

Enoughness

First Congregational Church Branford

John 2:1-11; October 7, 2018

World Communion Sunday

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So, here we are in the Gospel of John, and Jesus is just starting out his ministry. He's called his disciples, and,

On the third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. *But you have kept the good wine until now.*' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Did anyone attend a wedding this summer where they served wine? Do you think they switched to a cheaper wine halfway through?! Did the wine run out? No. People would've gossiped that the bride's family chintzed on the wedding. That would be bad enough in our time, but in Jesus' day it would've been a social faux pas of the highest degree! It would've brought shame upon the host, maybe even upon the newlyweds. In order for the couple to be blessed by God, wine and food were to be bountiful at their wedding.

In the Old Testament, an abundance of good wine is a sign of the joyous arrival of God's new age. That's why John's Gospel chose to show the miracle at Cana as the *beginning* of Jesus' ministry because the *arrival of Jesus* brings abundance, and new possibilities.

As for abundance, each of those 6 water jars held about 20-30 gallons! Jesus turned an astonishing amount of water into wine. The message seems to be there's going to be enough for all, enough wine, enough grace, enough love, enough

forgiveness. It's never going to run out!

In 1997, when I was a settled pastor in Indianapolis, there was an event that many churches had planned to help bring Euro and African-American races together. It was called "*Building Bridges of Racial Understanding*." We gathered that sunny, hopeful Sunday morning in Indy's Market Square Arena for the first "Celebration of Hope" service. The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr. was the senior minister at Riverside Church in New York City, a 2,400 member, interdenominational, inter-racial, international church, and he gave the sermon, preaching on today's scripture. I'd like to use some of his ideas here today, along with my own.

Forbes' premise was thought-provoking... that "When the wine runs out, it triggers a primal *anxiety*, that somehow there will not be enough for *me*." When we were in the womb, there was enough, but when we're born we experience this underlying insecurity about *having enough*. He said, if you examine the issues of racism and all the other issues that are keeping America, as well as the *world*, from being one, you will see they all come from fear that there will never be **enough**. Enough money, enough land, enough jobs, enough food, enough prosperity, enough wine.

It seems that human beings experience the world as a place of lack; so, we say, I can't get **my** enough because you have it, and I want it, so I'm going to fight you for my enough.

You refugees over there - just stay out - if you come, there won't be enough for me. We're very worried about having enough.

When, the truth is, there's **enough** for whites, **enough** for blacks, **enough** for Christians, enough for Jews, **enough** for Muslims, **enough** for Israel, **enough** for Palestine, **enough** for Iraq, enough for Afghanistan, **enough** for Syria, **enough** for Iran, **enough** for the United States.

But, Forbes talked about how we try to get our **enoughness** from our race, our politics, our nationality, our spouse, our money, our intelligence, our good looks, our popularity, our talent, our job, or our good grades — and, when we try to get it from those things, the wine runs out. There's only one way to ever have enough..... only God can give you *your enough*. God's the only one who can fill you up to the brim.

When I try to get my enough from the world, from seeking approval, from buying a toy, the wine runs out, which makes me anxious about not having enough, so I keep reaching for something else to fill me up! Oftentimes, we want other people to fill us up, to meet the insecure needs we carry, *but people can't give us our enough*, because that's God's job.

And, I know that whenever I'm jealous of something someone else has, I've gone to the world to fill me up. I should have those things!

But, our Jesus came into the world, and goes, listen.... beloved, be still, stop running, and *let me fill you up with the good wine... and it's going to overflow.* When we receive *that* blessing, we don't go around needing someone or something to fill us up. When you're feeling enough, you're not jealous of someone else's enough, you're not worried that they're taking what's yours. *I have enough.* Wouldn't you say it's so important to teach our children and our grandchildren who gives them their enoughness? They're not going to get it from drugs, not from popularity, or from their job one day. Only God can fill them to the brim. Let's protect them from having to run around looking for it everywhere else!

My husband's church in Essex, First Congregational, is Open and Affirming to the LGBTQ community, and they have a small rainbow flag sticker on their sign on the hill. It caused a married couple who had been close to Ken, who Ken had actually married, to leave the church. They were fine with the ONA stance in theory, but they had a problem with all of Essex being able to see that their church affirmed alternative lifestyles! *We can keep it hidden right here, but we don't need to advertise about it out there!* They were embarrassed, and I guess ashamed about it. Other than that, the sticker has gone largely unnoticed - until Friday. The church is currently undergoing some construction projects. Late in the afternoon this big, construction worker walked up to Ken and said, *I saw your sticker, which tells me your church is about inclusion, and I started to cry.* The message to him was, there's enough for all, *whoever you are.*

Okay, now, there's been a lot in the news surrounding the current Supreme Court proceedings. I'm not going to talk about the outcome because I'd get in trouble! It's a very charged issue on both sides. But, I do want to lift something out as it pertains to this sermon.... the larger issue of the pervasiveness of sexual assault has been named. I'm sure there are *me, too* people here today. It's hard to heal what stays silent. And, now it has been named, which is a good thing. So, here's what happens, I think... when anyone assaults someone, it comes from a place of *I'm not okay with me, and I'm going to take from you. I'm taking your enoughness... because I don't have enough. I got nothin'. Gimme yours.*

So, I was thinking, if we want to help Jesus heal the world, it's *really* important for you and me to fill up with blessing, every day, to feel full, to get *our enough* - to feel good inside.... So, that I don't damage you! So that I don't assault you, so that I don't yell at you, so that I don't steal from you. It has to start with my going to God at the beginning of every day - *Lord, fill me up.* If I'm a healed person, I'm going to be kinder and more respectful toward men and women. That alone is enough to heal the world! - but it can even go a step further.

From my *enoughness*, let me give to the church, let me give to the poor, let me help a refugee, let me provide some clothes for the homeless, let me reach out to someone whose lonely, let me open the door for black people, gay people. I feel

good, so I want you to have the good wine, too. I've gotten my enough and want you to have it, too. If we could see that *the wine isn't going to run out*, we'd stop holding on so tightly to what we see as our small, half-full cup, and be jealous of someone else's cup, and want to take it from them!

Can I lift up Amazon?! They've been criticized in the past for not paying their workers very much while their founder, Jeff Bezos amassed a vast fortune. Bezos has just boosted the hourly pay to \$15, and he's advocating for an increase to the federal minimum wage. He finally went, *oh, I get it, from my enough, I need to make sure others have their enough*.

Now, let me ask, is there something you don't have enough of -- love, friendship, money, self-respect, attention, confidence, faith, generosity, spirituality, calmness, forgiveness, acceptance, power, intelligence, joy, happiness at home, job satisfaction. What isn't there enough of in your life?...

If you're not comfortable with this next part, just close your eyes.

In the spirit of prayer, put your hands out--and ask God to fill your hands with whatever it is you think you lack... See God fill your hands with this thing that you think you lack, and watch it overflow—it's overflowing—now drink from the cup—and see God fill your cup again, and drink, and see God fill your hands again, and look, it's still overflowing—there's **enough**, there's even enough to give some to your neighbor - if someone's next to you, put a hand under your neighbor's cup and give, and then get some of theirs—it's just pouring, and overflowing, and take another drink—and there's still more—now just throw it on yourself!—and then one last time, look at that cup again—it's overflowing with love—and it's overflowing with what you thought you didn't have enough of.

Whenever you feel a lack, remember that God's telling you there is no lack—drink from this cup— there's plenty for you. I will provide. There's enough. It's never, ever going to run out.

God bless you, and your enoughness, God bless you, and your enoughness that you're able to give some away. Amen.