

CHRISTMAS SERIES: BORN
SERMON: AVAILABLE
12-4-22

OPENER:

Isaiah 6:8 (NIV) Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Maybe you're like me, scratching your head from time to time and wondering why God would choose to use you. I'm greatly aware of my human limitations. I'm just an ordinary woman who has made herself available to God. That may sound simple, but that's my secret in a nutshell. I am available to the Lord, asking for His strength to fulfill His purpose.

**GOD DOESN'T WANT YOUR CAPABILITY.
 HE ONLY WANTS YOUR AVAILABILITY.**

**IF YOU GIVE HIM YOUR AVAILABILITY,
 HE'LL PROVIDE THE CAPABILITY.**

AVAILABILITY BROUGHT JESUS INTO THE WORLD

Luke 1: 35 & 38 (NLT) The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.³⁸ Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

(Backstory on Mary)

Mary was engaged at the time to be married. To come up pregnant would cause a lot of caouse for her.

- > She would face ridicule in the community and hardship.
- > She could lose her fiancé.
- > She would be publicly humiliated. After all "who would believe her?"
- > She would more than likely be looking at a life of raising a child on her own? How would she do that? She had no way of making a living, providing a home for the child?
- > How would her parents react? Would they believe her story?

MARY TOLD THE MESSENGER, "I AM HERE TO SERVE THE LORD. WHATEVER YOU SAY I WILL DO."

**DO WE SAY THAT WHEN GOD ASKS US TO DO SOMETHING?
 WITHOUT HESITATION, DO WE SAY, "I AM HERE. I AM AVAILABLE. I WILL DO
 WHAT YOU ASK. USE ME?"**

We must each come to a place where we trust God and are willing to follow Him completely, even when our circumstances look difficult.

I. TO BE AVAILABLE WILL REQUIRE SURRENDER

Surrendering to God means letting go of our plans, and letting God have His way in every aspect of our lives. Allowing Him to guide our steps and direct our decisions. This means we surrender our will for His perfect will.

TO SURRENDER MEANS TO LET GO OF CONTROL.

**SURRENDER MEANS TO LET GO OF THE POSSESSION
OF YOUR OWN LIFE AND REALIZE YOU ARE GOD'S POSSESSION AND
CREATED TO DO GOD'S PURPOSE.**

**WE ARE HERE TO SERVE GOD - NOT OUR OWN AGENDA.
TO SURRENDER WILL REQUIRE SOME SACRIFICE.**

- > Mary would sacrifice her reputation.
- > Sacrifice her desire to be with Joseph.
- > Sacrifice her lifestyle.
- > All for the sake of God's glory and plan.

And what about Joseph.....

Matthew 1:18-21 (NLT).Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

(Backstory on Joseph)

The angel said "*Do not be afraid*"...

What was Joseph afraid of? Marrying a woman who was already pregnant would affect his business. It would affect his standing in the community. The good name that he had worked for for so long would be forever tarnished. He would be the guy who married the girl who messed up. These were not the goals and plans he had for his life. Surely this is not what all of his hard work had come to?

II. TO BE AVAILABLE WILL REQUIRE YOU TO FACE YOUR FEAR

Are you afraid to be with someone who has a tarnished reputation? Are you afraid of what people think?

Are you too afraid to let go of your personal goals and let God give you new goals that will glorify Him?

A LESSON IN AVAILABILITY

Luke tells a fascinating story about being available to the Lord:

Luke 5:1-11 (NLT) One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. ² He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. ³ Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."

⁵ "Master," Simon replied, "we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again." ⁶ And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! ⁷ A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

⁸ When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." ⁹ For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. ¹⁰ His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you'll be fishing for people!" ¹¹ And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

There were two boats, AND both were available for Jesus to use. Why? Because the fishermen had gotten out of them.

1. TO BE AVAILABLE IS TO EMPTY OUR LIVES SO HE CAN FILL THEM.

SOMETIMES WE NEED TO GET OUT OF THE WAY AND LET JESUS TAKE OVER AND DO WHAT ONLY HE CAN DO.

ILLUSTRATION:

There was nothing special about Peter's boat. It was just a wooden boat, not much different than any of the others. What made it special that day was that Jesus was in it!

In the same way, you may not feel as though you have any special abilities God can use. But if you make your life available to Jesus, great things can happen. He can teach, heal the sick, cast out demons, and show compassion through you.

John 3:30 (NKJV) He must increase, but I must decrease.

**MAKE A PLACE FOR HIM IN YOUR LIFE.
GET OUT OF THE WAY AND LET HIM TAKE OVER.
LET HIM DO WHAT HE WANTS TO DO.**

MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE.

2. TO BE AVAILABLE IS TO BE WILLING TO GO INTO DEEPER WATER

This store gets better when Jesus says, (Vs4) “go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish.”

GOD MAY HAVE USED YOU IN THE PAST BUT IIN COMPARISON TO WHERE HE WANTS TO TAKE YOU - YOU’VE ONLY BEEN IIN SHALLOW WATER.

**IT’S TIME TO HEAD INTO DEEPER WATER.
JESUS IS SAYING, “YOU HAVEN’T SEEN ANYTHING YET.”**

(Vs 5) Peter said.....we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. But if you say so, I’ll let the nets down again.

Peter was skeptical. Peter was tired. Perhaps you are too. The thought of being faithful to what God has asked you to do may seem overwhelming. You may be spent, exhausted and weary. But, God is asking you to keep doing what you are doing, keep sowing.

DESPITE THE FAILURES AND THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THE PAST, WE NEED TO TAKE COURAGE AND LET DOWN OUR NETS ONE MORE TIME.

You probably know how the story ends. “When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was tearing”.

SIDE NOTE:

Two boats were empty and available to Jesus, but He chose the boat owned by Peter. Does that mean Jesus may disregard us and choose someone else instead? Well, yes and no. Indeed, there will be times when we aren’t used by God as we think we should be. But look what happened later in the story:

(VS. 7) A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

LET ME SAY THIS, BE AVAILABLE TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE IN THEIR MINISTRY AND YOU WILL REAP A HARVEST TOO.

IF YOU FEEL UNDERUTILIZED AT THE MOMENT, DON’T BE DISCOURAGED.

KEEP SEEKING THE LORD, REMAIN AVAILABLE AND HAVE A SERVANT'S HEART.

IF YOU DO THESE THINGS IT WILL ONLY BE A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU WILL PARTICIPATE IN A SUPERNATURAL HARVEST OF BLESSINGS!

3. TO BE AVAILABLE IS TO EXPECT GREATER THINGS

If you or I were the fisherman who witnessed the miracle catch in Luke 5, we probably would have concluded, "It doesn't get any better than this!"

Verse 9 says,For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him.

Even though the fishermen had experienced something quite astounding, they would have been mistaken to conclude that this was the ultimate miracle of their lifetimes.

Jesus told Peter, "*From now on you will catch men*" (Luke 5:10).

You see, the miraculous catch of fish wasn't the pinnacle of the disciples' success. They weren't going to sit around in their old age and say, "Boy, that was the greatest day of our lives." No, not at all. This experience was meant only to whet their appetite for a far greater mission—becoming fishers of men and women.

**HAS GOD USED YOU I THE PAST? THAT'S GREAT!
EVERY PAST EXPERIENCE IS PART OF A TRAINING PROCESS TO GET YOU
READY FOR EVEN GREATER THINGS TO COME.**

**LET ME ASK YOU, HOW IS GOD PREPARING YOU TO BE USED RIGHT NOW?
OUR AVAILABILITY FOR GOD TO USE US NEVER STOPS.
IN FACT, IT SHOULD GROW.**

The final verse in this passage shows that the disciples were still available (VS. 11) "*They left everything and followed Him*"

THERE IS AN UPSIDE TO INADEQUACY

The fishermen were taken from inadequacy and fruitlessness to a sudden harvest of supernatural blessings. As they made themselves available and simply obeyed Jesus' instructions.

Ephesians 3:20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

1)Feelings of inadequacy can be crippling at times, but they can be used for our good.

As King David sang in Psalm 61:2 (NIV) when our heart is overwhelmed by the challenges of this life, we can say to the Lord, *“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”*

2)Awareness of our own inadequacy reminds us of our dependency on the Lord.

John 15:5 (NLT) Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

**HE DIDN'T SAY, WITHOUT ME YOU WON'T REACH
YOUR FULL POTENTIAL.
OR WITHOUT ME YOU WON'T ACCOMPLISH MUCH.**

NO, WITHOUT JESUS WE WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING.

Philippians 4:13 (NIV) I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Like Jeremiah, Moses, David, Paul and many other leaders in the Bible, we may have plenty of excuses as to why God should choose someone else. Yet, the Lord sees something amazing in us, something He can use for His glory, just as He did in these biblical leaders.....

>Moses wasn't a great communicator, but God overlooked his flaws and called him to lead a nation.

>David was the runt of his family, and no one saw him as a future leader. Yet God saw something great in the shepherd boy and knew he would be a man after His own heart.

>Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba all were included in the genealogy of Jesus, in spite of some very dark pages in their past.

>Paul described himself as *“a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man”*(as well as the chief of sinners. Despite all this, Paul said, *“[the Lord] counted me faithful and appointed me to the ministry”* through His abundant grace.

If God could use people like this in a powerful way, in spite of their shortcomings, surely He can use you as well. Like many leaders in the Bible, we may have plenty of excuses why God should choose someone else. Yet the Lord sees something in us, something He can use for His glory. We just need to make ourselves **“AVAILABLE”**.