A Brokenness That God Desires

1 Corinthians 1:27-29
27 But God hath 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 nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

Point #1: God uses weakness, inability, and brokenness. So that there is no doubt that God is the one that did the work.

Example #1: Millions of Hebrews are slaves in Egypt. When they pray to God for deliverance, God purposes to deliver them.
• But watch how he does it. He doesn’t send an army. He doesn’t march into Egypt as a conqueror. He doesn’t come in with brute force and set the captives free.
• He chooses one man. A flawed man. An imperfect man. A man who doesn’t believe in himself. A man who doesn’t have any confidence in his own abilities.
• From the backside of the desert he calls a man, who was chosen for this purpose from before his birth. A man who is running from God’s call. A man who is hiding from God’s purpose. A man who, if the truth were told, doesn’t even want to be chosen!
• Moses would just as soon be left alone. He would rather be lost in the obscurity of history than to step into the limelight. But God chooses this man to go set his people free from Egypt.
• When God calls to him from a burning bush, his immediate reaction to God’s call is to focus on his own abilities.
• But God, I can’t even talk... God said, that’s perfect. Go tell Pharaoh to let my people go!
• Go used Moses’ weakness to deliver the children of Abraham from Egyptian bondage. And when it was finished there was no doubt that it was God who had done such a mighty work!
• Point #1: God uses weakness, inability, and brokenness. So that there is no doubt that God is the one that did the work.

The Way God Sees
• God looks at things differently than we do.
• When the people chose a king, they chose Saul, who was a kingly king. He was a real man’s man. He stood head and shoulders above the rest, he was stronger, he was mightier, he was more dashing, he was the kind of king that men would choose.
But, when God chose a king he chose a shepherd boy. In time David would prove to be a great leader and a fierce warrior but he would never match Saul in stature! That didn’t matter to God. Because what God was looking for in a king was vastly different than what men were looking for.

When God called Gideon to deliver his people, Gideon gathered an army. God took one look at Gideon’s group of warriors and said, “I can’t use that.” If I let you go fight the battle with that army, you might think that you, somehow, caused the victory. Let me deal with that. Let me take away your ability. Let me set the stage for the kind of victory where I get the credit. Let’s make the odds impossible then let me show you what I can do.

**Point #1: God uses weakness, inability, and brokenness. So that there is no doubt that God is the one that did the work.**

**The Cross**

In a manger in Bethlehem, the king of all kings, the Lord of all lord’s became a baby. The battle lines were drawn. The war of the ages was coming down to one final cataclysmic battle. Hell was prepared to defend its death grip on humanity. The forces of evil were amassed and they were ready for a brutal spiritual battle. They had determined to stand against the Ancient of Days and they thought they were ready for assault by the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But he didn’t come as a lion. He came as a lamb!

He chose weakness over strength. He chose humility over pride. He chose submission over authority. He who holds all power and all authority, he who by his words formed the universe, he who cannot be defeated, chose to come to this world as a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. He robed himself in humanity. He robed himself in vulnerability. He made himself a little lower than the angels!

Hell didn’t understand. The princes of this world never could grasp it. I’ve no doubt that the angels in heaven were awestruck as god became a man.

God uses weakness. God uses inability. God uses brokenness. The things that we see as liabilities, God sees as advantages. Where we see weakness, God sees strength. Where we see inability, God sees the opportunity for his supreme ability to show through. Where we see brokenness, God sees a vessel worthy of honor! To the carnal mind it doesn’t make sense. To the wise, it is foolishness. To the educated, it is folly. To the accomplished it is failure. But to God, it is the evidence of a vessel that he can use!

God deliberately chose the things that are foolish in the world to confound the wise. He intentionally chose the base things, the despised things, the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are.

He came in humility, as sheep before its shearers. They mocked him. They beat him. They cursed him. Yet, he opened not his mouth. He lifted not a finger. While angels waited for his command, yearning and straining to come to his defense, he hung on the cross, a spectacle of weakness and helplessness. But in that moment, out of utter defeat, he won the greatest victory. Out of death, he purchased life. Out of submission he exercised
authority. And, as he breathed his last, as his blood flowed down that cross, he purchased salvation for the entire world. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:4 that he was crucified in weakness. But that weakness became his greatest strength. Death was swallowed by life. Defeat yielded to victory. The vanquished became the victor!

- **Point #1: God uses weakness, inability, and brokenness. So that there is no doubt that God is the one that did the work.**

**God Can Use You**

- Many times, the first thing we do when God calls us to do something for him is to go through our laundry list of reasons why we cannot be used by God.
- We all have them. Our personal failures. The litany of past defeats, of false starts, the list of the many times that we started to do something for God but somehow, along the way, we lost our direction and what began with high hopes ended in dismal failure.
- God didn't call you because you were qualified.

- , when he challenges us to step up to a higher dimension or to embrace a deeper walk with him,

The life of Moses presents a series of opposite extremes.

- He was the child of a slave, and the son of a queen.
- He was born in a hut, and lived in a palace.
- He inherited poverty, and enjoyed unlimited wealth.
- He was the leader of armies, and the keeper of flocks.
- He was the mightiest of warriors, and the meekest of men.
- He was educated in the court, and dwelt in the desert.
- He had the wisdom of Egypt, and the faith of a child.
- He was fitted for the city, and wandered in the wilderness.
- He was backward in speech, and talked with God.
- He had the rod of a shepherd, and wielded the power of the Almighty.
- He was a fugitive from Pharaoh, and an ambassador from heaven.

In *Acts 7:22* we read, “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”

God had an important work for Moses to do and for this he must be prepared. That work was to lead His people out of Egypt, and conduct them unto the promised inheritance. And for this work Moses was not yet equipped. It is true that this one who had become the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter had received a thorough education, for he was “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” Nor was he any longer a youth, but now forty years of age—in the very prime of life. Nor was he only
a student or theorist—he was “mighty in words and deeds” (Acts 7:22). What, then, was lacking? Surely here was one who possessed all the necessary qualifications for leadership. Ah, how different are God’s thoughts from ours! “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15). What we have enumerated above were but natural attainments and acquirements; and the natural man is set aside before God, for no flesh can glory in His presence (1 Cor. 1:29).

The “wisdom of the Egyptians”, profound as men esteem it, was, after all, only “the wisdom of the world”; and that is “foolishness with God.” The colleges of this world cannot equip for the Divine service; for that we must be taught in the school of God. And that is something which the natural man knows nothing about—“And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?”—in their academies (John 7:15). To learn in the school of God, then, Moses must turn his back on the land of the Pharaoh’s. It is so still. The heart must be separated, the spirit divorced from the world, if progress is to be made in spiritual things. “The hand of man can never mould a vessel ‘meet for the Master’s use’. The One who is to use the vessel can alone prepare it.”

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb” (Ex. 3:1). From Egypt to “the backside of the desert”, from the palace to the sheepfold, was a radical change for this man who was yet to fill so important a role. Tending flocks seems a strange preparation for one who was to be the liberator of a nation of slaves. And again we are reminded of how different are God’s thoughts and ways from man’s. And the ways of God are not only different from ours, but they are obnoxious to the flesh: as Genesis 46:31 tells us, “Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians.” Thus God leads His servants to take that very place which is hateful to worldlings.

“The ‘backside of the desert’ is where men and things, the world and self, present circumstances and their influences, are all valued at what they are really worth. There it is. and there alone, that you will find a Divinely-adjusted balance in which to weigh all within and all around. There are no false colors, no borrowed plumes, no empty pretensions. The enemy of your souls cannot gild the sand of that place. All is reality there. The heart that has found itself in the presence of God at ‘the backside of the desert’, has right thoughts about everything. It is raised far above the exciting influences of this world’s schemes. The din and noise, the bustle and confusion of Egypt, do not fall upon the ear in that distant place. The crash in the monetary and commercial world is not heard there; the sigh of ambition is not heard there; this world’s fading laurels do not tempt there; the thirst for gold is not felt there; the eye is never dimmed with lust, nor the heart swollen with pride there; human applause does not elate, nor human censure depress there. In a word, everything is set aside save the stillness and light of the Divine presence. God’s voice alone is heard, His light enjoyed, His thoughts received. This is the place to which all must go to be educated for the ministry; and there all must remain if they would succeed in the ministry” (C.H.M.).
What strikes us as even more strange is that Moses should have to remain forty years in Midian. But God is in no hurry; nor should we be—“He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. 28:16). There is much here which every servant of God needs to ponder, particularly the younger ones. In this day it is the common custom to pitchfork new converts into Christian activities without any serious inquiry as to their fitness for such solemn and momentous duties. If a person is “mighty in words and deeds” that is considered all that is necessary. “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the Devil” (1 Tim. 3:6) might as well not be in the Bible, for all the weight it has with most of our moderns.

In a place of retirement Moses spent the second forty years of his life; a place where every opportunity for communion with God was afforded. Here he was to learn the utter vanity of human resources and the need for entire dependence on God Himself. To be much alone with God is the first requisite for every servant of His. But why is it that no details are recorded of God’s dealings with His servant during this interval? Practically nothing is told us of the experiences through which he passed, the discipline of which he was the subject, the heart exercises he suffered. As in the case of the training of the prophets, John the Baptist, Paul in Arabia, this is passed over in silence. Is it because God’s dealings with one of His servants are not fitted to another? Are there not some things we can learn neither by precept nor example? Certain it is that there is no uniform curriculum in the school of God. Each servant is dealt with according to his individual needs and disciplined with a view to the particular work which God has for him to do.

For many long years had the groans and cries of the distressed Hebrews gone up; but the heavens were silent. Forty years previously, Moses had become impatient at the delay, and thought to take matters into his own hands, only to discover that the time for deliverance was not yet ripe. But “now.” Now the four hundred years of servitude and affliction (Gen. 15:13) had run their ordained course. Now the hour for Divine intervention had struck. Now the time for Jehovah to deal with the haughty oppressor of His people had arrived. Now the children of Israel would be in a condition to appreciate the promised inheritance. The pleasant pastures of Goshen and the carnal attractions of Egypt had, no doubt, quelled all longings for Canaan, but now that their afflictions were fast becoming unbearable, the land flowing with milk and honey would be a pleasing prospect.

And now that the time for deliverance had arrived, what is the method of Divine procedure? A captive people is to be emancipated; a nation of slaves is to be liberated. What, then, is the first move toward this? Had God so chosen He could have sent forth His angels, and in a single night destroyed all the Egyptians. Had He so pleased He could have appeared before the Hebrews in person and brought them out of their house of bondage. But this was not His way. Instead, He appointed a human ministry to effect a Divine salvation. To Moses He said, “I will send thee.... that thou mayest bring forth My people.... out of Egypt.” There is little need to apply this to ourselves. God’s way then, is God’s way now. Human instrumentality is the means He most commonly employs in bringing sinners from bondage to liberty, from death to life.
“Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt” (v. 10). What, then, is the response of our patriarch? Surely he will bow in worship before the great I am at being thus so highly honored. Surely he will ask, in fullest submission, “Lord, what would’st Thou have me to do?” But how did Moses reply? “And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (v. 11).

Moses at eighty was not so eager as at forty. Solitude had sobered him. Keeping sheep had tamed him. He saw difficulties in himself, in the people, and in his task. He had already tried once and failed, and now for long years he had been out of touch with his people. But while all this was true, it was God who now called him to this work, and He makes no mistakes.

The Lord, therefore, graciously encourages him by promising to be with him and assuring him of the ultimate success of his mission. “And He said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain” (v. 12). This was very comforting. God did not ask Moses to go forward alone: an all-mighty One would accompany him. And this is still the Divine promise to each Divinely-called servant. I doubt not that the apostles must have felt much like Moses when the risen Savior commissioned them to go and preach the Gospel to every creature—Who am I that I should go? If so, their hearts were reassured with the same promise Moses received—“Lo I am with you alway.” And fellow-worker, if the Lord has manifestly called you to some task for which you feel utterly insufficient, rest on this precious promise—“Certainly I will be with thee.” This is a word that every one engaged in Christian service needs to take to heart. When we think of what is involved in bringing a soul out of darkness into light; when we encounter the fierce opposition of the devil; when we face the frowns and sneers of the world, little wonder that we hesitate, and ask, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But take courage faint-heart, and remember the unfailing promise, “Certainly I will be with thee.”

nevertheless, God is not limited by our failure at this point, and clearly does this come out in the passage before us. Moses was timid, hesitant, fearful, unbelieving, rebellious, and yet God used him! Nor does he stand by any means alone in this respect. God used the mercenary Balaam to give one of the most remarkable prophecies to be found in the Old Testament. He used a Samson to deliver Israel from the Philistines. He used a Judas in the apostolate. If God were to wait until He found a human instrument that was worthy or fit to be used by Him, He would go on waiting until the end of time. God is sovereign in this, as in everything. The truth is that God uses whom He pleases.

1 Corinthians 1:18-1:29

*****Sermon Outline*****

A Brokenness That God Desires
God’s Tool Box: 3 Things That God Can Use...
1) Foolish Things....
1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;
2) Weak Things....
1Co 1:27...and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things
which are mighty;
3) Base Things, Despised Things, and Non-existent Things....
1Co 1:28...And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God
chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:
Base
BASE, a.
Low in place. Obs.
Mean; vile; worthless; that is, low in value or estimation; used of things.
Of low station; of mean account; without rank, dignity or estimation among men;
used of persons.
Of mean spirit; disingenuous; illiberal; low; without dignity of sentiment; as a base
and abject multitude.
Of little comparative value; applied to metals, and perhaps to all metals, except gold
and silver.
Of illegitimate birth; born out of wedlock.
Why These Things?
1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.
1Co 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:
Is The Cross Foolishness? Not To The Believer.
1Co 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto
us which are saved it is the power of God.

Stained-Glass Saints? If you’ve ever visited the great cathedrals in Europe, you’d
think the apostles were larger-than-life stained-glass saints with shining halos who
represented an exalted degree of spirituality. But actually, they were very, very
common men.
It’s a shame they have so often been put on pedestals as magnificent marble figures,
or portrayed in paintings like some kind of Roman gods. That dehumanizes them.
They were just twelve completely ordinary men--human in every way--and we
shouldn’t lose touch with who they really were.
So what qualified those men to be apostles? The truth is, it wasn’t any intrinsic
ability or outstanding talent of their own. They were Galileans. They were not the
elite. Galileans were considered low-class, rural, uneducated, people. They were
commoners, nobodies. But those nobodies would become the preeminent leaders
of the fledgling church--its very foundation!
Now when it comes to church leadership, there are some rather clear moral and
spiritual qualifications that men must meet. The Bible sets the standard extremely
high (see 1 Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9; Hebrews 13:7).
But you know something? The standard isn't any lower for the rest of the church. Leaders are to be examples for all others who strive to meet the same standard. There is no such thing as an acceptable "lower" standard for rank-and-file church members. In fact, in Matthew 5:48, Jesus said to all believers, "Be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."
That's a tall order! Frankly, no one meets such a standard. Humanly speaking, no one "qualifies" when the standard is utter perfection. What joy there is in knowing that it is God Himself who must save sinners, sanctify them, and then transform the unqualified into instruments He can use.
The twelve were like the rest of us; they were selected from the unworthy and the unqualified. They were, like Elijah, men "with a nature like ours" (James 5:17). They did not rise to the highest usefulness because they were somehow different from us. Rather, their transformation into vessels of honor was a divine work and their incredible influence is a result of the divine message they preached.

**Why God Chooses Us**

Do you ever become discouraged and disheartened when your spiritual life and witness suffer because of personal sin or failure? We tend to think we're worthless nobodies--and left to ourselves, that would be true! But be encouraged--worthless nobodies are just the kind of people God uses. If you think about it, that's all He has to work with!

But have you ever stopped to consider why that's true? Listen to this: God chooses the humble, the lowly, the meek, and the weak so that there's never any question about the source of power when their lives change the world. It's not the man; it's the truth of God and the power of God in the man. Next time you're reading through the gospels or the book of Acts, take a few minutes to consider the work of God in the apostles. They were slow to believe, slow to understand, and had horrendous memories! Sound familiar?

Don't worry--that is perfectly consistent with the way the Lord always works. 1 Corinthians 1:20-21 says, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." That is the very reason there were no philosophers, no brilliant writers, no famous debaters, no distinguished teachers, and no men who had ever distinguished themselves as great orators among the twelve Christ chose. They became great spiritual leaders and great preachers under the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was not because of any innate oratorical skill, leadership abilities, or academic qualifications they had. Their influence is owing to one thing and one thing only: the power of the message they preached.

On a human level, the gospel was considered a foolish message and the apostles were deemed unsophisticated preachers. Their teaching was beneath the elite. They were mere fishermen and working-class nobodies. Peons. Rabble. That was the
assessment of their contemporaries and that has been the majority opinion of the
genuine church of Christ throughout history and to this very day! "For you see your
calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not
many noble, are called" (v. 26).
But think about this: "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame
the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the
things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are
despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the
things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (vv. 27-29). God’s favorite
instruments are nobodies, so that no man can boast before God. In other words, God
chooses whom He chooses so He might receive the glory. He chooses weak
instruments so no one will attribute the power to the instruments but rather to the
God who wields the instruments. Those who pursue their own glory will sadly find
God’s strategy unacceptable--and they’ll miss out on true glory and true joy.
With the notable exception of Judas, the apostles were not like that. They certainly
struggled with pride and arrogance like every fallen human being. But the driving
passion of their lives became the glory of Christ. And it was that passion, subjected
to the influence of the Holy Spirit--not any innate skill or human talent--that
explains why they left such an indelible impact on the world.