

SERIES: BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE
SERMON: BE THE BEST WHERE YOU ARE
2-5-23

OPENER:

We all want to be the best that we can be.

>If you are a father you want to be the best father that you can be.

>If you are preparing for marriage, you want to be the best wife. > If you are a mother, you want to be the best mother.

>If you are a student, you want to graduate with best grades.

> If you are in business, you want your business to be successful.

>If you have started a new career, you want to move up the ladder.

>If you have made a decision to commit your life to the Lord, you want to grow and walk in His blessings. You want to be the best Christian that you can. You want to do great things for God.

.....But being the best you can be is a journey. Being the best you can be involves the steps it takes to get there. And let's be honest, some people never attain to all they can be. Some people never lay hold of all that God has for them. That promise, that word of prophecy never comes to pass in their life, because they didn't take the necessary steps of faith to obtain the promise.

**WHAT YOU WILL BE AND HOW FAR YOU WILL GO IS DETERMINED BY
THE STEPS YOU ARE TAKING RIGHT NOW.**

BIG THINGS ARE ACCOMPLISHED BY SMALL STEPS.

**1. GOD TESTS US WITH SMALL THINGS FIRST BEFORE HE GIVES US
GREATER THINGS**

Luke 16:10 If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.

Matthew 25:21 Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.

Often, the thing at hand seems very little and small and we despise it. We want bigger - better. We want larger responsibility. But if we can't be trusted with the little things, God won't trust us with greater responsibility.

**WE THINK IT'S THE BIG THINGS IN LIFE THAT MAKE US GREAT.
BUT YOUR GREATNESS IS NOT BUILT IN THE
BIG THINGS OF LIFE - IT'S BUILT IN THE SMALL THINGS.**

That's where integrity and faithfulness shows up — in the stuff that nobody sees, in the stuff behind the scenes, in the small, the unseen, the unspectacular choices of life where you do the right thing even though nobody's ever going to see it.

Faithfulness requires integrity, and God tests your integrity in the little things.

So often the smaller things go unnoticed by others. There are no pats on the back, no praise, no apparent reward. So often they are done in private, behind closed doors. But God is watching us.

**YOUR PUBLIC BLESSING IS DETERMINED BY YOUR
PRIVATE INTEGRITY.**

ILLUSTRATION:

One of my first responsibilities in the church was custodial. Every Saturday, when I came home from college, I cleaned the church.

ILLUSTRATION:

David was anointed to be the next king of Israel at the age of seventeen. After this incredible promise was given to him, David did not go to the palace for a coronation; he went back to the shepherds' fields. He was anointed but not appointed. He had to pass the test of being faithful taking care of sheep. He had to pass the test of being good to King Saul even though Saul was trying to kill him.

David didn't take the throne until he was thirty-seven. It took twenty years for him to take the throne, for him to be prepared for where God was taking him. Don't get discouraged by the preparation process between the time God puts that dream in your heart and the time it comes to pass. If you keep the right attitude, every struggle you go through, every disappointment, every delay is making you stronger, developing your character, growing you up. Pass those tests. It's getting you

prepared. David as a shepherd. David passed the test of faithfulness, honesty, reliability before God.

- > What is at hand, that God has entrusted you with right now?
- > What small thing has God given you to complete or manage with integrity?
- > Do you ever treat the “small things” and “large things” differently?
- > How does God want you to treat them?

We so often want to graduate to the better things without passing the test.

2. BE THE ABSOLUTE BEST WHERE YOU ARE SO GOD CAN BRING THE BETTER THING

ILLUSTRATION:

My first car and 1963 Plymouth valiant. It was bright red. It was red all the way through. It wasn't really the car I wanted, but I knew I had to take care of it like it was.

ILLUSTRATION:

Our society has a growing feeling of entitlement, such as, “I deserve a promotion (without the process)” ... “I deserve the position, prestige, and responsibility without having to pay the price and be faithful today.”

ILLUSTRATION:

Today we can microwave an entire meal in a few minutes, our prescription lenses are ready to be picked up in an hour, we can drive thru and get our oil changed in 5 minutes. We are a culture that is used to getting what we want instantly. We aren't used to working patiently, or waiting on anything — not even a hamburger.

When we feel entitled we feel we are owed a favor, or we deserve special treatment. It's the “you owe me” attitude.

**AN ATTITUDE OF ENTITLEMENT SAYS I CAN'T WAIT.
AN ATTITUDE OF ENTITLEMENT SAYS, I DESERVE THIS.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO WORK FOR IT.**

AN ATTITUDE OF ENTITLEMENT WILL STOP YOU FROM BECOMING THE BEST THAT YOU CAN BE.

Hebrews 6:15 Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised.

God had promised Abraham great things. But it took Abraham's patience to receive it.

**PATIENCE IS PART OF THE PROCESS TO OBTAIN THE BEST THAT GOD HAS FOR YOUR LIFE.
BEING FAITHFUL REQUIRES PATIENCE.**

QUESTIONS TO ASK IF YOU ARE FAITHFUL:

You might be asking, "I agree with you, but how do I know if I am viewed as a faithful person by others?" Perhaps the following questions would be good for you to consider:

- Do others constantly have to remind you to get things done?
- Do you habitually forget to follow through?
- What does your word mean to you? Do you follow through with what you say?
- Do you return your phone calls?
- Do your children believe you when you promise to do something with them?
- If you promise you'll be home, do you call if you're going to be late?
- Are you trusted by your friends?
- Can others count on you?

3. WHAT YOU ARE DOING NOW IS PREPARING YOU FOR YOUR FUTURE

How do you view the details? As picky things to be ignored or that get in your way? Or as too little to matter or insignificant? Do you say, "this isn't really what I want to do? Or this isn't really where I want to be? I'll really invest myself once I get there!"

BUT GOD NEVER WASTES TIME.

WHAT YOU ARE DOING NOW, GOD IS USING TO PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR FUTURE.

ILLUSTRATION:

If we don't value what God has put in our hands to do now and only step over it to get to the next big thing, then it will become a stumbling block instead of a stepping stone. If you trip over it you never move forward. And God keeps putting back into your hands that things that you despised doing because you wanted something bigger, better.

God will take you back to where you disobeyed and rebelled. He will put in your hands again that same thing that you threw down, you disobeyed. And you just keep repeating the same thing and never moving forward

**MANY ARE ON A CAREER PATH, BUT FEW SEEM TO BE ON
A CHARACTER PATH.
WE SACRIFICE GOD'S BEST FOR US ON THE ALTAR OF OUR OWN
AMBITION.**

ILLUSTRATION:

Israel wandered around the same mountain for 40 years. And what should have taken them an 11 day journey took 40 years

If you always have your eyes on where you want to be instead of where you are, you'll never be faithful with what you have now.

Colossians 3:23-25 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ²⁴ Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. ²⁵ But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites

**THE PERSON THAT IS GOING SOMEWHERE NEVER GETS THERE BY NOT
GIVING CAREFUL ATTENTION TO
WHERE HE IS NOW.**

ILLUSTRATION:

The Bible says we can't set our hands to the plow and look back. It goes the same way, that we can't set our hands to the plow and look to another field. You have to keep your eyes on the row your plowing to get to the other field.

IF YOU WANT MORE, THEN BE FAITHFUL WHERE YOU ARE.

4. DON'T DESPISE THE SMALL THINGS

Sometimes we are guilty of despising small things and becoming dissatisfied that we aren't involved with a big thing. But, to God nothing is small or insignificant. When you think about it, just about everything begins small. Countries, cities, corporations, etc. They all began small, didn't they?

ILLUSTRATION:

TG & Y. I hated that job. I was 15.

Zechariah 4:10 Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand.
(Explain scripture)

The nation of Israel had humble beginnings too. Logically, they should have never become important. But God had other plans. Up to this point in history, Solomon's Temple, in all its glory, stood in the city of Jerusalem. It was the pride of the Jewish nation. Foreigners would sometimes travel to Jerusalem just to see the beauty of the temple. Solomon's temple took over 7 years to build, and it was truly an incredible sight to behold!

But in 586 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar's armies overran Jerusalem, plundered the city and then burned the temple down.

But time marches on. The Babylonian Empire fell to the Medco-Persian Empire and a new king named Cyrus sat upon the throne. Cyrus allowed Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem where they began to rebuild the temple and the city.

**THIS IS SO CHARACTERISTIC OF US.
WE LIKE TO EQUATE BIGNESS WITH BLESSING.
BUT THAT'S JUST NOT THE WAY IT WORKS!**

>We want big schools so we can look like we are smart and have a good education.

>We want our diplomas to say "Harvard" or "Yale".

>We want big churches so we can look like we are blessed of God and doing something important.

>We want important people around us so we can look like we are important too. Nobody brags about knowing the trash man.

>We want expensive cars and nice clothes so we can look successful or popular.

>We want to look significant!

EXAMPLES:

Just a small seed of the gospel brings salvation!

The place where Jesus was born was a small place. Micah called it “little among the thousands of Judah”.

Gideon’s army of 300 soldiers got victory over a multitude of soldiers.

An Old Testament widow had just a small amount of food but she was able to feed her family and the man of God for quite some time!

One small lunch fed a multitude.

And the list goes on and on. God uses little things!