

Who God Uses
Aug 16, 2015

Movies have been around so long now that there are many common plots that get repeated over and over. One such plot is "boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy wins girl back." Another common plot involves a group of misfits, usually a little league team, who get a new coach and develop into the champions. Another common plot for action movies involves a big, special problem that calls for a special person to solve it. The person is usually a bit of a rebel who, with courage, skill, and usually a lot of luck, gets the job done.

I believe there is something in this last plot that really appeals to us. Maybe you have daydreamed about being called on to do some great thing that only a few people can do. You imagine making a significant difference in the world. Then you come back to reality and realize that such a thing isn't likely to happen because you are just a normal, average person.

Well God wants you to hear something important this morning. Normal, average people are the kind of people God uses most.

Don't think to yourself, "God can't use me because I'm not special in any way."
You are exactly the kind of person God uses. We see this in the Bible in Luke 1:26-38.

Luke 1:26-38 (NIV) In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."

Then the angel left her.

Who was this young woman God had chosen to give birth to the Messiah? What was so special about her? Well..., nothing. We don't know of anything that made her stand out from the crowd of young woman living at that time in Israel. And that is the point.

God uses ordinary people. Turn to your neighbor and tell them, God uses ordinary people.

Don't think, "God can't use me because of my age." We don't know how old Mary was at this time. We believe she was in her early teens, 13 or 14. She may have been a little older, 15 or 16. This was the typical age range of marriage in those days, especially marriages arranged by parents, which most were. We believe she was of this age.

God can use people of any age. You don't have to be full grown. You don't have to be an adult. God uses adults. God uses senior adults. God also uses teenagers. God even uses children. Everyone here is old enough to make a difference with God in the world. God is not limited by your age.

Don't think, "God can't use me because of my background." Mary was from Nazareth. Nazareth wasn't a special place. Archeologists tell us that Nazareth had only one well at the time of Jesus. This means that the amount of people who could live there was limited. Consequently, Nazareth was a small village. It was a rural, out-of-the-way village. Today we might say that it was out in the boonies. Nothing special ever happened there. No one important ever came from there. Years later a man named Philip met Jesus. Then Philip ran to tell his brother Nathaniel. He said, "We have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth." And Nathaniel (John 1:46) answers, laughingly, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

God can use anyone, from anywhere. God can even use you to make a difference in the world.

Nor should you think, "God can't use me because of my past." God can use you despite your past, even a sinful past. God can use the worst people and make something good out of their lives. God used Paul, though he persecuted Christians. God used David, though he was a lowly shepherd, and, later, an adulterer. God used Moses, who was a murderer. God used Jacob, who was a thief and liar. Whatever you have done in the past, it does not disqualify you from being useful to God.

Do not think, "God can't use me because of my financial situation." We know that Mary and Joseph were poor because of the offering they brought to God when they dedicated Jesus. Instead of a lamb and a dove, they brought two doves. This was the substitute offering that the poor were allowed to give for the birth of a child. Mary and Joseph were too poor to bring a lamb, and yet God used them.

(See Luke 2:22-24; and Leviticus 12:1-8)

As well you should not think, "God can't use me because I don't have a special talent, skill, or ability." That just means you are ordinary. Ordinary people are the kind of people God uses. We are the kind of people God uses. The Bible is full of stories of how God used ordinary people. People like Abram, Isaac, Jacob, Deborah, Hannah, Samuel, Peter, and Barnabas were used by God to make a big difference in the world. These people were no different than most of the people of their day. They weren't better looking, more talented, richer, nicer, better singers, better in sports, more popular than others. They were just ordinary, average people. They were shepherds, farmers, fishermen, housewives, and carpenters. These are the kind of people God uses to build His kingdom.

Likely you do have some interests, a hobby, or a vocation you enjoy. You are interested in computers, or gardening, or sewing, or martial arts, or scouting, or fishing, or music, or sports. **Whatever interests, hobby, or vocation you have, God can use in some way.** God doesn't waste anything of use, and He is more creative in using anything than you can imagine. Why, God used well a man whose best talent was that he encouraged others. In fact, he was nicknamed "son of encouragement." God used him to bring many people to Jesus.

In addition to whatever interests, hobby, or vocation you have you also have a special thing going for you. When you received Jesus as your Savior and Lord, God forgave your sins, put His Spirit in you, gave you a new heart, and started reshaping you for service in His kingdom. That means you are the best kind of person for God to use. You are the best kind of person for God to use because you have the best story to tell to the world.

That story is your story. It is the story of how Jesus saved you and what He has been doing in your life since then. This is your story. No one else has your story. That makes it unique and special. And God can use it in a mighty way because...

No one can tell your story with as much passion and joy as you can.

Such stories, told by those who experienced them, can be used to make a big impact on those who need to learn about Jesus.

Yes, you, as a Christian, are exactly the kind of person God uses. And it is even better if you are NOT extraordinary. That's because it is harder for God to use really talented people. Talented people too often are puffed up with pride for God to use. God can do a lot more through average people who know they are average and know they need to depend on God.

Special people too often try to do things for God rather than with God. Special people too often run off ahead of God trying to impress God with how special they are. And that limits how much God can use them. God can do much more with people who humble themselves before Him.

Humble yourself before God because it isn't you who are special. It is God who is special. **GOD will make a big difference in the world...**

Mary asked the angel how God could do what He said was going to happen? She did not say it was impossible. She just did not understand how it would happen. She was told that it would come about by the power of the Holy Spirit, for nothing is impossible for God.

God can do things you haven't imagined. When this event took place, surrogate mothering had not been invented. No one had ever thought of it... except God. God told Mary that the Holy Spirit would produce a baby within her, not her baby, just a baby. The power to do this incredible, unheard-of thing was God's power, not Mary's power.

Some of you are too young to remember a series of commercials in the 1990s. They were a certain brand of pretzels. In one commercial a hockey game is taking place. One player is injured and they are out of replacements. So a man watching the game from the stands jumps up and volunteers to take the injured man's place. This

replacement is short, and a little paunchy. He is just a normal, average guy. But he wins the game for the team. His friend in the stands looks down in wonder at what happened and says, "It must be the pretzels."

The idea is that this guy wasn't a great hockey player on his own. He won the game because of eating the pretzels. It was the pretzels that won the game.

God uses ordinary people so that when we make a big difference with God, people will say, "Wow, it must be God with them that did this." The power to make a difference with your life is the power of the Holy Spirit.

So I hope you see that God can use ordinary people like you and me. The only thing preventing God from using you to make a difference... is you. What made Mary usable was her willingness to be used. She said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."

GOD will make a big difference in the world through your submission to His will.

Mary said, "Okay, Lord, I am willing to do what you want." That is the kind of person God uses. If you want to make a difference with God in the world, you have to submit yourself fully to Him. As you read the New Testament and learn what it is God wants you to live, pray this: **Pray, "Lord Jesus, I am willing to live whatever, however, and wherever You want me to."** Pray this everyday. Pray yourself into His hands to be used to make a difference in the world, to bring people to Jesus, to touch others with His love, to serve people's needs.

Will you say yes to God today? Will you give yourself to Him, to His will, 100%? Don't just give Him 50% of you. Not just 75% of you. Not even 90% of you. Give Him 100% of you.

Will you give yourself 100% to the will of God...

... even if it means danger? Yes, danger. It may be the danger of the jungle, the danger of the ghetto, or just the danger of your job. Live for Jesus on your job or in your school and you may face real persecution, real ostracism. Are you willing to say yes to Jesus even if it means that?

... even if it means changing the direction of your life?

... even if it means you never marry?

... even if it means you never re-marry?

... even if it means a shortened lifespan?

... even if it means poor health?

... even if it means a change in vocation, a change in your plans for your life?

Jesus gave His all for you on the cross. Give all of yourself to Him.

How many Christians have given Jesus 99% of themselves. There is one little sin they are holding onto, one sinful attitude they reserve, a resentment, a hatred for someone else, a refusal to forgive, an indulgence in lewdness or rudeness. Is that you? You've given Jesus everything except this one little thing? That's why God can't use you. You are holding back on Him.

Some need to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. You keep waiting for some sign before you will make the commitment. The only sign you are going to get is the sign of the truth. Jesus is the only way to God. You know it in your heart. Just step out and choose to believe on Him. The truth is the truth. You don't need a sign. Simply choose to believe what you know in your heart is the truth. Waiting for a sign is putting God to a test. It is still holding onto control. It is trying to manipulate God. It is trying to be forgiven on your terms instead of God's terms. You have to give that up in order to be saved.

So right now, today, receive Jesus as your savior and give your life to Him as your Lord.