



Week 2: Never Settle For Stale Religion

Mark Clark // July 26, 2026

Most of us know what it feels like to run out - of energy, hope, joy, patience, or even faith. We often assume God only cares about the “big” spiritual issues while we’re left to figure out the everyday struggles on our own. But Jesus’ very first miracle tells a different story. At a wedding in Cana, he steps into an ordinary crisis and transforms it into a picture of the abundant life he came to offer then and now.

Scripture: [John 2:1-11 NIV](#)

Bottom Line: Never settle for stale religion when Jesus offers a flourishing relationship with him.

Digging In:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word “flourishing”?
2. Have you ever experienced a situation where what seemed like a small problem turned into something much bigger? What happened?
3. Read John 2:1-11 together. What details in the story stand out to you that you might not have noticed before?
4. Why do you think Jesus chooses a wedding—and this miracle—as the beginning of his public ministry (see [Revelation 19:6-9](#) for additional insight)?
5. How does this story in John 2 highlight Jesus’ humanity (vs. his divinity in the first part of John 1)? Why are both aspects of his nature important for us to embrace?
6. In what ways was running out of wine a significant problem in that culture? Can you think of a similar contemporary situation?
7. Mark emphasized that Jesus cares about our “small” everyday needs. How does this story demonstrate that?
8. Is there an area of your life where you’ve been trying to solve things on your own instead of bringing them to Jesus? What concern(s) do you need to trust him with this week?
9. Theologian J. I. Packer wrote, “God fixes our prayers on the way up. If he does not answer the prayer we made, he will answer the prayer we should have made.” Unpack this. What are the implications for you and your pattern of prayer?
10. Why does Jesus use the ceremonial cleansing jars for this miracle? And why does he provide an abundance of wine—more than required? What do these details reveal about Jesus and his heart of grace? How has this grace changed your relationship with God?

11. What is one habit, struggle, mindset, or pattern of sin you sense Jesus wants to “wash clean” in your life?
12. Where have you been tempted to settle for a stale religious routine instead of a growing relationship with Jesus? What would flourishing with Jesus look like for you over the next few months?

Moving Forward:

This week, don't overlook the “small” things in your life. Whatever concern, decision, relationship, or burden you're carrying, intentionally bring it to Jesus instead of trying to manage it on your own. Ask him to exchange places of routine, worry, or striving with the joy and freedom that come from walking closely with him.

Prayer Prompt:

Invite everyone to quietly consider this question:

What's one area of my life that I need to hand over to Jesus instead of trying to manage myself?

After a moment of silence, invite people to pray a simple one-sentence prayer silently or aloud:

Jesus, I trust you with _____.

Then close out your time by praying:

Jesus, thank you that you care about every part of our lives. Help us to trust you more, receive your grace, and experience the abundant life you came to give. Amen.