

THINGS WE DON'T HAVE TO HAVE

Text: Acts 3:6

INTRO: Often we allow ourselves to be hindered from accomplishing what we could & should accomplish because we are too aware of what we do not have. Simon Peter, in our text, did not have what the lame man sought, but he had for him what all the silver & gold in the world could not have bought. Silver & gold, he did not have. But what he did have, he used & God was served and glorified.

I. WE DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE ELOQUENCE.

A. Now, don't get me wrong. Eloquence is a great gift, & if we have it, we certainly should use it in God's service as Apollos did. He was eloquent, & he greatly helped. Acts 18:24, 27.

B. But when God called Moses, he tried to opt out, because he was not eloquent, EX 4:10.

C. Even the apostle Paul was not an excellent speaker, 1 Cor. 2:1. By the standards of the Greek philosophers, he seemed ignorant or untrained, 2 Cor. 11:6. But a more effective teacher of truth, the world has never known!

D. Now, again. Eloquence is a great gift. If you have it, use it to the glory of God. But don't forget what God said to Moses: "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? or, I the Lord? Now therefore, go, & I will be with your mouth & teach you what you shall say." (EX 4:11-12).

II. WE DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE AN EXTENSIVE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.

A. You don't need a PhD, a master's degree or even a bachelor's degree -- even, necessarily a high school education. Peter & John (& probably most of the other apostles as well) were basically uneducated & untrained so far as this world's educational systems were concerned, Acts 4:13.

B. You don't have to know Hebrew. You don't have to know

Greek. You don't have to know philosophy or physics or higher mathematics.

- C. Now, I'm not bad-mouthing a good secular education. And, of course, you cannot teach what you don't know -- so you'll have to have some knowledge of Scripture. But if you know something someone else hasn't learned yet, you just might be able to teach it to him. Both Paul & Moses were well educated. But Peter, Andrew, James, John & thousands of other successful servants of God were not so highly educated. If you have a good education, use it in the service of God. If your training and experience is in other fields, use that. Use what you have to do what you can.

III. WE DO NOT HAVE TO HAVE GREAT WEALTH.

A. Obviously, wealth involves power & influence. If you have been blessed with riches, or with the ability to make great sums of money, you should use that ability in the service of God. But the vast majority of God's faithful servants down through the ages have been men & women of modest incomes. A cup of cold water doesn't cost much. A kind word costs even less. The widow, MK 12:42. The Macedonians, 2 Cor 8:3

B. In fact, from what I have observed from history & from experience, wealth seems to hinder far more people than it helps when it comes to serving God.

IV. WE DO NOT EVEN HAVE TO HAVE GOOD HEALTH.

A. Obviously, good health is a marvelous blessing -- one that most healthy people take for granted.

B. But if I don't miss my guess, most of us have known a few faithful Christians who were physically weak or ailing, but spiritually stronger than most -- who from their sick-bed used their telephones to encourage their fellow Christians. Who sent get-well cards & birthday cards, Bible correspondence courses, etc., to those who were physically blessed much more than they were themselves. Everitt Wood. Russell Richardson. Joe

Manganello & Percy Wilson.

CONCLUSION: What has God put in your hand? Use it in His service! The ability to read & write. Enough food to feed your family, and maybe have some to share with others from time to time? Enough money to keep body & soul together -- & maybe a little more? The ability to get from place to place? The ability to work or play?

David Thurman tells the story of a preacher who was challenging a congregation to give more abundantly. He asked, "How many of you, if you had \$1 million, would be willing to give half of it to the Lord?" Several raised their hands. "How many would give half if you had \$100,000?" Again several raised their hands. Finally, he asked, "How many would give half if you had \$20?" This time no one raised a hand. The preacher asked an elderly man who had raised his hand the other two times, why he suddenly became so stingy. He answered, "Because I HAVE \$20."

It is easy to talk about how generous you would be with what you do not have. But will you resolve to do what you can with what God has put in your hand? Matt. 25:34-36.

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