

Use What You Have

Sermon #0920
1961

Study by W. D. Frazee—June 16,

"And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand?
And he said, A rod" Exodus 4:2.

"And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith
thou shalt do signs" Exodus 4:17.

Moses had been chosen for a special work. He was to deliver Israel. He was born for that work. By a series of miracles and providence he was brought to the point where, at the age of eighty, he received his special call and commission. He was to lead a nation from bondage to Canaan.

But Moses began to make excuses. He began to tell the Lord that he wasn't able to do it. He didn't have what was necessary. He was ready forty years before, but God wasn't. Now God's assignment came, and Moses was hesitant.

This was to be commended up to a point. Moses was humble and meek, but there comes a point when that sort of thing is displeasing to God. When God has given us a work to do, and assures us He will be with us, He wants us to have confidence and courage.

To encourage Moses as he argues and produces excuses and alibis, God said, Moses, what is that in your hand?

Moses said, A rod.

Some translations say a stick. That is what it was. Just a shepherd's stick.

I don't know what went through Moses' mind. It may be that the thought came to him that when the Lord saw that was all he had, the Lord would know he couldn't do much. He had just a stick.

The Lord said, Take it, and with it thou shalt do signs.

Did he? Yes. He held that rod over the Nile and it was turned to blood. It was that stick that was used again and again as the plagues came upon Egypt.

When Israel came to the Red Sea, and the arm of the ocean stretched before them an impassible barrier God said, Take that stick. Hold it out over the sea, and I will make a way through it.

Later, when they came into the desert where there was no water and the congregation was crying from thirst, God had Moses take that stick and smite the rock. Waters gushed out.

The most unpromising material worked when it was being used by God. What is that in thine hand? Take it, and with it you shall do marvels, great signs, and wonders.

This fits in with the wonderful promise in Philippians:

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:19.

Then do we have what we need? If we are walking in the line of God's providence we have it. Oh, for eyes to recognize it. But it takes eyes of faith to see in the shepherd's stick the agency for delivering two million people. It takes eyes of faith to see in five little barley loaves and two fishes that which will supply the needs of five thousand men.

You remember that wonderful experience told in John the sixth chapter and Matthew the fourteenth chapter. Jesus is seeking to teach His disciples certain lessons so that after He is gone back to His Father they will be able to carry on His work in His way. He knew He was sending them out into a difficult world, a hostile world, and He was sending them without very much visible resources. So He took pains to teach them that He intended to use the scanty resources that they might have with them at any time.

On this occasion Jesus lifted up His eyes and saw a great company coming. He said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? Where are we going to get what it takes to take care of these people?"

"And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do" John 6:6.

Jesus was trying to get Philip and his brethren to think through the problem. How glad He would have been if Philip would have said, Dear Lord, I know You have some way, and doubtless there is something here that will take care of it.

It is a wonderful thing in a work of this kind to have people who think it can be done. Every now and then some of you have an opportunity to prove that. The telephone rings and someone is coming. The telephone rings again and more people are coming. Do you suppose we can find a place for them?

There are some people who have schooled themselves in that sort of thing so that they know at once the answer is yes. They are not sure how it is to be done, but they know the answer is yes.

There are others whose minds run so that they say, I don't know where we will put anybody. It looks like we have about all we can handle.

I suppose we need a certain amount of cautious people. It keeps us from going off the deep end. There is a place for every gift.

Philip and his brethren were apparently on the cautious side. He answered:

"Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" John 6:7.

Matthew suggested that they should send the multitude away and go into the village and buy themselves food.

It is a wonderful thing in our evangelistic work to have the spirit that God has supplied and will supply what it takes to meet the needs. The reasons are there.

Philip and his brethren were not guilty of exaggeration when they spoke of the difficulty. They said even two hundred pennyworth of bread wouldn't be enough. They were telling the truth. Certainly it was not because they were not generous. They were just facing facts, as we say. But Jesus was bringing them into this situation on purpose to test and develop their faith.

I have settled many times in my heart that whenever this work gets to the place where we don't have opportunities of that kind, I just assume the Lord will put me in a more difficult situation. I want the privilege of seeing God work miracles. God doesn't work miracles when we can see all the resources in hand that it takes to deal with the problem.

Why should He? He doesn't work miracles for our entertainment. No. But when hearts of faith take hold of a need with one hand and the available resources on the other, and bring them together, God works miracles. He will do that for you personally.

Some of you students are grappling with problems. It may be money problems. It may be health problems. It may be the problem of how to live for twenty-four hours a day. But whatever the problem, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He has never asked us to do anything He had not already done.

The disciples looked around and finally found a little boy with five little loaves and two small fish. They said with an atmosphere of hopelessness and thinking that surely Christ would be convinced that the idea was useless, "What are these among so many?" That's all we have.

What would you have done if you had been there? I suppose that unless God can do for us what He was demonstrating through Jesus, we would say like the disciples, That shows there is no use for us to undertake it. But think what would have been missed with that sort of conclusion.

Jesus knew what He would do. He knew what He would do because He knew what His Father would do. So He said, Bring them to Me. And He gave thanks.

What an interesting thing to give thanks for. If you had to feed five thousand people, would you be giving thanks for five loaves?

Jesus did. Then He started breaking off the bread and said, Here Peter, take this to those fifty people yonder. Here John, take this to those hundred over there And so on until all were fed, and Jesus and his disciples sat down to eat what was left. And they had more than there was to start with.

You say that is a wonderful story. It is. And when Jesus left He said to His disciples:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father" John 14:12.

God is looking for hearts of faith. We are going into a series of crisis. The great purpose God has in bringing us into a work of this kind is to help us develop faith that sees in what God supplies the means to do the work that God wants done. Faith that says, If this is what God supplied, this is what I need to meet the need of those around me. I will use what God supplies and not waste my time in idol lamentations thinking about all the things I could do if I had something.

Not long ago I was down in southern Mexico where dear Brother Comstock and the brothers with him had been carving out of the jungle a mission for God. As you look at that place you see a road winding down the mountainside into the mission. If you didn't know you would wonder how Brother Comstock ever got a bulldozer there to make that road. He would smile and point you to the men working there on the mission and say, There is the bulldozer. It was all done by hand.

Oh, that's too slow.

Well, while some people would be waiting or a bulldozer, the road is done.

The wise man said:

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might"
Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Now don't misunderstand me. There are times to use a bulldozer. If it is available it may be one of the means that God has supplied. My point is that if something needs to be done, what a shame to wait for a bulldozer. After all, God has been accomplishing things, and men have been doing things for thousands of years, without bulldozers.

One of the purposes of the enemy in this mechanized day and day of high finance and great prosperity is to get us to the point where we won't undertake very much unless a vast amount of paraphernalia is supplied. Budget, machinery, all sorts of things. But the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits.

To know God is to know that He often accomplishes the greatest work with the smallest resources.

Think of David. He started out to meet the giant. He was offered the resources of the king, but he recognized he wasn't familiar with those heavy weapons and armor. Laying it aside he relied on God and the little stones and sling. Did it work? Providence worked with it.

If the giant hadn't gotten hot under his helmet and moved it back it wouldn't have worked so well. The point is that God had it all arranged. At the moment the giant pushed his helmet back David was ready. The stone went whizzing through the air and found its mark. Then David used the giant's own sword to cut off its head.

Oh, how apt we need to become in reading the providence of God; ready to venture forth on the word of Christ, assured that when we get to the place where a need is God will have it there in one way or another. Our Lord has a thousand ways to provide for us of which we know nothing.

A number of years ago I was visiting a city where I had labored in evangelistic work. I chanced to meet a woman who had heard something of the preaching of the Word.

I asked her if she was keeping the Sabbath. She said she wasn't able to do that. She had someone she had to support.

Knowing she knew the truth well, I reminded her of the promises of God. I told her how God had led Israel through the Red Sea and rained bread from heaven to feed them in the desert.

She said, "Yes, Brother Frazee, but God would never do anything like that for me."

Right away the answer came into my mind, and I said, "Sister, that is the truth. The Lord wouldn't do anything like that for you. Do you know why? You wouldn't let Him. You wouldn't ever get to that point."

Then I explained to her just what I am explaining to you. The place where God works a miracle is when we get to the limit of our resources and use what we have to obey what God said. That is the way God works. And unless He can find hearts of faith to lay hold of His promises and use what He provided, then we cannot see these miracles the Bible tells about.

Bring to God your gift. He will add His blessing to it. The two of you will do it—God and you.

Samson was raised up to deliver Israel. One day he got into a situation where he was surrounded with the enemy, and it looked like he was finished. But the Spirit of God came upon him, and he looked around for a weapon. All he could find was the jawbone of an ass (Judges 15:15,16).

I suppose some people would have said, Oh, if I could just get hold of a sword. Today they would want an atomic weapon of some kind to show what they could do. But moved by the Spirit, Samson took that bone and started to work on the enemy. The Bible says he slew a thousand men. That is more than some people have done all their lives with a good sword.

Would you see in a jawbone a weapon that would slay a thousand? My point is, God often uses unlikely methods, means that you might not recognize.

Think of that remedy God prescribed through the spirit of prophecy for Isaiah who was on his deathbed. The prophet said a lump of figs (2 Kings 20:7). Did he get well? Yes.

It is interesting to me to notice that was in a country where figs grow. The remedy was at hand.

Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay. He told him to go wash in the pool. It was within walking distance. He didn't have to go half-way around the world to find it. Jesus was using means that were available, means that were within reach.

Do you have what you need? Yes. My God shall supply all your needs. Has He done it? If He has kept His word, you are in the line of His providence. God has had the airplane, as it were, dump the material you need, and there it is waiting for you. But be sure your eyes are open to recognize it.

Doctor Paulson tells of an experience in the early days at Hinsdale when they were living by faith. They were starting a medical missionary work for God. He practiced the plan, and taught his followers, to pray for whatever they needed. When they needed patients they prayed for patients. This time they needed a stenographer. So they prayed for one.

One morning a man came in. He looked like a bum. He told Doctor Paulson he was looking for work. He had been directed there. Doctor Paulson asked the man what work he did. The man said he was a stenographer.

At first Doctor Paulson hardly knew what to think. But then he thought he had better tell the man what he had been praying for.

He told the man, "I have been praying for a stenographer."

The man answered, "I have been praying for a job."

Doctor Paulson said, "Maybe we ought to get down and thank the Lord that He has answered both our prayers."

That man was a good stenographer too.

Can you recognize the providence of God?

That man had some problems. He wasn't an angel. And when you pray for people to help you, you may get some people with problems, and who make problems for you. But that doesn't mean God hasn't supplied them. I want you to see something interesting:

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word" John 17:6.

Jesus, do you think Your Father gave you Peter. Isn't he all the time making trouble for you? Didn't you just tell him a few hours ago that he was going to deny You with cursing and swearing? Yet you are kneeling down here and saying that the Father gave that man to you? Do you really believe that?

Yes.

Philip was slow of heart.

Thomas was so full of doubt that on the resurrection day he couldn't believe that the Lord had risen, and kept his gloomy doubts for a whole week.

Were they the ones God gave to Jesus?

Oh brother, sister, if God ever gives you a work to do He will give you some people to help you, if you ask Him. But remember, some of them, probably most of them, perhaps all of them will be full of problems. And the Devil will tempt you to doubt that you can do much with that kind of people. He will tempt you to dream what you could do if you could just get some help that amounted to something.

Remember the prayer of Jesus, "The men which Thou gavest Me." My God shall supply what? All you needs. And if what you need is a stenographer, and he comes dressed up in a hobo's outfit, remember that God has heard your prayer.

And along with that man needing a job, you need the discipline of trying to help him. That is part of your need. Had you thought of that?

What you were wanting was to get the work done. God wants to get you done, so He gives you a helper who tries your patience, tests your faith, and stretches your adaptability. Don't shrink from it. Don't draw back from the process. Say, Father, I thank Thee for the men that Thou has given me.

There is another verse in the Bible I like:

"Behold I and the children which God hath given me"
Hebrews 2:13.

Parents, has God given you some children? Did you ever think what you would do if you had children who were not so full of faults as yours are? What would you do with the ones you have?

You may have children who were not born to you. Jesus had a lot of children. Besides the children born to her, Sister White had a great many. She talks about people taking the poor and needy and fatherless and motherless children into their homes. But she said that there are some people who are afraid to do that.

"You may have thought that if you could find a child without fault, you would take it, and care for it; but to perplex your mind with an erring child, to unlearn to many things and teach it anew, to teach it self-control, is a work which you refuse to undertake. To teach the ignorant, to pity and to reform those who have ever been learning evil, is no slight task; but heaven has placed just such ones in your way. They are blessings in disguise"
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, page 27.

It takes faith to see through it. It takes heavenly radar. Will you accept the means God has supplied, or will you waste your time in idle lamentation?

If we could only realize the potential that is wrapped up here. It is tremendous. And from a material standpoint, we have far more resources than we are using up. And God is ready to multiply those if we will begin to exhaust them. They will be like the widow's meal. They won't run out. They will be like the cruse of oil. There will always be some left.

What is that in thine hand? What have you got? Start to use it whatever it is. If it isn't enough, tell God you will start to use it anyway, and watch Him stretch it. Your talents will grow as you use them.

I heard Elder W. D. White, Sister White's son, say that someone asked Sister White if the bread multiplied in Jesus' hands or the disciple's hands. She said, "Both."

As Jesus broke it, it multiplied. But as Peter took his basket and went down the row. There were more people than his basket could feed, but it did. Jesus wanted Peter to see the bread multiply in Peter's hands as well as in His hands.

Oh, if we will start using what we have, God will bless it.

This summer ought to be one of the greatest soul winning experiences that we have ever seen. It can be if we will be willing to use to the limit all the resources we have—our time, our money, our ability. But if they will listen to the Devil, too many will say, Oh, well, I can't talk as well as brother so and so, so I will let him talk. I can't sing as well as sister so and so, so I will let her sing. I can't give Bible studies as well as sister so and so. She ought to give the Bible studies. She would be just the one to go to these people. I am afraid I would just bungle it all up. I don't think I can even go to the door and invite people to the meetings. My tongue might

stumble, and I would give a wrong impression. I will just hope it will work out all right. And it will probably be done better if I don't have anything to do with it.

What is that in thine hand? What is that in your mouth? Oh, let us say, Dear Lord, I am sorry that the offering is no better, but here are my two hands. I will use them for You. Here are my two feet. I will use them for You. Here is my tongue. I will use it for You. I will do my best, and not stand waiting for someone that can do it better. They are doing it better with someone else. Let them go at it. Let me get some. There is some for me. There is a work for me to do.

Bring to God your gift, my brother. He will not need to ask another. You will do it. He will add His blessing to it, and the two of you will do it, God and you.

When we have evangelistic meetings there will be times when after the meeting you will have the opportunity to speak a word to someone. The One who knows tells me that there are times when a few words spoken in private after a meeting will do more good for a soul than the whole sermon did. Will you say that word? Will you be there on duty, watching for souls as they that must give an account?

What is that in thine hand? Will you use it? What is that in thy mouth? Will you use it? There will be opportunities at times to stand and tell in your own simple way what God has done for you. Friends, when that time comes ask God, Is there something You want me to say?

And don't listen to the Devil. He will be there. Don't worry. He will say to you, You had better not say anything. You will just spoil it.

In your own way and in God's way use what He has given you. And your word will help someone that other people's word won't touch. Tell it in you own way. If it is bungling and halting, God will use it to help some other bungling and halting brother that polished words would only discourage.

What is that in thine hand? Oh, I am so glad that Moses was finally persuaded to take his stick and start going, aren't you? Think what happened. Will you take your stick and start going?

We have that expression, "He is only a poor stick." Maybe that is what you are. But if you will put yourself in God's hands as that stick was in Moses' and God's hand, with it thou shalt do signs.

I have mentioned that one of the Devil's favorite tricks to side-track a train that God wants to get going is that he puts it on lamentation. Oh, I just wish things were different. I wish I had different helpers. I wish this. I wish that.

One of the side-tracks is the matter of marriage. People wish they were married to someone else. That is a devilish side-track. I want to read one of the strongest statements I ever read. I don't see how it could be any stronger.

"Her marriage was a deception of the devil. Yet now she should make the best of it" *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, page 100.

I am not bringing this in to suggest that your marriage is a deception of the Devil. We are told not to harbor the thought. The time to have any doubts is beforehand. But even if it is a deception of the Devil, what is the thing to do? Make the best of it. I am reading this not merely for marriage, but for every situation in life.

Joseph found himself a slave in Potifer's house. What did he do? He made the best of it. What did he get for his pain? He got thrown into prison. What did he do there? He made the best of it. He took that very situation and used it as a tool to work with. The time finally came when he was put upon the throne of Egypt. He made the best of that too.

What is the situation you are in?

Even in the Philippians' dungeon with their feet in the stocks and their backs raw and bleeding, Paul and Silas made the best of it. They sang funeral hymns? No. They sang praises to God.

Praise to God at midnight in the dark dungeon with your feet in the stocks? Can you do that, brother? Ah, God is training us with little difficulties and little disappointments.

The point is that God used those songs of praise, and heaven answered. An earthquake shook the jail and they had a baptism. God used the very situation because He had some men who could see His providence in the circumstances.

Sometimes I get a clear picture of what can be done in this world if you and I will accept what God provides in our homes, our departments, and in every situation without one complaining word. without stopping to think, Oh, what I could do if I just had this and that and this person and that machinery.

No. Instead of any of that say, Lord, I thank Thee for what You are going to help me to do with what I have, the people I have, the problems I have, the means I have, the talents I have, the training I have. Right now I thank Thee for what You are going to help me to do today.

The potential is tremendous. What shall we do? Let's do what Moses finally consented to do. Let's give God our poor stick and get going. What do you say?

I am glad Moses never turned back from that decision that day. And something can happen to our human hearts that will set us going toward Zion, and we need never stop. No more complaining. No more murmuring. No more stopping to confer with flesh and blood, and lament about all we don't have, and what we could do if we had this and that.

No. Take your sticks and work signs and miracles for God. Be willing to follow the desert trails. Put up with the heat or cold. Whatever the situation, seize upon the circumstances as instruments to work. Put what you have into the work.

"It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you. We need to have far less confidence in what man can do and far more confidence in what God can do for every believing soul. He longs to have you reach after Him by faith. He longs to have you expect great things from Him. He longs to give you understanding in temporal as well as in spiritual matters. He can sharpen the intellect. He can give tact and skill. Put your talents into the work, ask God for wisdom, and it will be given you." *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 146.

Copyright 2019. All rights reserved.

W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org