

# Servanthood - Characteristics of a Servant

by Chuck Smith

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*A servant must be a man of prayer, trusting in God's ability and promise, in order to be effective for God.*

**Duration:** 1:12:46

**Scripture:** Psalm 2:1

**Topics:** "Servanthood"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of faith and how it was exemplified in the life of Abraham. The first key to Abraham's faith was not focusing on the human aspects or difficulties, but rather trusting in God's ability to work. The speaker emphasizes that God uses imperfect vessels, like clay pots, to carry out His work so that the glory may be to God and not to man. The sermon also highlights the power of God's work, as seen in the healing of a lame man, which silenced the objections of the religious leaders. The speaker concludes by encouraging the audience to have unwavering faith in God's ability to fulfill His promises.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to you tonight about the minister and then next Tuesday night I want to talk to you about the ministry. I'm certain that the reason why all of us are here tonight is because deep down inside we want to be used of God. I want God to use my life for whatever ministry he might have for me.

And in desiring God to use me I want to be used to the ultimate. If I'm going to be in the ministry I want my ministry to achieve its ultimate for God. Years ago when I felt called of God to enter the ministry I sought to study the lives of men who have been effective for God in order that I might learn from them, discovering why they were effective for God.

Because I wanted to be effective for God in my service to him. And so in studying the book of Acts, because to me the church hit its peak in the first 30 years and has been going down ever since. In the first 30 years the church reached the then known world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It made a tremendous impact upon the world. The Pharisees or the Sanhedrin accused the disciples of filling Jerusalem with this man's doctrine. They were so effective they have filled the whole city with the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Then later on when they arrived in Berea some people reported to the leaders of the city, these men who have been turning the world upside down have come here. The early church was very effective it was turning the world upside down. I think that there is a reason why the demise of the church came about.

I do believe that the church began to substitute the abilities of the flesh for the enablings of the Spirit. When we started developing fancy structures, fancy programs, fancy schools began to demand a certain amount of education, higher education, etc. The men began to trust in their own trained abilities rather than in the anointing and the guiding and in the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

I think that as we look at what God is doing today we find that by far the most effective works are those that are just empowered by the Spirit. The church program church is dead and all over the United States we get letters from people who say you know we love Jesus, we love the Word of God but we can't find a church where we can just learn the Word of God. There's so much church-anity and people are hungry for just the work of God's Spirit.

Now as we look at the book of Acts and as we look at these men that God used, perhaps we should turn to Acts chapter 3 and here we can see many characteristics of these men who were so mightily used of God. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour and we have our first clue. They were men of prayer.

The men who God uses are men who are in contact with God, men who pray. You cannot do any true effective work for God apart from prayer. Jesus said you don't go in and just take the goods from a strong man but you first go in and bind the strong man of the house and then you go in and take the spoil.

Now through prayer we are binding the strong man, we're binding the work of Satan and then in our services all that our Christian service should be is going in and taking the spoils. We've already won the victory in prayer. We've already fought the battle in the closet and there we have taken the victory binding the strong man of the house and then when we go out we just go out to take the spoil.

Prayer is by far the greatest outlet of spiritual power that we have. One of the mysteries of heaven will be why we did not pray more when God has given to us such a valuable tool for power. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal they are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy and a lot of people are getting battered in the battle because they haven't really fought the battle in the closet in their prayer life.

There are five outlets of spiritual power that I can think of. One is your words, what you say. God can use your words to touch lives.

It isn't necessary that they be eloquent words. It is necessary that they be anointed words of the Spirit. I have heard some of the greatest orators alive in the world today.

They were so polished, they were so smooth, the words just rolled out of their mouth. But they just rolled right off of me as easily as they rolled out of their mouth. It didn't stir me, it didn't touch me, it didn't move me.

Marvelous speech, looking at it from a homiletical standpoint, perfect. But yet there was nothing behind it. Several years ago on vacation up at Bass Lake, we went over to North Fork to a little country church.

The pastor wasn't there and some woman was speaking and she was from the hill country of Kentucky. She was a little hard to understand because it sounded like she had gravel in her mouth when she talked. And talk about butchering the King's English.

Man. But you know, as this precious saintly woman spoke, my heart began to burn. There was such an anointing of God's Spirit upon her life and upon her word that I was really ministered to that morning.

My words can be an outlet of spiritual power. God can use what I say. The second outlet of spiritual power is your life.

Every day your life, without you saying a word, is having an influence on other people for either good or bad. If your life is in tune with God and filled with the Holy Spirit, your life is having that silent influence for good wherever you go. Now in looking at our words and looking at our lives, we realize that our words can never be any greater than our lives.

A lot of times what a person says is totally disavowed by what he is. His life doesn't back up what he is saying and therefore what he is saying becomes meaningless because there is no real life behind it. So our words are important but they can never be greater than our lives.

Another outlet of spiritual power is our service. What I do for God, what I do in the name of the Lord, and God's Spirit can use even a cup of cold water given unto a prophet in the name of the Lord. My service for God can be a vital outlet of spiritual power.

My money can be an outlet of spiritual power. That which I release for the work of the Lord. Several years ago there was a young girl here in the Los Angeles area going to Biola College and she felt called of God to go to China as a missionary.

And so she took all of the courses. She studied nursing, got her RN and she finally applied to the mission board to go to China as a missionary and they required that she get a physical. And when she had her physical the doctor said there's no way you could ever go to China.

And he rejected her on a heart problem that she had that would have just been aggravated in China. And so bitterly disappointed after all of these years of training and preparing to hear this disappointing word you can't go because of your heart problem. She cried before the Lord because of her frustration of her ambition of her life.

But she came across another girl who also felt the call of God to go to China as a missionary who also was qualified but lacked the funds. She said I'll tell you what I'll get a job. We'll be partners.

And half of what I make I'll send to you to support you in your work in China. So they made a pact together and she went out and got a job and took half of what she earned and send it to the gal in China and supported her as a missionary in China. God began to bless her at her work.

She began to get promotions. And before long she met another girl who felt called of God to go to China as a missionary and she said I'll tell you what you go and I'll support you. God continued to bless her.

She became an executive in that company and was at one time supporting five young ladies over in China. Now when we stand before God to receive the rewards for the things that are done in our bodies and when the rewards are given out for those Chinese who were led to Christ by these five girls that went

over there, that one gal who stayed home and supported those five will share equally in the reward. She released her money and it became an outlet of spiritual power and it began to do a work for God over in China.

Paul in writing to the Philippians said I thank you for the offering that you sent to me not that I necessarily needed any money but I desire that fruit might abound to your account. The fruit of my ministry you see is going to go to your account because of what you sent. So our money can be an outlet of spiritual power that which we release for God.

But by far the greatest outlet of spiritual power is prayer for I can do nothing of real service for God until I have first of all done it in prayer. You can do more than pray after you pray but you really can't do much more than pray until you pray. Now one of the problems that many people have faced in their ministry is they're going out unprepared.

They haven't prayed in advance and they just go into a situation without having a lot of backing in prayer. You may say but Chuck it seems to me that what I do for the Lord in service is greater than what I do in prayer. But we must face the fact that when we pray or when we serve the Lord our service is limited in location to where I am.

Now I'm serving the Lord tonight I'm sitting here sharing with you the things of the Spirit giving to you help and understanding so that you'll know what is necessary if your life is to be used by God. The minister what he is like what he must do. But while I'm sitting here I can't be ministering up at the conference center tomorrow morning I've got to get up early get in my car and drive up to the conference center and tomorrow I'll be ministering to the students up there in school.

But it'll take me an hour and 45 minutes to get my body from here up there so that I can minister up there. But my service to God is always restricted and limited to my body. I can't be two places at once.

So my ministry is limited in locale to where I am. Whereas when I release the power through prayer it's unlimited. I can touch a world for God.

I can go into my closet and I can begin to serve the Lord over in China. And I can spend an hour of my life in China strengthening the brethren there, helping them, protecting them, shielding them, giving them strength and power and support. Then if I get tired of serving the Lord in China I can jump over to Africa and I can start doing a work for God in Africa.

Opening up the minds of people to understand the track or the Word of God that's been given to them. Creating a hunger in the hearts of those people to really know God and the fullness of God's love. Then I can jump down into South America for a while and then over to England and you can just bounce around all over the world without ever leaving your closet.

And doing work for God in each of these areas. Putting in time, getting credit in God's books for missionary work around the world. As through prayer I uphold them and I help them and I strengthen them because my prayer becomes a spiritual force and power.

Strengthening them and helping them wherever I direct it. So prayer is an exciting outlet of spiritual power because it is so broad, so unlimited. These men that God used were men of prayer.

They were going into the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon which was the evening hour of prayer. And as we study through the book of Acts we find how often they resorted to prayer. We find out how much prayer is mentioned as just a vital part of their lives.

So Peter and John were going into the temple to pray. There was a certain man there who was lame from birth asking for alms. You go to Jerusalem today and you'll find there at the Damascus gate there are people who are lame or blind or infirm to who still beg all the way out through the Damascus gate.

You'll see the beggars there. And Peter said to him, hey fella, look here. And he turned, no doubt holding out his hand expecting to receive something.

Peter said, I don't have any silver or gold but what I have I'll give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand to your feet and walk. Now it says that Peter took the man by the right hand and lifted him to his feet.

I would like to suggest that these men that God used were men of faith because it would take an awful lot of faith to lift a lame man to his feet. Don't you know that Satan was just whispering in his ear, Peter what are you going to do if this guy collapses? If he goes right down in a heap? What are you gonna do? All the people are gonna look at you and they're gonna think that you're you know molesting this handicapped man. It must have taken a lot of faith and at this point we have to be careful between faith and presumption.

If God tells us to do something then you know do it by faith. If God doesn't tell you then don't mess. When we were over at the little chapel a block away after a Sunday morning service they wheeled this man up in a wheelchair to the front and they asked me to pray for him.

They didn't tell me what his problem was but you know if he's in a wheelchair obviously he can't walk and so we prayed for him and the Lord spoke to my heart. I'd just been reading this account of Peter and the Lord spoke to my heart and said lift him out of the wheelchair. What if he falls you know? And so I said to the man after prayer I said in the name of Jesus stand and walk and I lifted him and put him on his feet and the fellow began to walk and he began to walk up and down the aisle and then he began to sort of trot up and down the aisle and the family said we didn't bring him here for that.

The guy was having some kind of a financial problem or something and they wanted us to pray for him but he had not walked in over six years and of course they were going you know just berserk. The following Wednesday evening I was speaking down in Tucson and at the close of the service there was a lady there with a wheelchair and the guy came up and he said would you pray for my wife and so I laid hands on her and prayed for her in the name of the Lord and I patted her on the shoulder I said God bless you sister you know and I just pray that the Lord will really touch your body and heal you you know and the guy wheeled her out and my son said hey dad why didn't you lift her out like you did that guy last Sunday and I said because God didn't speak to my heart and tell me to do it. You see there's a difference.

When God lays something upon your heart then dare to venture out. But if God didn't lay it on your heart then don't mess. If you don't have the faith for it you see and I just really didn't.

I just said son I just didn't have the faith to do it and I didn't feel impressed to the Lord. But these men that God used were men of faith. Now in Romans the fourth chapter we have four keys given to us for faith.

Speaking of Abraham's faith it's about I think verse 17 or so. Would you believe 19? Speaking of Abraham being not weak in the faith he considered not his own body now dead when he was about a hundred years old nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. So the first key to Abraham's faith was not looking at the human aspects.

And really when we are considering God as the agent doing the work we shouldn't be looking at human difficulties. But isn't it interesting how whenever any problem comes up the first thing we try to figure out is humanly how we might be able to do it. That's always the first thing we consider.

The human difficulties are the human impossibilities. And we're always measuring thing by our ability or by man's ability. But that is absolutely wrong.

Because it isn't up to me to do it it's up to God to do it. It isn't my ability here that's going to be working it's God's ability you see. And yet I'm always measuring it by man's ability.

Isn't it interesting how if a person comes along with a headache and says would you pray for me I've got this crazy headache tonight. You say oh sure God touch heal this headache oh thank you Jesus praise the Lord amen. You know if it doesn't go away take an aspirin you know.

Headaches though you know they're aspirin will help. They're not a big deal. Here comes a guy up and he says I just came from the doctor and I've been having a lot of problems.

He says I have leukemia and I have about two weeks to live. Would you pray that God would heal me. Two weeks to live.

Leukemia. Oh man oh God oh God in heaven. Creator of the heaven and earth oh God you know.

Man you got to really work up for this one you know because the doctor's giving him up. You know and leukemia is tough. What am I doing? I'm carrying my human limitations over to God.

I'm considering the difficulties as measured by man. But if God is going to heal somebody God can heal a person of leukemia just as easily as he can heal a headache. It doesn't take any more from God or any more of God to heal from some of these things that man are unable to do anything about.

But if God's going to do it it's no problem for God. The problem lies in our faith. But the problem with our faith is that we're measuring it by our analysis.

Abraham did not consider his own body almost dead hundred years old. Nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. Didn't take that into account.

Because you see I'm dealing now with the promise of God and God promised me a son through Sarah. So what if I'm almost a hundred? So what if she went through the change of life 20 years ago? Doesn't matter. So what have I been trying for 75 years? Really doesn't matter.

He didn't consider the human aspects. The human impossibility. Because God's the one that's going to be working here.

Secondly he staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief. How many times do we find ourselves staggering at the promises of God? You remember in the Old Testament when Samaria the capital of Israel was being besieged by the Syrian army at this particular time. Ben-Hadad the Syrian army.

And things were really desperate and the king of Samaria was blaming the prophet of God. Elisha. And Elisha was sitting there in his house with some of his friends and and he had a real keen insight.

You know God just revealed to him all kinds of things. And as he was sitting there he says, wow how about that? Look what that son of a murderer is going to do now. He's sending a guy down here to get my head.

He said when he knocks on the door open the door and pin him back with the door. For behold his master's footsteps are right behind him. The King's coming down too.

So this guy came down to Elisha's house and knocked on the door. And the guys opened the door and pinned him back. And pretty soon the King came up and he said to Elisha, are you the one that's been troubling Israel? And he said, come on get over that.

You're the one that's troubled Israel. You're the one that's brought the Baal worship and all and turned them away from Jehovah. Don't blame me.

It's your fault for the problems that they have because they've turned away from the true and the living God. Now there was a horrible famine going on. They were selling the jawbone of a donkey for 65 pieces of silver.

But Elisha said, don't worry. Tomorrow morning they'll be selling a bushel of fine flour of wheat for 65 cents in the gate of the city. The man upon whom the King leaned said, if God would open windows in heaven could such a thing be? What was he doing? He was staggering at the promises of God because he couldn't figure out how God could possibly do that.

Unless he goes around in heaven opens up windows and dumps flour out you know and all. Couldn't figure out how God might be able to, well that isn't my problem how God is gonna do it. That isn't my concern.

God said he's gonna do it so it's how God is gonna do it is his business not mine. I so often get into trouble by trying to figure out how God is gonna do it and we oftentimes stagger at the promises of God. Well that's alright Lord.

Now I understand Abraham staggered at the promises of God when the Lord came to Abraham said I'm gonna give you a son and here was Ishmael 13 years old playing outside. Abraham said oh thank you father that's great let Ishmael live before you forever you know you don't need to put me on anymore God you know here's Ishmael fine you know. God said no Abraham through Sarah shall thy seed be called.

Now after that he didn't stagger but now being strong in the faith he began to give glory to God. What does that mean? He started praising the Lord for a son and so here's this old hundred-year-old man out there just so happy just he just sitting there sort of rolling and laughing oh right you know you go say hey old man what are you so happy about? Oh can't believe it my wife's gonna have a son. Oh your wife's gonna have a son? Yeah.

Oh that's so neat you know. Praise God. Oh bless the Lord.

God is so good. How old is your wife old man? Oh I forgot but she's somewhere above 90 you know. How long you been married old man? Well we had our 75th anniversary a while back you know.

You haven't had any children up till now? No. And you know you'd walk away saying poor old fella but he's happy. Being strong in the faith he gave glory to God.

Oh what a key what a key what a key. Start acting like you have it before you ever get it. You know God is as good as his word and God's word is as good as he is.

Do you have God's promise? Do you have God's word? Then just rejoice. That's as good as having it. Abraham didn't stagger at the promise of God but he being strong in the faith actually began to give glory to God.

He was praising God for what God had promised. Several years ago when we had been in the ministry for about five six years I guess. I was working at Alpha Beta markets in order to support the family because the church could only pay us about \$20 a week and we had three children and so it was necessary for me to work at Alpha Beta in order to take care of the needs of the family and we we looked at it as God providing our needs.

Provided me with the ability to do grocery work and provided me the job at Alpha Beta. Good hours I was head of the produce department go in you know in the morning at four o'clock and I could get off in the early afternoon and had the rest the afternoon the evenings for the ministry and all and so it was just a great deal because it it helped provide for the needs of the family. But my mother-in-law died down in Phoenix so I had to take a leave of absence from the job and we went on down to Phoenix and by the time we were able to you know get everything all wrapped up down there and and you know take care of all of the affairs and all you have to take care of and get all the papers and anything else.

We were gone for a couple of weeks. So when I got back I went in to check my schedule to see when I was supposed to come back to work and the manager said well Chuck he said I got a call from the Union you can't go back to work until you first of all go over and clear with them. He said I guess you're behind on your dues.

I said oh yeah I forgot to pay before I left. So I went over the Union Hall and I said I want to pay my dues and they said well there's a \$50 fine plus your back due. I said well I don't have it.

Well he said we can't give you a release to go back to work until you pay it. I said well I can't get it unless I'm working. They said well you can't work until you get it and I was really in a jam because the church just wasn't paying adequate salary to get by on and and with three kids \$20 a week just wouldn't cut it.

So our debts began to pile up on us. We're praying. Alpha Beta had offered me management if I would leave the ministry.

They promised me a great career with Alpha Beta Markets and they they wanted me to come in and just to go into management with them. And so I was really discouraged because of the bills and everything else. Thinking about leaving the ministry thinking well Lord maybe you you know you want me to just be a good Christian businessman.

Support the church. I really don't seem to be very successful in the ministry. And and I was getting more discouraged every day and as the bills were mounting it was really tough.

One morning I got up early before anybody else. I went in the desk. I pulled out all of the bills.

All the notices. I totaled everything up and we had four hundred and sixteen dollars in bills. And you know \$20 a week wasn't even buying the food for the kids.

I mean we were going deeper every day. And I thought well that that's it. You know there's no sense of trying to kid myself any longer.

I can't just you know sit here and go deeper into debt all the time. I'm gonna have to you know leave the ministry. Get a job or something.

You know this doesn't make sense. And I was just really discouraged that morning going around just figuring well you know this is it. I've had it as far as the ministry is concerned.

And the phone rang. It was a long-distance call. People said hi Chuck how are you? I said oh great you know how are you? And they said we called you to let you know that yesterday we put a letter in the mail for you.

We sent it special delivery air mail. You should get it today because the Lord laid upon our heart to send you a check. And I said oh well praise the Lord you know that.

I'm really thrilled about that. And they said yes the Lord laid upon our heart to send you a check for \$425. I said what? Whee! You know.

Man. Oh I when I hung up the phone after talking to them ran into the kitchen. I grabbed Kay began to waltz around the kitchen.

Boy was I happy. Oh praising the Lord. You never heard such praises.

Oh God you're so good. Lord I love you. Lord alright you know.

Every bill I have was gonna be paid. Whoo God is so good. Whoo and I was just so excited so high.

And when I began to settle down a little bit the Lord began to speak to me. He said what are you so happy about? I said Lord you're so neat. Oh how I love you.

Lord you're so good. Oh I love you Lord. You're just alright.

Lord said how do you know they're gonna send that money? Come on God you gotta be kidding me. How do I know? They already said it Lord. They told me.

These are good honest people. I'd trust their word anyplace. They they're just good people God.

And they gave me their word. And I believe. The Lord said very interesting.

You had my word this morning when you first got up. I didn't see you jumping around the place. I didn't see you all happy and praising me.

Said I saw you going around kicking you know the floor and murmuring and complaining. And you had my word I was gonna supply all your needs. Now you have the word of man.

And you're so excited. You're so happy. Whose word is greater? You know I had to end up repenting and asking God to forgive me.

Because he was right. I had God's promise but I was discouraged and blue. We have the Word of God.

We ought to get excited over the promises of God. Abraham did. Part of his faith was hey God said it.

I know he's gonna do it. Hallelujah. Bless God.

Finally being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able also to perform. The fourth key to Abraham's faith he just believed in the ability of God. Now how big is your God? Tell me what is too hard for God to do? Name something that's too hard for God.

God said to Jeremiah. Lord Jeremiah I have made the heaven and the earth. Is there anything too hard for me? Now look out at the universe.

He created it all. Is there anything too hard for him? You know sometimes we come to God with sort of an apologetic attitude. Oh God this is really a tough one.

You know if you don't want to that's I can understand Lord because this one's really tough you know. Like it's straining God or gonna put a real strain on him you know. But to come through on this one.

Being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform. Of course I believe God is able to do it. Well if he's promised he's gonna do it then surely he will.

So they were men of faith. Now their faith had come because they were men of the word. When this guy made his little pass through the temple.

Running, leaping, praising God. People inside the temple said hey did you see that guy? Isn't that the lame man that's been out there at the gate all these years? Man it sure looked like him. How could it be him? He was running.

I don't know let's find out. And this guy made one pass through the temple and 5,000 people followed him out to Solomon's Forge. Greatly wondering.

And he grabbed hold of Peter and the people began to assemble around looking at Peter. And Peter said he men of Israel. Why marvel at this? Or why look on us as though we through our own righteousness have done this good deed to this lame man? Now here is an important key for anyone who is considering the ministry at all.

I believe one of the greatest dangers that exists in the ministry and a thing that will put you out of the ministry quicker than anything else is taking the credit or taking the glory for the work of God. If you are going to have an effective ministry for Jesus Christ you must first come to the cross and reckon the old man to be crucified with Christ. You must as Paul be crucified with Christ.

Because the moment God begins to work in your life through the power of the Holy Spirit there are a lot of stupid people out there that are going to start looking to you as though you are something special. Somehow people get their eyes upon man instead of God. They are looking at the instrument and they want to glory in the instrument rather than in God who uses the instrument.

Several years ago we were pastoring in Los Ramos and a lady started attending some of my Bible studies whose husband was one of the most prominent psychiatrists in that area. But he was having a problem. He had got hooked on Valium and it was beginning to affect his practice.

He was so loaded on drugs that when the patients would be there talking to him he'd fall asleep. And it was really beginning to affect his practice and yet he was hooked. He was really in bad shape.

Well she said Chuck he's an atheist. He's such a brilliant man. But she said if anyone can reach him you can.

So they invited Kay and I over for dinner on Friday night and so we had dinner and then Kay and this gal headed off for the kitchen and left Bud and I alone. And so we started talking about God and about you know the Bible and about the world and about you know all kinds of things. And so she had us over you know she kept inviting us over on Friday nights and you know she and Kay disappeared and then I'd have my shots at Bud you know.

So after a while one evening I said well Bud I said you know we've gotten pretty well acquainted now through this time we've been able to share together. I said you're a psychiatrist and I said I recognize from some of your questions you've been seeking to analyze me and you probably know a lot more about me than I know about you. And I said now having come to know me as you do and observing me and you know my attitudes you know how much joy I have and you know you know my whole philosophy of life.

I said tell me what if Jesus Christ isn't the Son of God? What if there is no God? What do you think I have lost by believing in Jesus Christ? As far as my lifestyle and the joy and everything. What do you think I've lost because I've believed in Jesus Christ? And he looked at me and studied me for a bit and he said not a thing I wish I were as happy as you are you know. I said all right let's turn it around Bud.

What if Jesus Christ really is the Son of God and he died? What if what I believe is true? What have you lost by not believing? He said you trapped me. I said no I didn't. God did.

So Bud knelt down and accepted the Lord. The next morning his wife was in my office bright and early. She's a very emotional type and all and oh she you know and she's the kind that she doesn't she doesn't walk into a room she's you know I mean storms I mean she just that kind of just you know just everywhere at once.

She came bursting into the office and oh Chuck I knew you could do it. I knew you could do it. I knew if anybody could do it you could do it Chuck.

You're the greatest. I said wait a minute Edie. Hold on here.

I said let's get something straight. I said your husband Bud is a psychiatrist and a neurosurgeon. That's right.

I said what if one of his patients had an aneurysm. Bud had to cut open the skull and took the little clips and clipped off the veins up there and stopped the aneurysm. Put them back together and when that patient had recovered he came back to your husband's office and said I'd like to see the scaffold that you did the work with and begin to hold that scaffold or the saw that they cut the skull with and oh you're the greatest scaffold.

You're so beautiful. I knew you could do it. You're such a marvelous scaffold you know.

I said you would think that it's time for your husband to take them from the operating room to the couch. There's something wrong when they start to praise the instrument. I said Edie you're praising the

instrument.

All I am is an instrument. It is God who did it. Not me.

I was only the instrument that God used. Don't praise the instrument. Don't glory in the instrument.

Glory in God who uses instruments to do his work. Now you must remember that you are never more than an instrument in the hand of God and therefore you as an instrument cannot take glory for what God does and the minute you take glory for what God does then God will set the instrument on the shelf and won't use it anymore. You'll go on oh yes you'll go on with the motions but listen there will be a dynamic power of the Spirit is lost and one of the tragic things you see a lot of empty shells a lot of guys around still trying to do the thing it's become mechanical they're going through the motions but there's no dynamic of the Spirit there anymore because they have dared to take the glory that should only be given to God and they've accepted the glory and the praise and the honors for themselves that should be directed to God.

Now that will be a continuing danger to the ministry. People will seek to glorify you. People will seek to honor you.

Seek to give you glory for what God has done. Don't take it. Ye men of Israel why do you marvel at this or why look on us as though we through our own righteousness have done this work to this lame man? Why do you look at me like I'm so holy? Like I'm so spiritual? Like I'm so righteous? We're only men like you are.

Be it known unto you that it's by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that this man stands here before you all. Don't take credit. Point them to the one who has done the work the one that should receive the glory and the credit for what has been done.

You don't dare take glory for what God has done and more ministers have come to an end of their ministry in that point that has that's the pitfall that it is that has destroyed more ministers than any other pitfall I know. If you want to continue to be used by God if you want God to continue his work through your life then make sure that you don't and you're not in it for glory for you. You're not looking for your glory or you're not taking and accepting the glory or the honors the plaudits that people are wanting to heap upon you.

Paul the Apostle was in Lystra as he was preaching there was a guy there about 38 years old had been lame from birth and Paul perceived the guy had faith to be healed and he said brother Jesus of Nazareth makes you all stand up and walk and the guy stood up and walked and the people did. This guy had been lame all his life. He's walking.

They ran down to the street to the temple of Jupiter Zeus and they said to the priest amen your God is up here in the street he came to earth along with Mercury and they're right down there in the street right now and so the old priests came pulling an ox up the street gonna sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas right there in the street of Lystra. Man they ripped off their clothes they said hey look we're not God we're men. We're men just like you are.

Don't do this but scarcely were they able to restrain them. People want to honor the vessel. They want to give glory to the vessel.

Don't take it. You don't dare take it. When Paul writing to the Romans in chapter 12 is writing to them about ministry gifts he begins that portion of the chapter of ministry gifts by saying take heed that no man thinks more highly of himself than he ought.

Be careful for that. That you don't start getting an exalted opinion of yourself. Well God used me because God knew that you know.

Don't get an exalted opinion of yourself. Don't take glory that belongs only to God. You've got to come to the cross.

You've got to have only one ambition and that is to glorify God. The old man the old life is dead. Ambition's dead.

Just bring glory to my master not to me. I'm just the servant bringing glory seeking to bring glory to my master. Jesus said take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men for I say unto you ye have your reward.

Be careful. You see today contrast with what went on in Peter's day. Those who go around claiming the gifts of healing.

I've heard them say oh well I fasted for many days you know. And to have this kind of ministry takes tremendous sacrifice. You've got to be willing to give your all.

You've got to give up everything. You cannot do this and that and the other you know and and it takes a real price. You've got to pay a price to have this kind of ministry you know.

Just the opposite of what Peter said. Hey don't look on me as though through my righteousness I did this. He wasn't even trying to say hey I'm I'm holy and I'm righteous and I fasted and I I did an awful lot to get this kind of power in my life.

No. Hey don't look on me. This is the work of Jesus Christ.

And then he doesn't even take credit for the faith. He said and it is through the faith of him. He didn't even take credit with my great faith.

He gave me the faith to do what I did. It's through the faith of him. Peter's not taking any credit at all.

This is the work of God glorified God. Now when Peter began to talk to them he began to quote scriptures to them. And as you read the quotations you find he's quoting out of several areas of the Old Testament.

I mean it's not saying he's not having to turn and find it everything else. He would just it's just a part of him. He just knows the word.

And he starts quoting the word. The men that God uses are men of the word. Men who have God's word just tucked away in their heart.

So if you want to be used of God get into the word. Study the word. Learn the word.

Know the word. For as you really get the word of God there implanted in your heart. Then you're able to use the word.

And also you'll know the God that you are serving. And the more you know God the more trust and faith you will have in God. Because you'll know him so fully and so completely.

Now the next day and well they they arrested Peter for this. And the next day they brought him into court. And Peter sort of they said now now tell us by what name or by what power did you do this work on this guy.

Now this was really a trick league question. Under the law in Deuteronomy if a man comes and does a miracle and he leads you to worship any other than Jehovah then let him be put to death. Trick question.

Peter said you rulers of the people. Then Peter no look at that a little bit further. Filled with the Holy Spirit.

There you've got your qualifying phrase. The men that God uses are men who are filled with the Holy Spirit. Men who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And the men that God uses are men who are filled with the Spirit of God. But then as you read on he said if we are examined today because of the good deed done to the lame man.

By what means he is made whole. Be it known unto you all and to all of the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified whom God raised from the dead even by him does this man stand here before you whole. This is a stone that was said of not of you builders but the same has become the chief cornerstone and neither is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

Peter you're pretty bold there boy. Yes the men that God uses are men who have a holy boldness. Men who will speak out in the face of all kinds of opposition speak out forcibly for Jesus Christ.

Men who are not ashamed to speak out for Jesus Christ even in the midst of the toughest adversities. These guys ready to pounce on every word and Peter just lays it out with tremendous boldness. Well the Sanhedrin was sort of stuck.

The guy was the lame guy was standing there whole what can we say. And seeing the lame man standing with him whole they could say nothing. You know when God is working and you have the evidence of the work of God it's amazing how it closes a lot of objections of people.

What can you say you're a bunch of messed up people who are now straightened out you know. A lot of lame people are now whole. What can you say.

The witness of that work of God you can't really say much about that. So they beat them and commanded them not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus. So they returned to the other disciples rejoicing that they were accounted worthy by God to be able to suffer persecution for Jesus Christ.

Oh Lord you know we're not we don't deserve to be punished you know and suffer for Jesus. Lord you're so good. Oh God how blessed we are that we were able to suffer for Jesus.

Hey these men are the kind of men you can't stop. They came back to their own company and they told them all the things that had happened. How that they've been beaten and commanded not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now they were men of prayer and so when the guys heard that they said well let's pray. And so they prayed. Now their prayer is something else and we don't have time to study it tonight but it's a classic prayer.

They don't jump right into the request. I think there's a lot of times we just say oh God I need this and I need this and I need this and I need this amen you know. And we just come and lay the trip on God and we don't even bother to have any fellowship communion or lay any groundwork.

They they said oh Lord thou art God. You've created the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them. And by the mouth of your servant David you said why do the heathen rage and people imagine a vain thing for they have gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed against his Messiah.

Lord surely that's exactly what's happened. You see they prayed and acknowledging first of all that God is God and first then secondly that God knew in advance the very stuff we were going to be facing today. God was aware of what was going to be going on because through David he talked about the very things we saw that he prophesied the very experiences that we had today.

So you know all about our lives in advance. You know everything about us God and through the mouth of your servant David you talked to these very things that we experienced today as the people had gathered together against you and against your anointed one. Surely Lord that's what they did.

Now behold Lord they're threatened and they got to the request and grant unto your servants that with boldness we might speak the word of Christ. Hey I like that. What are they asking God for? Boldness to do the very thing that got him in trouble.

Not to back away from it. Not to go hide someplace because we've been threatened. God help us not to let down just because we've had a little persecution.

Help us not to lay off Lord just because you know we've run into a little. God give us boldness that we might speak your word. We might speak in the name of Jesus and the place where they were praying was shaken and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

These are the men that God used to turn the world upside down. These are the keys of the men that God uses and will use today to turn the world upside down. If you will determine that you will become a man of prayer, a man of the word, a man of faith and filled with the Holy Ghost and not looking for any glory or honor or whatever to yourself but only as an instrument to be used of God to bring glory and honor to him and will just commit yourself in reckless abandon for Jesus Christ.

Hey you'll turn the world upside down. One day Dwight Moody was just a shoe salesman and a man that he was selling a pair of shoes said to him the world has yet to see what can be accomplished through just one man who will totally dedicate his life to Jesus Christ. That challenged Moody and he says God I want to be that man.

Well he came close but the world has yet to see what can be accomplished through one man who will really dedicate himself totally to Jesus Christ. Why don't you be that man, that woman, the minister. God uses instruments.

God uses people to do his work. We have this glorious privilege. Paul said oh we have this this marvelous treasure here in earthen vessels.

Now he's pointing out something that's quite ludicrous. You've got the most valuable thing in the universe, the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ and what's God put it in? This dumb clay pot, cheap old clay pot. Why? That the glory may be to God and not of us.

God commits his work of sharing and spreading the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to these instruments in order that the glory might be to God and not to man, not to us. Now there is a glorious ministry and this is what we want to get into next week as we talk about the ministry and what it's all about. So God bless you.

It's been a joy to be with you tonight.

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