

Use What You Have

Scripture: Exodus 4:1 – 17 and Mark 3:13 - 19

1/9/22

Let's start out this message with a story:

At a children's musical recital, a man watched a music teacher and student seat themselves in front of a piano. Before their duet began, the teacher leaned over to the student and whispered some last-minute instructions. Both of them got a big smile on their faces. As the music flowed from the piano, the man noticed that the student played a simple melody while the teacher's accompaniment added depth and richness to the song. Near the end of the piece of music, the teacher nodded her approval!

Our life in Jesus is much more like a duet than a solo performance! Sometimes, though, we forget that Jesus is sitting right next to us and it is only by his power and guidance that we can play at all!

We try to hit the right notes on our own. We try to obey God using our own strength, but this usually ends up seeming fake and hollow. We try to handle problems with our limited abilities, but the result is often discord with others.

Christ's presence in our lives can make all the difference! When we rely on Jesus to help us, we find our lives are more honoring to God. We serve joyfully. We love freely. And we will be amazed as God blesses our relationships.

It is like Jesus told his disciples – *If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Apart from me, you can do nothing!*

Jesus is telling us, his modern-day disciples – *If we remain in Christ and Christ in us, we will bear much fruit. Apart from Christ, we can do nothing!*

Let us each day play a duet with our good teacher, our good shepherd, Jesus Christ. It is only by his grace and power that we can carry the melody of our spiritual lives!

Let our 2022 church officers play a duet with our good teacher, our good shepherd, Jesus Christ. It is only by his grace and power that they will lead us into this coming year so that we can carry the melody of our spiritual lives!

I am intimidated by the talents of those around me. I am intimidated by people's ability to sing a touching song or even to sing a solo. I am intimidated by people's ability to play music and even read music. I am intimidated by people's ability to compose a beautiful prayer. I am intimidated by people's knowledge they share about the Bible. I am intimidated by people's teaching ability to share stories from the Bible. I am intimidated by so many people in my life!

Then comes my turn to make an offering during our service and I feel weak and insecure when I compare myself to people I have known.

(Rev. Fred Craddock, Bill Johnston & Marc Theriault, and Aimee Gusky & Mary Johnston)

If you sometimes feel like me - I HAVE GOOD NEWS! If our 2022 church officers feel like me – I HAVE GOOD NEWS!

Why do we sometimes resist the help and encouragement God offers? How can we rely on Jesus to change our outlook and our actions in certain situations?

Hear is the answer - God can use whatever we have. God can use whatever you have. And God can use whatever I have!

God did not choose Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt because Moses was the most talented and gifted speak, remember that Moses had a lisp and could not talk very well so God gave Moses Aaron to speak for him. God chose Moses for what he had!

God used the staff already in Moses' hand to do his work.

In another Bible story, God used Noah to build the ark. Not because he was the best, but because Noah had the tools to build an ark and save his family from the flood. God chose Noah for what he had!

God used the tools already in Noah's possession to do his work.

In another Bible story, God used David as a boy to kill a giant. God did not choose David because he was the strongest because he was just a young man. God used David because he already had the weapon to beat the Goliath in his hand. God used David and the slingshot to kill the giant. God chose David for what he had.

God used the slingshot already in David's hand to do his work.

Also, God used David again when God used the harp that he could play. God used David's harp to soothe a deranged King Saul. God chose David for what he had.

What do I have that God can use? What do you have that God can use? What do we have that God can use? Three great questions that deserve an answer!

Do you have the ability to bake? Then maybe God can use you to bake cookies for a busy mother or a shut in.

Do you have the ability to use tools? Then maybe God can use you to work with Habitat for Humanity or help the elderly with general work around their houses.

Do you have the ability to work on cars? Then maybe God can use you to help the needy with their cars.

Are you a good letter writer? Then maybe God can use you to write letters to college students, our military, and others far from home.

God can use whatever we are willing to let him use. Let me repeat that - God can use whatever we are willing to let him use.

Let us open ourselves and make ourselves available so that God can use whatever skill, talent, or gift we possess to his glory.

We often think God has no use for you. We think God has no space for you!

Another story – An aging military veteran who had some rough edges and was given to using rough language had a surprise visit from a friend. This friend cared enough for him to inquire about his spiritual beliefs. He was concerned about the man's spiritual well-being. The aging veteran told the friend – God does not have space for someone like me!

Perhaps his response was just his tough guy act, but his words could not be further from the truth. God creates space especially for the rough ones! God creates space for the guilt ridden and the excluded ones in this world. God invites everyone to thrive in his kingdom.

That is what Jesus' ministry was all about! Look at who Jesus chose to be his disciples – first he chose several fishermen from Galilee who were from the 'wrong side of the tracks' in the eyes of those in Jerusalem. Jesus also chose a tax collector, Matthew, whose profession included extorting from his oppressed countrymen. And then for good measure, Jesus invited some Zealots to be part of his group. Zealots were a radical religious group that hated Rome and any Jewish leaders who support Rome. The Zealots considered people who support Rome as traitors of which Matthew was one since he was a tax collector. What irony here, to have Matthew the tax collector with Simon the Zealot! But yet, Jesus' disciples blended into His team!

Jesus made space for these guys – I guarantee Jesus will make room for you!

Do not write off anyone as too 'bad' for Jesus. Do not write off yourself as not what Jesus is looking for. After all, Jesus said – *'I have not come to call the righteous, but I have come for sinners to repent.'*

Jesus has plenty of space for the tough cases - people like you and me!

Let us pray:

Dear God, help us to remember that you are with us in every moment. Let us welcome Christ's influence and instructions today.

Dear God, help our 2022 church officers to remember that you are with them in every moment. Let them welcome Christ's influence and instructions today.

Lord God, please use what we have to serve you. Blessed Lord, please use whatever we have to help others. Let us be your tool in this world.

Lord God, please use what our 2022 church officers have to serve you. Blessed Lord, please use whatever they have to help others. Let them be your tool in this world.

Dear Father, thank you that salvation is available to anyone who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus has plenty of room for the rough ones like each of us. AMEN.