

On being used by God – spot the difference

Stephan Vosloo

Someone sent me this excerpt the other day. On the surface there is nothing wrong with what is written here but for all of us who are really desiring that God may use us this can cause condemnation and I for one has had enough guilt feelings about the fact that I am not being used as I see He uses others. See if you can spot the difference.

"People are crying to God to use them, but He cannot. They are not given up to Him; they are not humble and teachable and holy. There are plenty of people who come to me and want work in my store, but I cannot use them; they are not fit for my work. When I must have someone, I have to go and advertise, and sometimes spend days in trying to find a man who will fit into the place I want him for, and then I have to try him and prove him to know whether he will suit me or not." The fact is, God is using everybody that He can, and using them to the full extent of their fitness for His service. So, instead of praying so much to be used, people should search themselves to know whether they are usable.

God cannot use anybody and everybody who comes along any more than the merchant could. It is only those who are "sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. ii. 21) that He can bless with great usefulness.

God wants men and women, and He is hunting for them everywhere; but, like the merchant, He has to pass by hundreds before He finds the right individuals. The Bible says: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. xvi. 9).

Oh, how God wants to use you! But before you ask Him again to do so, see to it that your heart is "perfect toward Him." Then you may depend upon it that God will show Himself strong in your behalf.

Glory to His dear, dear name!

Jesus said, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ...)" (John vii. 38, 39).

See to it that you are a believer. See to it that you are "filled with the Spirit," and Jesus will see to it that out of your life shall flow rivers of holy influence and power to bless the world; and you, too, will be surprised, at the reckoning day, to behold the vastness of your

reward as compared with the littleness of your sacrifices and your work.

For me, who has been crying out for the Lord to use me for many years this angle does nothing but produce condemnation. Do you think it is possible that God is not able to change even the vilest heart who applies for the position? Can He give strength to the weak, passion to the passionless, courage to the fearful, faith to the faithless? Is He so weak that He has to advertise and run around to find someone somewhere with a pure heart that He can use?

I am afraid that this is the angle of religion and is what causes people to work even harder and to burn out in their quest to impress God so that He may start using them. I want to submit that Scripture's angle is based on chosen ness rather than perfection. That is why He could choose a murderer like Paul, a boaster called Joseph, an adulterer and murderer called David and a cheat called Jacob.

The prerequisite for being used is not really my heart but the predestined call of God, my chosen ness. When Jesus called the disciples, their hearts were not perfect at all, as they proved later by allowing Satan to use them (get behind me Satan), by leaving Him when He was in trouble, by fighting about who will be seated at His right hand, by forgetting to pray when the storm threatened them or threatening to call fire from heaven on those who did not agree with their doctrine.

The reason why He calls us is not primarily for ministry but for love. He desires fellowship above sacrifice – the kind of fellowship that flows from conversation and obedient action. We are firstly called to talk to Jesus and to listen to His words to us. When we have heard enough times that He loves us unconditionally then only do we become ready to obey His commands. It is love that should drive us towards perfection, not the desire to be used. He chose us to be His bride first, not to be His crew or even His army. We work and die for him because we have seen His love. We become His workers and His soldiers because we love.

It is love that changes us, not the desire to be used.

All the fellowship and talking will no doubt cause a river of living water to flow from my inner being and cause my heart to be purified so that more water can flow unhindered but it is a result and not a prerequisite.

So what shall we then say, shall we continue to sin so that grace may abound? No, hundred times, no! Why shall we who have been called to fellowship with Jesus, qualified through His own blood to talk to Him, set free from the power of sin and the world by the cross, and equipped with His Holy Spirit to overcome temptation still remain in sin? We are qualified to enter into a relationship with Jesus; we are not qualified to work for Him. It is His love that constrains us, His grace that works through us. Paul even said that he had worked more than anyone else but then qualified the statement by saying, 'not I but grace working through me'.

We must receive this grace through asking, through fellowship, through conversation, through being with and not through our efforts to improve and impress. The definition of grace does not permit effort and it is by grace we are saved, through faith and that not of ourselves that no one can boast. If the premise of the writer was correct then those who are being used could boast of purer hearts than those who are not being used and that is contrary to grace and contrary to the Good News. In fact, that is not good news at all! I can just make myself available to be changed, to become the kind of person the writer so aptly describes. I can't do anything to get myself there but talk to Jesus and ask for the faith to continue to trust Him that He will make it come to pass. At the end of the road, my fellowship with Him will be so satisfying that I will not seek to see the effect of my ministry or even my prayers. My only concern is to live for the love of God. To worry about being used in that context is quite indecent of me because it is His concern how He uses me, not mine. All I can do is to seek fellowship, conversation and to live in His love. Let us focus in the right place and the confusing parts of the Christian life will become crystal clear.

“When will my heart be perfect towards You, O Lord? How can I get my heart perfect towards You unless You make me perfect? How will I be able to make the kind of sacrifices you desire without Your powerful intervention in my life? You will have to work in me to will and to work according to your good pleasure, otherwise I will falter and then.....?”