

What is that in Your Hand?

By Bill Scheidler

Introduction -- God's Questions

This message is aimed at four types of individuals.

1. Those who have compared themselves with others and belittled their own gifts and abilities thinking they had little to offer.
2. Those who have felt God's call in their life but because of fear have made excuses and run away from it.
3. Those who have tried to respond to God's call and ended up experiencing failure.
4. Those who have given up because of past failure and have felt that God cannot use them in their present condition.

This message will focus on God's questions.

God has many questions that He asks man to challenge and motivate him in his walk toward God's purpose beginning with the question, "Where are you Adam?" God has used questions to provoke us to be what He has planned for us to be.

Today are going to allow God to challenge us as He did three individual in the Bible with some variation of the question, "What is that in your hand?"

You see, God has given each one of us something that we can use for Him. All too often we either fail to recognize it or we belittle the thing that God has given to us. As we look at these examples, I pray that God will enlarge our vision concerning what we can be and increase our faith concerning what we can do for Him.

What was in the hand of Moses?

Moses' Beginning

Moses was a man whom God had His hand on from a very young age. It was not difficult to see that God was interested in this man (miracle preservation, similar to each of us).

As Moses grew up he began to feel that there was something that he could offer God—the wisdom and knowledge of Egypt.

Through negative circumstances and apparent failures we find him in Chapter 3-4 of Exodus having lost his original vision.

So when God approaches him at the age of 80 he had all of the excuses as to why he could not be what God had called him to be.

Moses' Six Excuses

When God came to Moses, Moses gave some reasons why he could not do what God wanted him to do. These are very much like the excuses that we use to explain “Why I cannot do what God has called me to do.”

1. First Excuse (Ex. 3:10-11). “Who am I that I should go?”

“Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”

Moses had no sense of value. He felt useless like he had nothing to contribute. God often sees things in us that we do not see in ourselves (Gideon).

2. Second Excuse (Ex. 4:1). “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice?”

Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’”

Moses had already made up his mind—he is going to fail. God could have just as easily asked him, “Well, just suppose that they do?” Moses had only experienced one failure in his life but Satan had used it to beat him down for forty years.

3. Third Excuse (Ex. 4:10). “O my Lord, I am not eloquent.”

Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

In other words, my natural training and abilities are not sufficient to the task. If I am going to deliver God’s people I will need eloquence. We act as if God was going to accomplish everything in the natural realm (Zech. 4:6). Moses had taken inventory, measured it against the task and said, “I don’t have what it takes.”

Jeremiah said, “I cannot speak, I am but a youth” (Jer. 1:6).

We know the rest of the story. It is hard for us to believe that Moses could ever have felt this way.

4. Fourth Excuse (Ex. 4:13). “Lord, you made the wrong choice.”

But he said, “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.”

Moses perceived that there were so many others who are more qualified than he was. That is how Moses felt, but the reality was that no one was better qualified or prepared to do what Moses was to do. Don’t look for others to do what God has called you to, you do it.

5. Fifth Excuse (Ex. 5:22-23). No result, “Why have you sent me?”

So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."

I thought it was going to be easier than this. Shouldn't I have more fruit if this is my ministry? If I am a deliverer, shouldn't someone get delivered? Be patient, even as the husbandman.

6. Sixth Excuse (Ex. 6:12; 6:30). "Others won't listen to me or receive my ministry."

And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?" Exodus 6:12

It is funny how all of these excuses (as good as they are) do not seem to get through to God. After all of our excuses God constantly reminds is that who He calls He also equips.

It's as if God is saying to Moses, "There is no plan 'B' Moses!"

Now let us look at the question posed to Moses by God (Ex. 4:2).

God's Question for Moses

Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'" So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." Exodus 4:1-2

What is that in your hand? Nothing much, Lord. Just a stick I picked up a long time ago. And certainly nothing when you compare it to all of the weapons and armaments of the Egyptians.

Is this "stick" suppose to be the answer to my question?

This was man's evaluation. What is in my hand? "Nothing much."

We know the story. We could easily exhort Moses and say, "It might be just a stick to you, but you give that stick to God and you see what God can do through just a stick."

- God can cause miracles to happen through just a stick (Ex. 4:3-4).
- God can divide waters and bring people out of bondage with just a stick (Ex. 17:5).
- God can bring water (that which brings and sustains life) out of a rock with just a stick (Ex. 17:5-6).
- God can defeat Amalek with just a stick when it is held up before Him (Ex. 17:9).

Just a stick!

Moses' Rod (Ex. 4:20)

Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

The stick of Moses became the “rod of God.” It was all that Moses needed.

You see, “Little is much when God is in it.”

God asks you, “What is that in your hand?”

What was in the house of a certain widow (II Kings 4:1-7)?

A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves.” 2 So Elisha said to her, “What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?” And she said, “Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil.” 3 Then he said, “Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors--empty vessels; do not gather just a few. 4 And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones.” 5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured it out. 6 Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, “Bring me another vessel.” And he said to her, “There is not another vessel.” So the oil ceased. 7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you and your sons live on the rest.”

This woman was in a hopeless and helpless condition. She had no husband, she was in terrible debt, she had nothing to look forward to and she had given up (the jar of oil not for eating but for burial).

Can God use someone in this condition?

The man of God speaking the word of God asked, “What do you have in the house?” Sometimes the answer is right there in the house.

Her first words, “Nothing!” That is, “Nothing, but...” Again, this is man’s evaluation.

I have nothing but a little bit of oil. Question, “What is oil symbolic of?” The Holy Spirit! We all have that.

The woman didn’t have an inheritance, financial resources, a husband, **only a little oil.**

“But little is much when it is poured out before the Lord!”

What she had was more than enough. She had not been counting God into the picture. Poverty is no obstacle in the presence of Almighty grace and fullness.

It is those who think that they have need of nothing that shut out the grace of God in their lives (Rev. 3:20).

This woman's deliverance came when she did three things:

1. She was willing to step out in faith at the word of the prophet and gather the vessels.

It took faith to answer her neighbors who asked, "What do you want it for?"

2. She shut the door and spread her open, empty vessels before the Lord with a sense of desire and expectancy—faith.
3. She was willing to pour out what she had into the emptiness of that which belonged to another—filling the void and need in the lives of others.

Do you have anything to give? What is that in your hand?

What was in the hand of a small boy (Mark 6:35-44)?

When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. 36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat." 37 But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?" 38 But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. 41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. 42 So they all ate and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. 44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

John's Gospel says, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

Matthew's Gospel says, "a few, little fish." Minnows! Guppies! We have got 5000 hungry people and a few guppies.

Man's evaluation.

Wait disciples! There's something that you are not taking into account. Put those things into Christ's hands...Let Him bless those small things...Let Him break them and distribute them to the masses. It will be enough! It will meet the need.

You see, little is much when Jesus blesses it, breaks it and feeds it to the multitudes.

How many loaves do you have? Jesus asks, "What is that in your hand?"

What do you have?

What do you have? Jesus will never ask for more than what we have. But if His miracle working power is going to be seen in us, we must be willing to give Him what we have.

Someone has put it like this:

Shamgar had an oxgoad,
David had a sling,
Samson had a jawbone,
Rahab had a string,
Mary had some ointment,
Moses had a rod,
Dorcas had a needle,
All were used of God.

Every good thing that is in your hand may become a conquering weapon for the Lord (repeat).

But in order for this to happen we must do four things:

- 1. Quit making excuses for ourselves and belittling what we have.**
- 2. Lay our gifts at His feet and let Him bless our efforts.**
- 3. Expect God to anoint us as we walk in obedience.**
- 4. Step out in faith and begin pouring out our lives into others.**

As we do we will see the miracle working power of God take over and begin operating in our lives.

Close: Pray for the following groups

1. Those who have compared themselves with others and belittled their own gifts and abilities thinking they had little to offer.
2. Those who have felt God's call in their life but because of fear have made excuses and run away from it.
3. Those who have tried to respond to God's call and ended up experiencing failure.
4. Those who have given up because of past failure and have felt that God cannot use them in their present condition.