

**The Wednesday Word, July 18, 2018: Ministry Through Mercy!
All Failures May Apply.**

2 Corinthians 4:1, "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;"

Alexander the Great was sculpted with his hand resting on his face, as if in contemplation. But the real purpose was to hide an ugly scar on his cheek.

The German emperor, Wilhelm II, was photographed and painted standing in such a position that his withered arm would not appear.

All of us have imperfections and not just physical ones. Some of us feel mentally scarred by our life and failures. Unfortunately, our wounds (self-inflicted and otherwise) incorrectly inform our psyche that God will never use us again.

And this is confirmed by the censorious and disapproving who tell us that the Lord is finished with us? Let me ask, who lied and said God wanted nothing more to do with you? Who told you that you are flawed and thus unusable? Such a prophet of doom needs someone to teach them the Gospel and its applications.

Christ Jesus has always done His work with broken things. But sub-consciously we applaud only the strong, the successful, the slick and the unmarked. God, however, is the God who will not abandon the unsuccessful. He is the God of those who have failed. He is the God of the defective and the damaged.

Take for example:

John Mark was a failure on the mission field.

Jacob was a liar.

David had an affair.

The Lord used them, and He can use you!

Abraham was too old.

David was too young.

Peter was afraid to die.

Lazarus was dead.

Rahab used to run a brothel.

The Lord used them, and He can use you!

Naomi was a widow.

Paul was a murderer.

And so was Moses.

Jonah ran from God.

The Lord used them, and He can use you!

Miriam was a gossip.
Gideon and Thomas both doubted.
Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.
Elijah was fed up.

The Lord used them, and He can use you!

Martha was always worrying.
Timothy had ulcers.
Noah got drunk.
Moses was hot-tempered.

The Lord used them, and He can use you!

We are not an impressive lot, but we have an impressive Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no bruised reed that He cannot bring back. There is no one to whom He cannot convey restoration (Matthew 12:20).

Someone once said, "I was never of any use until I found out that God did not intend me to be a great man." I like that. There's no pressure on us to be great or perfect in every decision we make. The Lord does not base His love for us on our performance.

Now here's the thing, we should never disqualify ourselves because of our flaws. In Nehemiah 4:2, some people couldn't believe that Nehemiah was going to rebuild the city walls with old burnt stones. What they were really saying is, you can't do anything with this rubbish. Could it be that too many people have said that about us? According to them, we're no good, we are failures, we're all messed up. We have been put on the trash heap. But here's some good news, Jesus doesn't go down to 'Perfect Street' to choose His material. He knows what we came from and where we've been. He knows where and how we've failed. He knows our repentance and regret. He wants us to know that our worth is in Him. (Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 10:32, 2Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 4:16.)

When our conscience accuses us of being unworthy, we learn to agree with it and then turn the Gospel Lion loose. We tell our conscience, 'Yes I'm unworthy, but Jesus was worthy in my place.'

He is our worthiness (Revelation 5:12). Mercy is our qualification for ministry (2 Corinthians 4:1). We need nothing more but nothing less!

And that's the Gospel Truth!