

Jesus, we do not have enough. These are really the anxious words spoken by Mary when she tells Jesus that the wine has run out. Jesus, we do not have enough. How many times have we also spoken those same words to Jesus? How many times have we said to Jesus, "I do not have enough."

What are the kinds of things that we have said we do not have enough of? Have we said to Jesus, "I do not have enough money." One of the things I learned from a recent class I took is that whenever we move into a higher income bracket, we immediately begin to compare ourselves to the next level income bracket. We never have enough. We always compare ourselves to those with the bigger homes, nicer cars, bigger businesses, more expensive electronic games, phones, and gadgets or whatever we define as financial success.

Jesus, I do not have enough. What are some of the other things we say we do not have enough of? Some of us say that we do not have enough love and friendship in our lives. So rather than nurture and grow the love within the relationships that we have, we search for love in other places. Sometimes our searches lead us down destructive paths like affairs and pornography. And we justify our searches by saying, "but I don't have enough of love and attention in my life."

Jesus, I do not have enough. Some of us say that we do not have enough affirmation in our lives. So we spend our days trying to prove to other people that we are worthy. We work longer hours, we say cruel things about others to make ourselves appear better in our eyes, we play mind games with others to try to get them to say nice things about us.

Jesus, I do not have enough. Some of us look at the challenges before us and say, "I can't accomplish this because I do not have enough talent." And so we use this as an excuse and we give up even trying.

Jesus, I do not have enough. Sometimes churches look at their resources and become overwhelmed because we compare ourselves to others and say we do not have enough buildings or income or people. So we think we cannot do very much because we become fixated on what we do not have.

Jesus, I do not have enough. Whenever we say we do not have enough, we are looking to the wrong places. Instead of looking for what we don't have, I wonder how our satisfaction in life would change if we began to look at what we do have.

Compare our resources and assets to the folks in Haiti right now. Haiti was the poorest country in our region prior to this devastating earthquake. Years of having their natural resources plundered by Europe and the rest of North America and then poor national leadership has left them with so few resources. So few assets to fall back upon. We look at Haiti and then have the gall to say to Jesus, "I do not have enough."

So instead of talking about what we don't have, I wonder how our life and our life satisfaction would change if we look around us and said, look at what I do have. Look at the resources I have in my life. Look at my assets. Look at my abundance. Look at the people who love me.

Instead of comparing ourselves to those who have more which is our natural tendency to do, what if we compared ourselves to those who have less? What if we looked at our homes, cars, games, toys, phones, gadgets and whatever in our life and compared it to what we see in Haiti right now? Would we still have the impression that we do not have enough and that we need more of something?

Instead of looking at our relationships and complaining about what we don't get from our relationships, I wonder how our satisfaction in our relationships would change if we looked at the assets within our relationships. Instead of comparing spouses and boyfriends and girlfriends and other friends to others, what if we instead looked upon these people and focused on the good in each of them?

What if instead of traveling down dark paths connected to our desire for more of something, what if instead we sought to nurture the assets in our relationships? What if instead of running away from relationships we ran toward them instead?

And what if as a church, instead of comparing ourselves to whatever church that has more of whatever we think we need, what if we said, we have a lot of resources right here. We are a blessed community of faith. We need to live like it.

And why should we live as if we are in lives of abundance? Let's return to the passage from John. Mary looked at what they did not have, the wine. But Jesus showed them that with him there was abundance. There was no cause of alarm. He would give them everything that they needed and more.

And so Jesus took the jars of water, their assets, and produced more than water. He took what they could bring to him and he turned it into something more than what they had. They had a little, they brought their little to Jesus, they left with abundance.

In our first reading this morning, Paul is writing to the Corinthians and Paul applauds their gifts. He marvels that they have people who have the gift of wisdom, faith, teaching, discernment. He applauds their gifts and affirms that they are gifts from the Spirit of God.

So when you look at your life, what assets do you see? What are the people and possibilities that God can grow into greater abundance if we bring these things to Christ? What about our financial resources? Instead of saying we don't have enough, let us instead ask how can I use my assets and resources to help someone else. How can we use our assets and resources to assist those struggling in Haiti right now?

How can I use my assets and resources to assist my neighbor who is need right now? How can I use my talents and abilities to bring something to someone else in my life right now? You and I are only limited by our own imaginations. Because God is interested in taking whatever assets we have and creating something that doesn't currently exist.

What are the relationship assets close to us? What about our marriage and dating relationships? What about our parents and children? What about our friends and people we work around? What about people we come in contact with on a daily basis in some way? Look upon these relationships and ask yourself, "How can I build up these relationships and make them stronger? How can I live in relationships of abundance?"

I want to end with a true story about the difference between looking at what one is missing versus seeing what one has.

Andrew DeVries was struck by a car while riding his motorcycle and shattered his leg. The damage was so pervasive that surgeons began to prepare DeVries for the likely chance that his leg would be amputated. DeVries recalls though that as everybody was making plans for his life without a leg, a young physician's assistant came up to him and said, 'Andy, what kind of golf ball do you play?'

DeVries, who is now 62, remembers that with doctors telling him he was about to lose his leg below the middle of the thigh, this PA "talking about golf balls seemed almost idiotic." But he told the PA, Sarah Scholl, that he preferred Titleist's Pro V1 ball. The next day, DeVries woke up to find flowers in his room. "And right in the middle of all those flowers, was a yellow 12-pack of Titleist Pro V1," DeVries said. "That Physicians Assistant Sarah had purchased those. And Sarah brought hope.

DeVries recalls how she had helped him stop thinking about how sorry he should feel for himself — and she brought a glimmer of hope. She saw him for what he could become, not what he might have been missing. It was then that DeVries underwent another surgery, one that could result in amputation. He woke up in recovery, and he had 10 toes," DeVries was very excited.

When DeVries was released from the hospital, Scholl was the one who wheeled him out to the ambulance for the ride home. And she had a favor to ask her patient. Scholl told DeVries that she had lost her father some time ago. And, she said, when the time came, she would like it if he would walk her down the aisle to give her away. DeVries said, 'Sarah, you don't have a boyfriend.' To which Scholl replied, "Someday I will."

At the time, DeVries wasn't sure if he would ever get out of his wheelchair. In all, it took him five years to recover fully from the injury to his leg. He and Scholl stayed in touch. And this summer, he got an e-mail from her, saying, "I am engaged. Will you come to my wedding?"

Andrew DeVries had the privilege of walking — rather than wheelchairs — Sarah down the aisle." This was the first time that Sarah Scholl had ever seen Andrew DeVries standing upright.

A miracle of abundance. AMEN.

-Idea for sermon was rooted in sermon by Howard, Rev. Anne Sutherland, Day 1, Jan 17, 2010, and found at http://day1.org/1679-finding_wild_space

-Story at end from "A Healthy Approach Replaces Self Pity with Hope," NPR Storycorp and found at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113830758>

-Text: John 2:1-11; I Cor 12:1-11

-Given: January 15, 2010 in Allison Creek Presbyterian (York, SC)