

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“Fit For The Master’s Use”

by Brian Meade

In 2 Timothy 2:20-21, the apostle Paul introduces us to God’s intentions toward all of humanity, as he says, ***“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”***

Sometimes we hear, “That before God can use us, He has to break us.” But I believe Scripture affirms here that God must reform or shape us before we can be used by Him. In order to be fit for our Master’s use, we must be changed from a vessel of dishonor to one of honor.

As Paul says, ***“in a great house,”*** there are vessels that are valued and used and then they’re those not useful, and thus of dishonor.

Notice here in this passage that God says, ***“if anyone cleanses himself from the latter.”*** What is the latter? It has reference to sin and the dishonor that it brings to our lives! (Proverbs 14:34; Rom. 2:6-11).

God has invested a great deal in our cleansing by the sacrifice of His One and Only Son– Jesus. This salvation from sin is only made possible by the blood that was shed at Calvary and our obedience to the gospel (1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Thessalonians 1:8).

When God called Saul of Tarsus, who was the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), He sent Ananias to ***“Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”*** (Acts 9:15) Paul would certainly be a useful vessel used by God for good– but first he had to be washed (Acts 22:16).

Paul would say to the church at Corinth, ***“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”***

God had to clean up the people of Corinth, who would be His people (1 Corinthians 1:2), by their obedience to His Son in faith (Acts 15:9), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of Jesus (Romans 10:10),

and baptism into Christ (Acts 18:8). Notice the great change in their condition— from dishonor (sin) to being **washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ...**

We define the terms of what takes place when we are cleansed:

- (1) Washed**— To be forgiven, conceived of having one's sins washed away.
- (2) Sanctified**— To become dedicated to God; either in distinction, in devotion, or in moral purity.
- (3) Justified**— To be or become judicially vindicated as of having complied with the requirements of the law (of God)

Even today, when we undergo the same transformation by the blood of Christ, we are then qualified to be useful to the Master in doing good in His kingdom. The Hebrew writer says this to us along this line, **"how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"** (Hebrews 9:14)

Once the cleansing of our soul is accomplished (1 Peter 1:22), we are to begin service as useful vessels for God. Note what Paul says about this in Tits 2:14, (Jesus) **"who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."**

We are now **"useful"** to our Master in heaven and that word means: "Being of use or service; Effective; Profitable."

It is interesting to note that the name "Onesimus" in Philemon verse 10 actually means **"profitable."** Paul seems to use that in verse 11 by saying that he was once "useless," but since he had obeyed the gospel, he is now "useful."

The same word is also used in connection to John Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11, as Paul says, **"Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service."** As we know from Luke's account in Acts, John Mark left the work and became the center of disagreement between Paul and Barnabas when choosing who to go with them on the 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15:36-39). It seems Mark had redeemed himself with his work along side of Barnabas in preaching the gospel.

God can and will use us as a **"vessel for honor"** to Himself and His glory. The Bible teaches us, **"The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."** (2 Timothy 4:18)

Paul told the Corinthians, **"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord."** We are to consider ourselves unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10)

But in all that have spoken in this regard, we must be willing vessels (2 Peter 3:9). We must obey God and our Lord Jesus Christ and bear much fruit to God (John 15:1-8; Colossians 1:10).

And only then are we fit for the Master's use! (2 Timothy 2:21)

"I am not what I ought to be; I am not what I hope to be; but thanks be to God, I am not what I was."
Spiros Zodhiates

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Martha Norvell (Mississippi Care), June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Tammy Kilgore (Jerry's niece), Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois Wright, and Dan & Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor,, Danny Cottrell, Gary Doles, Joe Felks, Randy Beaty, Brandon Briggs & Bentley Briggs, Russell Briggs, Briley Briggs, Blake Briggs, and Stephanie Briggs, Jerry and Karen Kennemur, Sherry Doles starts some preventive Chemo treatments soon (possibly in August). And Robbie Doles has been not been feeling well and has requested our prayers.

Those Who Serve:

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| Announcements: | Paul Johnson |
| Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: | Tim Harris Jr <i>Hebrews 2:1-3</i> |
| Song Leader: | Adam Harris |
| Lord's Supper: | Doug George |
| Preaching: | Brian Meade |
| Sermon: | <i>"How Do We Listen To God's Word?"</i> |
| Closing Prayer: | Nathan Meade |