

**Topical
Prayer Meeting
Pastor JD Farag**

KAPONO: Thank You, Lord. Would you join me as we pray? Lord, we thank You so much and how great You are, Lord. Would You please, as we are gathered here this evening, Lord, just we ask that You would hear our prayers, hear our cries to You, Lord. There are people on this list that are hurting, Lord, that are seeking You, Your comfort, Lord. We pray for salvation for every single person on that list that doesn't know You, Lord.

So would You be with our prayers, Lord? May we be intentional and specific about what we pray. We thank You, Lord, that You are listening, and we ask this in your name, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. Good evening. Glad you guys are here. And we're actually livestreaming, right? And here's why. I was not planning to do this. But in my prayer time, I sensed a prompting to do this and share a word from God's word. And I have no notes. But I have God's notes. So that's all you need. We'll get to that in a moment.

But I first wanted to share with you kind of the drill for tonight and then a huge, and I mean huge, praise report. So let's start with the drill. I'm going to — I have a word to share. I didn't say brief. Did you notice I didn't say brief? But just something to set the tone for tonight's prayer meeting. Because I don't want this to be just another prayer meeting.

I just, in my time, usually I spend more time in prayer on prayer nights, during the day, and really inquire of the Lord and seek the Lord and talk to the Lord because that's all prayer is, talking to the Lord, right? And today was different. And so I'm going to actually share a praise report. But when I'm done sharing this word from God's word, I'm going to take a seat and sit down [*Sit down!*] (Chuckle) and Mac's going to come up and close up, so... But I'm going to open up and pray. And if you don't have a list, now would be a good time to grab one because we are going to pray as the Lord leads for those that have asked us to pray.

So we're in our staff meeting. We have staff meetings on Tuesdays before the prayer meeting, and right about the beginning of the staff meeting, I got an email from our attorney, and I want to read it for you verbatim. His name is Sean Louise. We've retained him as our attorney. He was the one that was most instrumental in the revision of our religious exemption letter, which this praise report is about. And he sent it to us, us being

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Gail and myself. And he says, "Aloha, Pastor and Gail. Great news! *[Exclamation mark]* HB 118 relating to vaccinations: The bill was recommitted to the JDC Committee. It is dead for this session.

[Applause]

[He goes on] It was unconstitutional..." This is what I love about this guy. He's a brother in the Lord, you know, but brilliant legal mind, civil rights attorney. I mean this guy... So he goes, "It was unconstitutional under the Smith case because it targeted religion.

It was not a law of general applicability as it allowed medical *[Parentheses]* (secular exemptions) but not religious. The Jack Phillips Baker case from Colorado and the Miami, Florida, Hialeah case *[Sounds like they're local]* the Miami, Florida, Hialeah case all supported our position as well. One less battle front for us to contend with at this time. Praise Jesus. Best regards, Sean A. Louise."

How's that one? Oh, (Chuckling) well, that's a great lead into what I want to share with you tonight. The first miracle that Jesus ever performed is recorded in only one of the four gospels, and it's the Gospel of John, and it's right at the beginning in *John's Gospel, Chapter 2*. Matthew, Mark, and Luke don't record this account. They're commonly referred to as the Synoptic Gospels, but not the Gospel of John. And we know that all that Jesus did was not recorded or written because it would be so voluminous, you couldn't contain all that He did in His public ministry for those three-and-a-half-years.

But this particular one, the Lord used to really minister to me and open my eyes to some often-missed details that are in the account. I'm not going to read it, but I do want to encourage you in your time in God's word to read it. I just want to summarize it, and in so doing, point out some of these details that are going to be germane to our prayer meeting tonight, starting with this first one.

And I'm going to approach this a little bit differently. Just, I want to say by way of a warning but by way of introduction, sounds better, I want to approach this a little bit differently because doubtless you've heard this miracle taught maybe more than once. But I want to come at it from a different angle.

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Let me explain. This miracle would have never happened had Jesus not been invited. Now you read it, and we're told that — and especially in this small community of Cana in the Galilee region. So it's likely that everybody knew everybody. So Mary's invited, Jesus is invited, and His disciples with Him are invited.

Now, you can read past that, like, okay, cool. What happened? And isn't it interesting, by the way, just a little side note, that the first miracle that Jesus performed was at a wedding. But again, I'm taking this different approach because this would have never happened had Jesus not been invited.

See, Jesus is not a wedding crasher. Was that too much? No. You know what I mean by that? He's not gonna — He's not going to go or attend something that He's not been invited to. So that's the first detail, germane to our prayer meeting tonight. Jesus has to be invited. And He always accepts the invitation. He always RSVPs. I know it might seem inconsequential and nebulous; you know.

Okay, so He was invited. No, this is huge. Yeah, it might be seen as a minor detail, but no, I don't think it's a minor detail because how often do we, maybe better said, are we guilty of not inviting Jesus into our situation by way of an invitation? Because He's not going to just show up uninvited. We need to invite Him into that trial, that decision, that situation, that set of circumstances, that marriage, that family, that problem, the finances, whatever it is, fill in the blank. But Jesus would not have been at this wedding were He not invited to this wedding.

I don't want to harp on it because there's like three more details here of equal and even more significance that I want to share with you, but it starts with the invitation. Oh, we do err greatly when we don't invite the only one that can do the miracle we need done. Now, we have a problem by the time we get to *verse 3*.

What's the problem? They run out of wine. (Gasp!) Say it isn't so. Now you gotta understand Middle Eastern culture and modern day, to this day in my culture as an Arab in the Middle East, and certainly this was true in the Galilee, it would have been unthinkable. The shame.

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Because you have to understand that the host of the wedding, the master, if he runs out of wine, he could never show his face in that community again because the shame would be too great. It's just a cultural dynamic. So you know this is actually a pretty serious problem. So what are we going to do about it?

Well, Mary, sensitive to it, brings it to Jesus. Again, I'm approaching this differently. This miracle would have never happened if Mary didn't bring the problem to Jesus. You know where I'm going with this, right? How often are we guilty of not bringing that problem, that situation, that decision to Jesus? I mean, **“Cast all of your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.”**

Jesus even said ask Me for anything. Anything? Yes, anything. Anything? I said anything. You know what anything means? Anything. Big or small, bring it to Me. Ask Me. And I promise you that if it brings glory to the Father and it's good, you can have that which you ask for. Ho! Sign me up. You mean, Lord, I can come to You with any problem? Yes. Any decision? Yes. Any trial and pain and problem? Yes. I said anything. Anything means anything.

So this is a thing. Bring it to Me. We don't do that. We call brother so-and-so, sister so-and-so, Uncle, Auntie. What are they going to do? It's a sad commentary in the life of a Christian, when bringing it to Jesus is the last resort instead of the first response. And it's so interesting. And it's missed, again, at first read because Mary brings it to Jesus and says to Him, **“They have no more wine.”**

Now, Jesus responds, and there's a lot of debate about the original meaning. I mean, at first, it's almost like, “Woman!” You know, you don't talk to your mama like that, boy. I don't care if you are God incarnate. No, that's — that was taking it too far. But that's not the flavor of the original meaning, is what I'm trying to say.

It was more along the lines of, yes, this is a serious problem. And by the way, it's an honor to be invited to a wedding and a Galilean wedding, no less because of the culture and the traditions. In fact, to not be invited is a diss. So if you've been invited and there's no more wine, you understand the seriousness of the implications of this problem.

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So after He responds to Mary, the last recorded words of “Mother Mary” in Scripture are as follows. **“Do whatever He tells you.”** Now that's going to come back into play in just a moment. And I'll try to be brief. There's that word again, the B word. So in other words, whatever He tells you, no matter what, just do it. And that's the last recorded words of Mary in the pages of Holy Writ.

(Stumbling over words) Just let me have this one. No one should ever pray to Mary. Because if you do, first of all, she would just say, do whatever He tells you to do. What are you talking to me for?

Okay, so now we're told that close in proximity are these stone barrels that were for water. And they were actually used for the Jewish ceremonial washing and cleansing. And these things were big, man. They would hold between 20 to 30 gallons. Imagine that. Just picture the size of these things. And there's six of them. And they're sitting there empty. And so Jesus said to the servants; these are the servants that were hired to serve because that's what servants do. They serve — at least you hope so — the guests and the attendees invited to the wedding.

So He says to the servants, **“Fill the jars with water.”** Hold it. Stop. I think you misunderstood, sir. We have plenty water. We need wine. Oh, no. See if I were there — do you do this? Do you put yourself in the passage? Because this isn't “based on” a true story. This is a true story. This actually happened.

And if I was there, I would — and I was hired to be one of the servants at this Galilean wedding and I got this man telling me, after His mom said, whatever He says to do just do it, and now He's telling me to take these 30-gallon barrels, stone barrels, and fill them with water, after His mom just got done telling Him they need wine — shouldn't we be filling them with wine? No. **“Do whatever he tells you.”**

Here's the takeaway and why it's so germane when it comes to prayer. Because see, prayer is not a monologue. Prayer's a dialog. Get this. Prayer is just talking to God, and the word of God is God talking to you. It's that simple. So you pray, you ask, you seek, you knock, and the Lord answers. And He tells you to go do something that is absolutely absurd and preposterous.

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First of all, how heavy are these things empty? They're made out of stone, and they hold up to 30 gallons. I mean, how many servants did it take just to pick up one empty and then carry it over? How about carrying it when it was full? And there's no mention — you see, if I was there, I would have said something like, there's been a miscommunication here. We're not out of water. We're out of wine. And you're telling me, go put water [*Water?*] in these things? Yeah.

So they filled them to the brim. Okay. I still would have been asking some questions like, why are we doing this again? See, that's what we do when God answers our prayers in a way that is seemingly absurd and preposterous. That's where trust and faith comes in. Lord, I don't know what You're doing. I mean, You've got me filling these things with water. But I do know that You know what You're doing. So I will do whatever You tell me to do. And so they did.

Do you realize had they not done this, this miracle would have never happened? It gets better. Some of you are thinking, I sure hope so. So they're filled to the brim, 30 gallons, all six of them. And then He told them, **“Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”**

So this is the reception. And so they did. Now, I would have said, You really want me to take this 30-gallon stone container of water to the master of the banquet who needs wine? Yeah. So do you realize this miracle would have never happened if they did not obey and do what Jesus said to do and take it, draw some out, and give it to the master of the banquet? Do you see where I'm going with this one? Oh, it's a hymn, a timeless classic. 'Trust and obey. There's no other way.' Okay, I'll obey. I'm just going to trust that You know what You're doing because I don't.

So they did so, we're told. And the master then tastes this water that had been turned into wine. Wait, when did the water turn to wine? Because when they drew it out, it was water. Does this remind you of the feeding of the multitudes? Every time they stuck their hand in that basket, there were more fish and more bread.

So it's believed that the act of obedience and faith and trust in drawing out the water — it says the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned to wine. And this is

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no ordinary wine. And the master of the banquet is just flabbergasted. And he has to ask because he didn't know where the wine came from. Where did you guys get this wine? Well, they knew. You have no idea, sir, master.

So he calls the bridegroom over, takes him aside. And he says to the bridegroom, listen, this is very strange because usually what people do at a wedding banquet is they serve the best wine first. And then when everybody's drunk, they bring out the watered-down, cheap stuff because they're not going to know the difference because they're already intoxicated. But you have done just the opposite. This is where we get that saying, 'Saving the best for last.' And I've heard this taught, as have you, I'm sure, that the best is yet ahead. I think there's more to it than that.

Hear me out. When Jesus tells them to fill these huge stone barrels to the brim with water, I guess He knows best. He knows what's best. Because that's not the way I would do that. That doesn't seem to me to be the best way. And when we pray, we are prone to give God instructions on the best way to answer our prayers.

Good thing God is longsuffering and has a sense of humor because I just picture Him chuckling like, you're so adorable. You're telling Me what you think would be the best way to answer this prayer, perform this miracle? You need a miracle here because the stores aren't open. And by the way, even if they were, how are you going to buy that much wine and have it be the best? No, that's a miracle. That's a miracle. And it's His first miracle.

But let's talk about this word "last." This is why I think there's more to it. So already there's, you know, some maybe doubt about the best way to go about this is to fill these things up with water when what we really need to fill them up with is wine. That just makes logical sense. Well, we're not operating in the logical. We're operating in the miracle. This isn't in the natural. It's in the supernatural.

So here's the takeaway. When we pray, don't pray direction prayers. You know what I mean by that? Where you give God directions, maybe better said, instructions. Okay. Lord, this is what I need. I need a miracle. And this is what I think would be the best way and the best time for You to do this miracle. Oh, you, you're so adorable. You're so cute. You have no clue. But getting back to the word "last."

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So right now we've learned that it was the best. Not just save for the last, but it's best if it's at the last minute and not a minute before. Let me say the same thing in a different way. There's something about that 11th hour when, I mean, you're just about to go under. You know, you're sinking, like Peter — God help! Save me — (Gurgling sounds) you know, as he's going down. I think that when we pray, we would do well to wait for the best, especially when it comes at the last minute and perfect timing.

And I mean, you gotta know if the master of the banquet has taken notice of how this wine is the best wine that you're now bringing out and serving. Who does that? Oh, He was, uh... Well, His mom was over here. Oh, His name is Jesus. He's the Son of God, God the Son. And here's where it gets really interesting because we're told at the end of this account, by John, inspired by the Spirit, **“This the first of His miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed His glory; [Listen] and His disciples put their faith in Him.”**

How does that apply to prayer? When we pray, we have to believe by faith. We have to put all of our faith in Him to do what's best even if it's at the last minute. It's been said that the hardest part of faith are the last 30 minutes. Think that through. I mean, you're waiting on the Lord. You're trusting in the Lord. You're looking to the Lord. And God does not seem to be in any hurry. You're the one that's in a hurry.

I never see in the Gospels anywhere where Jesus is running late for an appointment or having to reschedule an appointment. Man, My calendar is packed. I think about Lazarus, you know, with Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. “If You would have been here, he wouldn't have died. Why did You wait till the last minute?” “Because I'm going to do the best thing you could possibly imagine.”

I think we pray too small. We pray too little. And the waiting till the last minute for the best miracle is what builds our faith. Have you thought about it like that? It was after they witnessed this that they put their faith in Him. How many times have you prayed and waited and grew impatient? I know you'd never do that. I'll speak for myself. You're more spiritual than I am. Okay, Lord. Any time now. Why do You have to wait for the last minute? Because I want to do the best miracle.

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But here's the other thing. It's not just that I want to do the best miracle at the last minute, I also want to build you up in your faith. I want to strengthen your faith in Me. I will never fail you. I will never fail you. And He revealed His glory. It was a revelation of the glory of God incarnate, God the Son, Jesus the Christ. And that's why and when they put their faith in Him. Let me close this way. How am I doing? Not good. Don't look at your clocks.

James 5:16 says that **“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man [Not our own righteousness, but Christ's imputed righteousness] avails much,”** accomplishes much when we pray, believing by faith, and we ask. James says, **“You have not because you ask not.”**

You have to ask Him to come and invite Him to come into your situation, into your problem, into your finances, into your family, into your marriage. And then He'll RSVP. He'll be honored to accept the invitation. And then the problem arises. And it's a biggie. Who's the only one that can resolve that problem? Jesus, the Son of God. And He's there at your wedding. No way. Way. So pray. Pray. And when you pray, pray in faith.

What's faith? **“The substance of things hoped for [The writer of Hebrews says] and the evidence of that [Which is yet evidenced] [Forensic evidence] of that which is yet unseen.”**

In other words, faith is knowing that God is going to do it, and you have evidence to prove it. But see, faith is the antithesis of sight. You know, when our faith is turned to sight — you know, in heaven we won't need faith. We have no need. Because my faith is in Jesus and my hope, and my trust is in Jesus. Well, no need because I — **“And the righteous shall live by faith.”**

Well, now I live with the One who is my faith. So no need for faith because that was just the substance of the thing I hoped for, and that has now, as evidenced, been realized. Now this is where it gets tricky because — and sadly because the word faith name it, claim it, blab it, grab it, prosperity false teachers have marred this and ruined this for guys like me who want to share with you, people I love, about having faith.

Well, I don't want to be presumptuous. Well, wait, wait, wait. No, just — Just have faith. Put your faith in Him. Put your trust in Him. It's a done deal, just it hasn't been realized yet. But there's enough evidence to prove that it's going to happen. So believe. Just believe.

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Okay, let me see if I can, just by way of an illustration — I will close and then pray. Could you imagine as a parent, right, your kid comes up to you and goes, “You wouldn't want to like, you know, answer this prayer, or request, or solve this problem, would you?” “Well, if you're going to ask me like that.”

Now let's flip that around. As a fallen earthly parent, your child comes to you and says, “I have complete faith in you. I have a serious problem here, and I'm trusting you for a miracle because I need a miracle. I need a miracle on my marriage. I need a miracle on my finances. I need a miracle in my family. I need a miracle in my body. I need a miracle in my mind. I need a miraculous healing. I need the miracle of salvation for a loved one that I've been praying for.”

Listen. You trust Him, believe Him, put your faith in Him, and watch what He will do. Why? Because the writer of Hebrews says that without faith it is impossible to please God. You know what that means? That if I have faith, I'm very pleasing to God. My faith is such that it's irresistible to God. How many times in the Gospels did Jesus, like, stop everything and draw attention to someone's faith or lack thereof? One account where He said, **“I have never seen faith such as this in all of Israel.” “Your faith has healed you.”** Faith.

What's faith again? It's the substance. It's not the end product. It's just the substance of what you are hoping for, praying for, but you've been given evidence that it will happen. You just haven't seen it or realized it yet. That's faith.

I don't want to use a personal illustration. I said I would close, so I will, but I could take you back to 2002. I was in a pretty not good place. And I just cried out to God. And I prayed. But I didn't just leave it at that. I believed by faith that God was going to answer my prayer and hearken unto the voice of my cry.

And you know what? He did. He did. He took those huge 30-gallon barrels of problems and turned it into joy. Wine is a type of joy. **“Weeping lasts for the night, but joy returns in the morning.” “His mercies are new every morning.” “What you sow in tears [David writes in the Psalms] you will reap in joy.”**

Oh man, I got a lot of joy coming because He counts every single tear, and He keeps perfect, accurate books and records. Okay, tear number 5,325,628,329 — yep, 30 now. So He keeps

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count of my, keeps track of my, keeps books on my tears and promises me that what you have sown, cried in tears, you're going to get it back in joy. I filled up how many stone, 30-gallon barrels of tears that He's turned into joy at the last minute by faith for His glory and my faith.

Oh, I hope that is of some encouragement to you tonight. Because I want to — I want to pray. You know, it's interesting. The disciples would ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. I would have never. I would have asked Jesus to teach me how to preach. You know why they asked Him to teach them how to pray? Because they saw how powerful His own prayer life was when He would get alone with the Father. Mountains would move. Miracles would happen. People would get healed. People would get saved. Demons would be cast out.

And that's not even a — that's not even a fraction of it. I suppose you could sum it up this way. When we pray, and I hope that we will pray tonight, a prayer that is with faith that God has heard my prayer, and faith that God will answer my prayer the best possible way He could have ever answered it, even if it is again, at the last minute. Just wait, which, by the way, that's what strengthens your faith, is the process of waiting.

Okay. I did it again. See, it doesn't even matter if I have notes. I'm going to pray, not long. Could you imagine if my prayers were as long as my sermons? And then when I'm done, I'll have Pastor Mac come up and he'll pray. And then I'll take a seat, and then he'll close it up. So would you join with me?

Father, I want to begin, first of all, by just praying that You would bless this account of the first miracle You performed to our hearts. Open it up to our eyes of faith. Lord, use it to teach us how to pray, how to first invite You into it, and then bring the problem to You. And then wait on You and have faith in You and look to You and trust in You, knowing that You always have our best interests at heart.

Lord, I pray that the baby of faith is not thrown out with the bathwater of the false teaching about faith. Lord, I ask, and I pray this for myself, that I would have that faith to move mountains, though the size of a mustard seed, microscopic in size. I want to please You, Lord. I think everybody here tonight at this prayer meeting wants to please You, Lord. And if You're pleased by our faith, then Lord, we want to have faith to please You.

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So tonight, as we pray, we do so with faith in You to do the best possible way to do it. Lord, there are two pastors, actually, that I want to pray for, the first of which, of course, is Pastor Leitu. Lord, as he is recovering, we're thankful that the surgery went well. We're thankful that he's back home.

But I want to put my faith where my mouth is and ask You, God, for the miracle of a swift healing and recovery and return. And do it in such a way, Lord, that it is unmistakably You. We know You can. We're putting our faith in You to do that. Will You? It's not: can You. It's: will You? And it's not our will, but Your will be done.

So Lord, please would You for our brother, miraculously bring about a swift recovery and even supernatural healing, so much so that the physicians are scratching their heads and glorifying You, knowing that it had nothing to do with them.

The other pastor that I want to pray for is a little bit more difficult. It's Pastor Tim Newman, the pastor of Calvary Chapel Windward, whose wife, Kathy, went home to be with You after battling an aggressive form of cancer, being diagnosed about the same time my wife was and going home to be with you on the same day of Pastor Leitu's surgery.

And Lord it's — we don't know what's best. You do. We don't understand why. But You know what You're doing. We don't know Your whys, your ways. But what we do know is that we can come to You with anything. And what we're coming to You tonight for is the comfort of the Holy Spirit because the family is devastated, the church family devastated.

Lord, I pray for Tim's son, daughter, grandchildren, church, that as only You can, bring about this miraculous comfort and healing of broken hearts, devastated hearts. We know You can. It's not: can You. It's: will You, Lord, please? We believe by faith that You can and will do it. So please, Lord, we ask You for that in Jesus' name, Amen. Pastor Mac, come on up.

PASTOR MAC: Well, good evening. And, I'm going to open it up for corporate prayer with a prayer. So just join with me. Father in heaven, thank You, Lord, for allowing us to be here. And, Lord, now, with the time that we have with You, that we desire to be with You, and knowing in faith that You are meeting us here, would You just bless this time? Give us that desire to pray. Give us the words to speak, knowing that You would hear them and answer them. So Lord, now would You hear from on high from Your servants?