

## USEFUL FOR THE MASTER

### II Timothy 2:20-26

In a spacious and expensive house there are at least two general kinds of utensils. There are those of honour and much value (gold and silver), and those of dishonour and little value (wood and pottery). The former are reserved for special occasions and the latter are used more frequently. The former are never destroyed, but the latter chip and break and must be replaced. These different vessels are for numerous purposes, according to the will of the ones who own and use them.

As we know, a vessel is something that is capable of containing a substance. We think of it as a container or utensil. In a beautiful manner the Holy Spirit here uses a vessel to represent a Christian. A Christian is a vessel for the use of the Master. Our risen Lord spoke of Paul saying, "He is a chosen vessel unto me." That suggests that He also desires to possess and use us. We can be and should be vessels unto honour and fit for the Master's use. What a pity that every Christian is not a vessel unto honour!

Two great, consuming and dynamic convictions should be written large in every life. One of them is that the thing of greatest importance is the salvation of the soul. The other great conviction is that we are saved for service. A Christian is not merely a believer preserved for future happiness, but a sinner saved for present service. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" should be the first question of every saved soul. In the very first moments of his Christian life Paul put Christ in His rightful place by crowning Him as Lord. Throughout the remainder of his life Paul gave himself unreservedly to the service of his Lord and Master.

The crowning privilege of a believer is a life of service for Christ. One of the greatest calamities that could befall any Christian would be to reach the place where God could not use him. Paul was careful to qualify to serve. He was haunted by the fear that a time might come when his obedience might wane, his enthusiasm cool, his interest lag and his love wax cold, and then that God would be forced to say, "I cannot use you."

No real believer in Christ will ever be lost and go to hell, but many who once served the Lord have lost the glorious privilege of service and will miss the reward they might have had. Moses was a faithful servant of God, but disobedience marred his record and he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. What greater calamity can come to a believer than to be cast off from service?

It is said that when Nathan Hale, that noble patriot of the early days of American history, was led out to execution by the British, he said: "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." We have but one life to live here, so it behooves to consider how we can best invest it.

Surely all of us who are God's children have a sincere desire to be used in the Master's service. If we are to serve in the most effective manner, the Holy Spirit must make us what we ought to be. It is the Lord's intention that we shall be vessels for Him to use as He wills for the fulfillment of His purposes.

"Channels only, Blessed Master;  
But with all Thy wondrous power  
Flowing through us Thou canst use us,  
Every day and every hour.

It is God's desire that we shall be channels through which He can work and pour His blessings into needy lives. Are you among those whom the Lord desires to use, and yet cannot use? If so, may this hour be a time of such adjustment to His will that you

can go forth as a usable person. What a pity that there are so many who call themselves Christians who never seem to be of use to the Lord! Because God is so much more anxious to use us than we are to be used, we should pray, "Lord, make me usable."

What kind of a person can God use? Any child of God who is to be a vessel unto honour and useful for the Master must possess certain qualities or characteristics. Among them are the following:

### I. Purity.

One of the most obvious reasons why some who know Christ as Saviour are yet largely unusable is that of uncleanness. God cannot use an unclean instrument. Those who are to be the vessels of the Lord must be clean. You will remember that the Psalmist, after his terrible sin, and out of the agony of his conviction, cried to God and said: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow, ..... Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me .... Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee" (Psalm 51:7, 9-10, 13). It was only when his heart had been cleansed that he felt God could use him. So, it is well for us to let the Lord use His searchlight to shine into our hearts and to reveal to us any uncleanness which would prevent our being used by Him. Is uncleanness in your life the reason why you cannot be used of the Lord? If so, seek His cleansing.

A vessel which is useful to the Master must be separated from known evil and committed to the doing of God's will. D. L. Moody used to say, "God isn't looking for a gold vessel, He is not looking for a silver vessel, nor a beautiful vessel, nor anything expensive. It doesn't matter what the vessel is, if it is clean." God not only demands cleanliness, but He has made provision for it in the Christian life. If we are to be vessels that are useful for the Master, then we must be clean ones. Satan will defile us if he can in order to make us unfit for the Master's use, and to get us out of the way.

### II. Dedication.

The vast difference between Christians is to be found in the degree of their dedication. Even a life with meager gifts, if entirely dedicated to the Lord, can amaze the world. Dwight L. Moody was a shining example of what God can do with limited training and meager gifts when the life is fully yielded to Him. To be sure, God could have accomplished more with Moody had he been well trained. His lack of training limited his opportunities and influence, but still God cannot do much through a life that is not dedicated to Him. It will simply remain an earthen vessel, even though it is endowed with rich gifts.

### III. Availability.

One cannot expect to be used of the Lord in His service unless he is available. Are you close enough to Him for Him to use you? The Christian who desires to be used of the Lord must be in the position of nearness to Him and in an attitude of readiness to respond to His call. If one is to be useful for the Master, he must be ready to do any kind of service for Him, regardless of how humble it may be. No servant is better than the Lord. Christ performed the humblest tasks. He moved among the poor, the unfortunate and the diseased. He laid His hands upon them to heal them and to bless them. He did the things that the religious leaders of His time despised. He preached the truth so clearly and so persistently that He was persecuted for it and finally crucified. He left us this example, with the hope that we might follow in

His steps. If you want to be a vessel unto honour in the service of our Lord, get very near to the Master and stay there.

Anybody who wants to be useful for Christ must approach the Word of God with an unfaltering faith in it. Those who have moved the world for God have been those who have accepted the Bible as the Word of God. Christ uses the man who makes much of the Word of God. Our Lord wants regenerated men, yielded to Him, mastered by a great purpose, who have learned how to prevail in prayer, how to use God's Word, who have a vital message for the world, and who have faith enough to expect results.