

Big Lessons

You and I are too impressed with size. If something is small and quiet, we have the idea that it is unimportant; but if it is big and noisy, then it must be important. But God doesn't measure life the way we do. The big things don't always impress Him. In fact, some of the little things in the Bible teach big lessons.

The prophet Zechariah asked an interesting question one day: "For who has despised the day of small things?" He was trying to encourage the nation as they were rebuilding their temple and having a difficult time. The budget was low, the morale even lower, and it looked like the job would never be finished. The people were discouraged because the whole project seemed so small-it just wasn't the temple it used to be.

We had better be careful not to despise small things! After all, we got our start in this world as babies, totally dependent on others. When God wanted to deliver His people from Egypt, He didn't send an army-He sent a baby to a Jewish family, and years later, Moses led his people out of bondage. When the nation had sunk into spiritual and political defeat, God sent a boy named Samuel who one day led the nation back into greatness. And when God wanted to deliver mankind from sin, He sent another baby. Jesus Christ came as a baby that He might one day die for us on the cross.

God uses small things to accomplish great purposes. He used Moses' rod to defeat the armies of Egypt. He used David's sling to overcome the giant Goliath. Gideon and his three hundred soldiers used pitchers and torches to slaughter the huge army of the Midianites. Rahab tied a piece of red rope out of her window, and it saved her family. A lad brought a few loaves and fishes to Jesus, and He used them to feed thousands. Never despise the small things because God can use them to accomplish great things.

You may think that you are insignificant in the great plan of God, but you are not. You are tremendously important to God so much so that Jesus died for you, and the Holy Spirit lives in you. You may seem small in your own eyes, and this is good; because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. However, don't let your humility become sin by making you believe you can do nothing for God. God can use you to help Him accomplish His will on this earth.

God not only uses small things, but God uses small acts that seem insignificant to us and to others. How many times have you done something good and thought, "Well, nobody knows about that and it won't accomplish much." How wrong you are! There is no deed of sacrifice or kindness that goes unnoticed by God. He can use these small deeds of Christian love and accomplish great things.

I think, for example, of what Mary of Bethany did for Jesus. Shortly before His death on the cross, Jesus and His disciples were having supper at the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Mary came into the room with a jar of expensive perfume, and she poured it out on Jesus' feet as a loving act of worship. Nobody outside that house knew what she did. In fact, some inside the house criticized her for doing it. But Jesus defended her and made an amazing statement: "Wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done shall be spoken of for a memorial to her." This one act of worship had worldwide effects!

Whatever is done in love for Christ will have power and influence for all eternity. The widow brought to the temple just two mites, worth less than an American penny; yet Jesus said she gave more than all the rich people put together, and her act of worship has been a blessing to people around the world for many centuries. No sincere act of worship or service is overlooked by God. Men may despise small things, but God encourages them; it is in the small things that a person's faithfulness is really seen. Many people would have no problem participating in a big event in public; but how many are willing to serve God and worship Him in the little place where nobody is watching?

The Christian who can't be trusted with the small things can never be trusted with the big things! Jesus tells us that if we are faithful in that which is least we will also be faithful in that which is greatest. To Him, the least is the greatest because it leads to the greatest. All of which means that you and I had better examine our values and our priorities lest we be found despising the day of small things.

When God asks, "Who has despised the day of small things?" He is not suggesting that things stay small all. The church began with 120 faithful praying people in the upper room, and within a few weeks numbered over five thousand people. Had the believers despised their small group, they would never have become a large church. A man asked me one day, "How big do you think a church ought to be?" I replied, "As big as it deserved to be." God wants His church to grow; He certainly wants to see people saved from sin. John 15, Jesus talks about 'fruit . . . more fruit . . . much fruit' He said, 'Here in is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.'

Faithfulness in the small things will lead to blessing in the big things. David proved himself faithful in taking care of his father's sheep, so God gave him a whole nation to shepherd. David trusted God in private as he killed the lion and the bear, so God let him kill the giant in public. Timothy was faithful as Paul's helper, and one day he became Paul's successor. If we are faithful in the small things, God will trust us with the bigger things if this is His will.

But there is a warning here: not everything that is big is necessarily of God. It is possible for us to manufacture success in our own way and discover that God is not in the

earthquake or the wind. The tower of Babel was a great success until God sent His judgment and the whole thing fell apart. Perhaps some of us are building modern towers of Babel and the judgment is around the corner.

Since God uses the small things, never be influenced by the evaluations of men. It's amazing to see how the most successful men and women were ridiculed and rejected when they first started their work. William Carey was opposed by preachers when he tried to get a missionary agency started. Hudson Taylor was laughed at when he dared to go alone to China without the guarantee of support from home. When D. L. Moody started his little meetings in England, nobody dreamed they would turn into a tremendous force for God that moved two continents, and eventually touched the whole world. Men have a way of despising what is small, so be careful not to follow the ideas of men. Get your values from God.

Not all works are going to be big in the eyes of men and be known around the world. But that's not the important thing. The important thing is that we do our work well so that it will be big in the eyes of God. As those feeble Jews tried to rebuild their temple, their work looked pitifully small; but it was God's work just the same. And that temple would one day see the very Son of God standing in its courts, healing the sick, forgiving sinners, and teaching the multitudes. Never despise the day of small things. It is in the small things that God can work and bless; and the small things prepare for the bigger things.

No work is small if it is God's work. No gift is small if it is given in faith and love. No act of service is small if it is done to the glory of Christ. Don't go around comparing yourself with others. Let God do the measuring and the weighing He measures for eternity ~ and that is what really counts.