

### 3 Ploughboys

“What have I gotten into now?” That’s what Josh McDowell told some of us he was thinking as he walked home the night he became a Christian. (That was the 1960s before Josh was President of Campus Crusade for Christ, author, and Christian celebrity.) I wonder if Mary thought a similar thing after Gabriel left, or 80-year-old Moses after the burning bush. In fact, scripture reveals that God loves to use nobodies. Some say it is just to show that God was doing the acts, not lowly men. But Luther thought this went deeper into God’s Love. No human goes to waste. All of life is interconnected and God saves what was thought irredeemable. God has put divine purpose in each of His children. *A ploughboy might well be as important as a bishop.*—Martin Luther. *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* Gal. 3:28 And all of this is wrapped into His Plan from the beginning (See Eph. 1). Since He is the Author, it’s not about you; it’s about Him. That’s the rub with our sinful nature. We want to appoint ourselves little gods in control. Our demands and desires become idols, false gods within our control. Being saved leaves our old nature rudderless and uncertain. Now what?

We can either speculate what God wants from us or seek revelation. The self-help side is our inclination. But ask God instead. After all, He saw you in the midst of all your sin and still has ways to use you. *“I have carried you since you were born; I have taken care of you from your birth. Even when you are old, I will be the same...I made you and will take care of you.”* Is. 46:3-4. It’s no secret what God wants. Humility (Is. 66:2) is what Jesus had (Phil. 2:6) and what made David (Ps. 23:1) and Mary (Luke 1:38) usable. Purpose in life is to serve God and He promises to fill you with courage, hope, joy, and especially His love. *“For I know the thoughts I have for you, plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”* Jer. 29:11.

Discovering His will and gifts can sometimes take suffering (Hannah) or a long time (80 yr old Moses) and time with God. It would be nice to think we could sit and meditate like a philosopher, but troubles and distractions get in the way. Cancer and bankruptcy, addiction and divorce may be bashing down the door. But faith isn’t a logic or language problem. It is a matter of the heart.

God wants us to find Him in His Word. It simplifies your life and gives it meaning. All of us were born to serve God and be part of His plan. Yet we are unique, that’s how He made us and meant us to be. Finding God’s purpose is part of His calling for you. And it may be hidden. When others see a shepherd boy with odd red hair and red face, God may see a king--David! Maybe you think, “I’m dumb as a brick.” No, you’re God’s beloved child and He may give you a Phd. in serving Him. My friend was 8 years old from an Ethiopian village when some Lutheran missionaries came by and gave him a pencil, a notebook and a Bible. He stared at it and said to himself, “Now you are a scholar.” Today he is a strong Christian and head of the physics department in a US university. It didn’t come easy. Listen to God’s Word and talk to Him in prayer. Some of God’s purposes are singular. Naomi, the widow, lived with her Moabite daughter-in-law, Ruth. But she must have steered Ruth to God and found her a good man, Boaz. God put Naomi in charge of a mission to just one person. Who was Ruth? She was King David’s great grandmother. Are you aware of His mission for you? There is the story of the Sunday school teacher who taught the shoe salesman who joined the Salvation Army band which a ballplayer, Billy Sunday, heard and gave his life to Christ. Years later another Billy—Graham—heard Sunday preach and said, “Does God want me to dedicate my life to what he is doing?” Your own spiritual gifts may take time and struggle to find. Like that first Sunday school teacher, you may never see the fruit of your gifts and talents. Yet seek diligently! God is looking for ploughboys.

What are the consequences of following scripture this way? First, we shouldn’t deny the enumerated spiritual gifts of Paul’s epistles. Never limit God. But we also know Satan finds fertile

ground in the mysterious. If a seeming 'gift' or lifestyle violates scripture or is the result of emotionalism, it isn't authentic. Another consequence is that Lutherans believe pastors and ministers receive Divine Calls. They pray about a Call, and for the Spirit to confirm. True also for the church that calls them. It's not a hire 'em-fire 'em job. The Spirit has the enlightened vote.