

SUBJECT: THE DISTINCTION OF GOD'S NOBODIES

SCRIPTURE: I CORINTHIAN 1:26-31

INTRODUCTION

Do you think of yourself as a nobody?

We live in a "celebrity Christian culture". We are hearing more and more testimonies of celebrities who have become Christians. God has allowed me to personally hear the testimony of country music legend Hank Locklin; we hear the testimonies of politicians like Alabama's Judge Roy Moore; and professional athletes like Kurt Warner of the Saint Louis Rams giving his Christian testimony on a Billy Graham crusade. We are hearing their testimonies on radio programs, through songs, in books, and on television programs. I thank God for that! *However...*

I am somewhat concerned that these testimonies may be giving the wrong message to the youth of our day. That message is this, "Unless I become popular as a recording artist, or outstanding in some professional job or some athletic contest, God won't use me. *Nothing could be further from the truth.*

- You may never be elected to office,
- You might not win any awards in your lifetime,
- You might not break any records,
- You might not play on a championship team,

But none of those things will keep God from using you in a powerful way to advance His Kingdom. In this passage of Scripture we are given the description of the kind of people God normally uses.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

In these few verses the apostle Paul teaches us that the power of God is wrapped up in human weakness.

For over forty years as a pastor I have found that there is nothing God's people want more in their lives than God's power. Christians pray for more of God's power in their personal lives; more of His power in their family life, more of His power in their churches, and more of His power in the ministries they do.

Jesus says something very interesting in...Matt. 28:18-20

18 **And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

19 **Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.**

Herein lies the truth ...

All of this power that we all are seeking, has been given to Jesus and Jesus promises that He is always with us.

So here's the truth..., the power that we seek has already been given to us, because we belong to Jesus. We have already been given power to accomplish whatever task God has given us. Not one of us needs more power than we already have. What we need is to unleash that power which already resides in us.

To better understand this truth we shall observe two facts:

1. The Chosen Few (26).
2. The Majority that God Uses (27-28).

I. THE CHOSEN FEW (1 Corinthians 1:26) For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

The city of Corinth had in it many noble families of high pedigree and scholastic achievement. According to this verse these qualities are unimportant when it comes to serving the Lord. We live in a culture where the local church wants a pastor with a doctor's degree. But friend let me tell you, its not scholarship but relationship that God is interested in; God is not interested in fame but faith. He is not interested in ability but availability. It's not who you are, but whose you are that matters to God.

The apostle does not say that there were none of the wise, the mighty, and noble called. God has for wise reasons, chosen and called persons of different stations in life to

perform special duties for him. The vast majority of the people God uses are from the ranks of just plain ordinary folks.

What is it about just plain folk that God likes to use?

II. THE MAJORITY GOD USES (1 Cor. 1:27-28) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are:

1. God Chose the Foolish. (27) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world... verse 20 gives an explanation of this... Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

The word "foolish" in this verse is the word that we get our English word "moron" from. It literally means, non-intellectual.

Throughout church history the great motivators of the Christian faith had no formal training in theology or church administration, or Christian education. Most had never been to seminary.

Illustration: Billy Sunday was a giant of the faith, and never attended college or seminary. Yet God mightily used him to advance His Kingdom. He was a real character. He wouldn't measure up to any ministerial standards of the churches of our day. He was a YMCA clerk and a mediocre semi-professional baseball player. Yet it is estimated that during his lifetime he was responsible for over 1 million people coming to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

Some people used to say of Billy Sunday, that he was God's joke on the ministry. One writer described the way he preached as being hell hot; heaven sweet; sin black; judgment sure; and Jesus saves; and he preached it every time he got behind a pulpit. And that was all he preached.

One time when Billy Sunday was preaching in a great evangelistic crusade, he gave the invitation, and a stately old man with a long white beard came forward and knelt at the altar to pray to receive Christ. And when Billy Sunday looked down, all he could see was the shoulders of this man with his head bowed, and the white beard that hung from his

chin. In the midst of that most important and solemn occasion, Billy was so overcome by the humor of the way that looked, that he walked from behind the pulpit, reached his hand down to that old man, grabbed his white beard, and went "Honk, honk." Billy Sunday wouldn't fit into any theological or cultural box of our day. He was just plain and unique.

2. The weak things (27) God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty..

Illustration: Gideon was a weak, beat-up, wimpish man. (Judges 6:12; 14-16). He is hiding in the mountains, terrified of the armies of Midian who are devouring the crops of Israel below in the valley. And the angel of the Lord calls him a Mighty Man of valor (12). Mighty man of valor? Gideon was scared to death; he didn't know how to fight. He wasn't a leader. He was the youngest and weakest in his family. He was the most unlikely candidate to be a mighty warrior that there could be. Yet God used him to defeat the entire nation of Midian with just a handful of soldiers.... But, you see, he had the power of God working through him. God chooses the weak.

3. He chooses the lowly things (28) And base things of the world.

Illustration: One thing is often overlooked in the genealogy of Jesus recorded in Matthew chapter one. This person begat that person. It goes through the whole list of Jesus' ancestry.

But when you look closely at that list you see the names of four women listed there. Two of them were prostitutes, one was born on the wrong side of the tracks, and one was an adulteress. Yet God used these women who were considered by the people of their day, as the scum of the earth, in His plan to bring His Redeemer into the world.

No matter what your past or present, God can still use you because God uses the base things of this world.

4. Despised things (28) things which are despised.

The word despised means contemptible.

Illustration: In 1 Samuel 17 we read of King Saul trying to get young David ready to fight the giant Goliath, by putting his armor on David. He put a helmet of brass on his head, and he armed him with a coat of mail, and he put a breastplate of brass on him. It just weighted him down!

David said, "I can't do this. These things don't fit. I can't move. It's just going to get in the way." So he took it off, and went out, with only his little sling shot. And when he stood in front of that huge giant, Goliath, nine feet tall of cold, hard meanness,...the Bible says that Goliath disdained him. He looked at David in a contemptible way. He said, "I'll take your flesh and use it for compost." In the eyes of giant Goliath, David was despised and contemptible.

But you know the story. David, operating under the power of God, dropped a nine foot, 560 pound enemy of God, dead to the ground, and secured a victory for the nation of Israel that day.

God delights in using what the world despises. He uses the contemptible. He uses the despised people to advance His Kingdom.

5. The nothing things (28). things which are not,

The Bible tells us that God created the world out of nothing. So if God is the one who created everything out of nothing, you don't need to have, or own anything, for God to use you and demonstrate His power through you.

Illustration: My father-in-law, Manley Hess, gave me some good advice on one of our trips home from seminary. "In your ministry always remember that God created the world out of nothing and as long as you are nothing He can create something out of you."

When you come to realize that you have nothing that God needs, that's when He can unleash His power through you.

Conclusion

Warning in verse 31 **According as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.** If you ever get to the point where you believe that your strength and effectiveness for ministry resides in who you are or what you have received through formal education, or business experience, or human abilities, you have lost the opportunity for God's power to show itself in your life