

"WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND?"

One day when Moses was tending the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law, on the backside of the desert, he "came to Horeb, the mountain of God" and saw a strange thing - an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush which was not being consumed. His curiosity led him to draw near for a better look. As he approached the bush he heard the voice of God call his name and tell him to remove his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. The Lord then gave instructions to return to Egypt to relieve the affliction of His enslaved people and to lead them to a land that "flowed with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:1-8). Moses tried to excuse himself by saying that he was incapable, but the Lord would not have it. He said, "What is that in thine hand?" Moses replied, "A rod." It was a shepherd's rod that he used to control sheep. It was common place and to Moses was nothing significant. But God told him that day to "take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs" (Ex. 4:17) and promised him "I will be with thy mouth" (Ex. 4:15) because he was slow of speech and not eloquent.

Moses went back to Egypt from which he fled many years before and succeeded in leading the people of God to freedom. And over and over again the rod in his hand was used to prove the power of God through signs and miracles. When he quit making excuses for his inability and turned himself over to the Lord he became very useful in His service.

In 1 Samuel chapter 17 we read of an incident that has been told over and over again. Adults and children alike find it intriguing. It concerns David and Goliath, the great champion of the Philistines. David was an unshaven shepherd boy of his father's flocks, but a very brave and courageous lad of Judah. He had by himself killed a lion and a bear when they attacked his father's sheep. And when the giant warrior, Goliath, challenged the people of God to send a man down into the valley of Elah to meet him in battle and no man had courage enough to go, David volunteered. Goliath was fully clad in armor from head to foot and carried a huge sword with which he intended to hack off David's head. But with no more than five smooth stones and a slingshot he met and defeated the Philistine giant with a well placed stone to the center of his forehead. To the surprise of everyone but David, the Bible says in verse 50, "But David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him."

During the time our Lord was on the earth something happened that has been recorded for all posterity to teach us a lesson. One day Christ went to the temple in Jerusalem and taught the people (Mk. 12:35). When He finished He "sat over against the treasury" (v41). He was observing the contributions that were given by the various worshippers. "And many that were rich cast in much." And while Jesus was sitting there a poor widow came with her contribution -- all that she had. The Bible says, "she threw in two mites, which make a farthing" (v42). She had less than half a cent to her name when she came that day, but she gave it all. Jesus was so impressed he called his disciples to Him and pointed out that this poor widow had given more that day than all the rich people, because they gave "of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (v43, 44).

Her generosity has been recorded in the sacred pages of God's holy word for all to read for the rest of time. At the time of this act little did she realize what this would mean to others throughout the world as an example of true sacrifice.

Later, in Acts chapter 9 the Bible tells us that at Joppa there was a certain disciple who fell sick and died. Her body was washed and prepared for burial. Then certain ones sent for Peter to come from Lydda which was not far away. When he arrived there were a number of women who came and "stood by him weeping and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them" (v39). We are told in verse 36, "this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did."

Evidently Dorcas was a poor woman, like so many others in that day. But that did not keep her from doing what she could. With needle and thread she found a way to serve the Lord by making garments for people who were even more in poverty and deprived than she. She must have realized, "He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord" (Prov. 19:17).

These cases should serve to help Christians who live in this day and time to realize that there are things that we can do for the Lord and His cause. We don't have to have wealth nor great talent in order to serve God. But God does demand and expect us to do what we can with the talent and blessings he gives us. It does not take a lot to volunteer our services to help the church. It is a matter of love for our Lord and what He has done for us which should prompt us to be willing to give of our time and our abilities. Teaching has to be done and lessons have to be prepared for the edifying of the church. We know all cannot be preachers or public teachers of the word of God, nor does the Lord expect this. But there are other things that have to be done. If the church owns property there is maintenance (painting and carpenter work and sometimes electrical). cleaning the building (including the rest rooms), washing windows, and mowing the grass and

edging the lawn that has to be done. The preparing of the communion has to be taken care of each Lord's day. Supplies have to be purchased. Sometimes things have to be installed such as light bulbs, paper towels, etc. In other words there is a place for all to be of service to the Lord if we are willing to make a little sacrifice of our time for the Lord and His work.

Remember Moses and his rod; David and his sling shot; the poor widow and her two mites; and remember Dorcas and her needle and thread. Every member of the church should find out how he can be of service to the Lord and His cause. There is no telling how much could be accomplished if we had one hundred percent cooperation and assistance, and the burden of church work was shared by all.