



November Sermon Series: Dangerous Prayers

Message #4: Use Me

Getting the Nod

Video: **Mike Ford**

What can be accomplished in this world with millions of Mike Fords? What a wonderful picture of a simple prayer, “Use me!” In fact, the ministry of the Rose Avenue Food Pantry, as well as the Community Center, is full of volunteers who love people and those who want to share Christ through a hot meal... or be a safe place for children... or a Friday night evening of music... or just a shoulder to cry on and maybe a big hug to get them through another bad day. Hopefully our Heritage facilities, our ministries, and our people shout out to a lost and dark world... “WE WANT TO BE USED, LORD!!!!”

An Illustration of God Using Us at Thanksgiving: Imagine you are at Thanksgiving Dinner with elegant silverware, warm company, and great food. At the end of the the meal, the hostess brings out a plate of dessert and stumbles dropping the dessert on the floor. At that moment... there are several responses:

- There’s the **Mercy response**: "Don't feel bad, I should of offered to help."
- Then there’s the **Critical response**: "That’s what happens when you’re not careful!"
- Then there is the **Teaching Response**: "The reason the plate fell was because you had all of the food on one side."
- Then let’s look at the **Encouraging response**: "You know, that could happen to anybody. You’ll do better next time."
- Then the **picky response**: "I didn’t like that dessert anyway. Let’s go to DQ and I’ll buy dessert."
- But then there comes the **Serving response**: "Here, let me help you clean it up!"

Transition: That’s what the heart of the Dangerous Prayer, “Use Me” looks like. **Lord, if you have something that needs done, or someone that needs help... use me!** But maybe some of us don’t feel that they can truly be used of God...

Connecting Us

Here are some actual Weekly World News headlines:

- “Batboy sighted in NYC subway.”; “People as small as ants are alive.”; “Elvis is not dead!”

We really doubt the truthfulness of those stories (for good reason). *But sometimes we doubt things that are true. One of those might be: “Can God use me?”* We may believe God can use people like Billy Graham, but sometimes we doubt that God can use us.

We come up with many reasons why God couldn’t use us.

- “I’m not talented.”; “I’m a new Christian.”; “I don’t know enough about the Bible.”; “I’m not outgoing.”; “I’m too young.”; “I’m too old.”.

But if you doubt God can use you, read Ephesians 2:10: “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10 NLT).

Listen to this truth...

- **Who are you?** “You are God’s masterpiece!”
- **What are we created to do?** “The good things that God has planned for us long ago.”

The original word for Masterpiece is = poiema (poy’-ay-may); a product with a **designated purpose, workmanship.**

Who does God most often use?

- **God uses the insecure.** NLT | 2 Co 12:9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”
- **God uses the unlikely. Like David.** NLT | 1 Sa 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”
- **God uses failed lives. Like Peter.** NLT | Lk 22:61-62 At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord’s words flashed through Peter’s mind: “Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.” 62 And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly.

Transition: So, Here’s the Big Idea of the day: If you want to be used by God... **You have to STEP OUT to FIND OUT.** When you’re about to step out, a voice will say, “You’re not good enough, etc.” **At that moment you will know that you are the exact person God can use.** **But we have to make sure that we have the right attitude and response before we pray , “God use me”...**

What’s God’s Take on This?

Three Responses to God’s Plan for Our Lives:

1. Jonah’s Response: Here I Am... But I’m Not Going.

- NKJV | Jon 1:1-3 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so, he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.
- That’s a response of inconvenience. There’s too much going on right now.
- It may be a response of priorities. Things more important need my attention.
- But sadly, Jonah’s response ending up being a costly detour. Had it not been for the fish... only God knows what would’ve happened to Nineveh! If no one goes... no one is saved.
- **Illustration of Betty Hess and her sister’s prompting to go back to check on her.**

2. Moses’ Response: Here I Am... Send Someone Else.

- NLT | Ex 3:10-11 **Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”** 11 But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”
- That’s a response of unworthiness. I doubt my abilities... I’m inadequate.
- That’s a response of procrastination. Surely God has someone more qualified and more motivated than me.
- **Illustration of Tommy Majors waiting for me so He could pass.**

3. **Isaiah’s Response: Here I Am... Send Me.**

- NKJV | Is 6:1-8 **In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!” 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.” 6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged.” 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”**
- Now, this is a response of a transformed servant. I’ve been touched by God... cleansed, blessed and highly favored.
- And it’s a response of surrender. If no one else will go... here I am... send me.

Transition: If we are willing to pray this prayer, “Use Me”, there are three steps before you reach your destination...

Takeaways

Three Places God Takes Us to Use Us:

1. **An authentic place of His presence.**

- **In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. (Isa. 6:1)**
- When we draw near to God... He draws near to us!

2. **A clear place of comparison.**

- **So, I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.” (Isa. 6: 5)**
- There is a comparison that too many believers miss. The general consensus of the average Christian is, “I’m a good person.” That may be true... but in comparison to God... none of us get a free pass. None of us are worthy enough... and if we can get that... we will be more committed to being used by the One Who is perfect and valuable to us.

3. A burning place of His grace.

- Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged." (Isa. 6:6-7)
- Grace is receiving the favor and transforming power of God without the ability to pay for it!!! We are eternally and spiritually bankrupt... with no ability to change that... but Jesus Christ on the cross pulled our lives from the trash-heap of hell and damnation... and gave us life!
- Understanding God's Gift of Grace changes everything! Our attitudes. Our priorities. Our purpose. And it changes our willingness to be used! **That's what compelled Isaiah to tell the Lord... "SEND ME!!!"**

Transition: Are you willing to tell God... USE ME. SEND ME!!!

Drawing the Net

Final Illustration of God's Complainer, Jim Rhodes: Driving through Mineral Wells, Texas, one afternoon in 1994, Jim Rhodes noticed many buildings standing vacant due to the shutdown of a local military base. "I always complain to God about things that bother me," says Rhodes, "so I asked him, **'Why aren't these buildings being used to help the homeless?'**"

A few days later an announcement appeared in the paper: one of the base buildings was available to any charitable organization that could put it to good use. More to appease his conscience than to make a serious inquiry, Rhodes sent a letter to city officials, suggesting his idea. The answer he wasn't prepared for came back: **"It's yours."**

After that Rhodes said, "Never say 'God use me' unless you really mean it," Rhodes says with a knowing smile. Decades earlier another complaint to God about abandoned children led him and his wife, Melinda, to adopt eight "special needs" children and be foster parents to hundreds more over the years. Soon Rhodes found himself also helping pregnant and battered women, which grew into New Haven Ministries in 1986.

As for the building...After a chain of miracles, including more than 5,000 volunteer hours from plumbers, electricians, and painters who renovated the facility, New Haven Family Center opened its doors in September 1995.

Since then, the center has helped dozens of families get back on their feet. Families live at the center two or three months while they find employment. The center provides clothes, food, GED, and computer classes. "This is a totally Christian, totally donated, non-government funded ministry," says Rhodes. "Most of these folks just need a hand up instead of a hand out."

What's next for Rhodes? "Only God knows," he chuckles, "but I'm sure he'll let me know the next time I start complaining." (Tara Tremaine, Christian Reader, "Ordinary Heroes.")

Do you want to be used by God??? Then **STEP OUT TO FIND OUT!!!**