel's seventy years of bondage had come to an end. He realized Israel was about to be delivered from Babylon. God's people were about to be set free!

So what did Daniel do? Did he wait for God to move, "taking it all by faith"? No! Daniel declared, "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). Of course he prayed with abounding faith.

This is what the Holy Spirit does prior to every great move of the Lord: *He calls us to fervent prayer*. And every great move of the Spirit that follows is sustained by prayer.

In Jude's epistle, we read of a last-days generation given over to fornication and sensuality. It was a time when God's people murmured and complained. Jude prophesied of it all, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment" (Jude 14–15).

Yet how were God's people to prepare for this? According to Jude, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (20). In the darkest hour, God's people are always to watch and pray.

Third, this generation has run out of wine and needs a miracle. Wine in the Bible represents joy and gladness. "Wine, that maketh glad the heart of man" (Psalm 104:15). In the New Testament, "new wine" is a type of the Holy Spirit.

Yet as I look at the church today, I see wine jars that are empty. Why? As almost every biblical prophet has said, "Sin takes away mirth and gladness."

Now I have a word for every mother, father and grandparent who has prayed so long for their lost young one: *Hold on*. Jesus is watching and waiting. His hour on your child's behalf is about to come.

The fact is, your boy or girl may still be drinking of the old wine of this world. They can't give up their old friends. They still harbor hurts from the church, holding grudges and having lingering doubts. But

the vessels holding that old wine are about to run dry. Their friends will fail them and they'll be overcome with emptiness.

When that moment comes — when all their efforts have failed — you will see God's hour of power. Only a miracle of his grace can bring true deliverance. So, keep on praying. God will keep his word to you!

In light of all this, what are we to do? Mary, Jesus' mother, gives us the answer. At Cana, she told the disciples, "Just do what he tells you." Beloved, the Lord is going to tell you what to do. He is the new wine, the source of all joy and gladness. And he will speak to you what he would have you do. Read his Word — and then just do it!

Jesus told us to work while it is still day. Why? Because the "night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

In Revelation 7, John describes a multitude standing before God's throne, a crowd so massive nobody could number it. This crowd is representative of people from all tongues and nations, dressed in white robes and all praising the Lord. When John asks, "Who are these people? Where did they come from?" he is told, "These are the ones who have come out of great tribulation."

Dear saint, I believe we are the generation referred to in Revelation 7. We are living in the darkest of hours and all around us are great tribulations. But the light is still shining brightly. Indeed, the darker the night, how much greater is his light!

As you labor in prayer for your loved ones, and for a world covered in darkness, I want to remind you of your own story. Remember, in your tribulation time somebody was winning souls. Somebody was praying the lost into the light. Somebody was rising above the dark and proclaiming Christ. Somebody believed Jesus would break out new wine. And it happened. You came into the light! Surely many others will come out of the darkness and into the light.