

The Common People

1 Cor 1:26

1 Corinthians 1:26 - For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

Introduction:

- A. Perhaps two of the best know and best liked boys in literature are Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Mark Twain must have had a very vivid imagination to be able to write so much about these two rascals. As he relates it, one day the governor came to town. Tom and Huck were terribly disappointed because the governor was not 25 feet tall and he lived in a house with a tin roof!
- B. We sometimes fall into the same error of thinking that great things are done by larger-than-life-people. This often leads to excusing ourselves from grand labors because we are so ordinary. But Abe Lincoln was recognized as quite common looking. He said, "God must have loved the common looking man, for He made so many of us!"
- C. When we look at dogs in the show ring, we are impressed with the beauty and grace they have, yet it often takes a completely different kind of dog to do the real work. Tennessee Walkers are beautiful horses yet take the saddle off and put them in a harness hooked to a plow and they won't be able to do the work.
- D. The Lord's work also demands a special type of person. However, it is a person that He made in abundance!

I. God Frequently Used Common People

A. Amos was a farmer, yet chosen to speak for God - Amos 7:10-17

Amos 7:10-17 - Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is unable to endure all his words. "For thus Amos says, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'" Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee away to the land of Judah and there eat bread and there do your prophesying! "But no longer prophesy at Bethel, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence." Then Amos replied to Amaziah, "I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet; for I am a herdsman and a grower of sycamore figs. "But the LORD took me from following the flock and the LORD said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.' "Now hear the word of the LORD: you are saying, 'You shall not prophesy against Israel nor shall you speak against the house of Isaac.' "Therefore, thus says the LORD, 'Your wife will become a harlot in the city, your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, your land will be parceled up by a measuring line and you yourself will die upon unclean soil. Moreover, Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'"

B. Elisha was also a farmer, but his influence was felt from widows to kings - 1 Kings 19:19; 2 Kings 4:1; 5:8

1 Kings 19:19 - So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him.

2 Kings 4:1 - Now a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD; and the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves."

2 Kings 5:8 - It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

- C. Moses was raised in king's palace yet had to be purified as a shepherd 40 years before leading God's people. Note: God used shepherd frequently
- D. John the Baptist was so common Jesus rebuked the people for expecting anything else - Matt 11:7-11

Matthew 11:7-11 - As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces! But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.' Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

II. *Jesus Lived And Worked With Common People*

- A. He was born in a stable
- B. Shepherds, not kings, announced His birth
- C. He was trained as a carpenter, not particularly attractive - Isa 53:1-3

Isaiah 53:1-3 - Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

- D. He chose men from common ranks, not elite (fishermen, publicans, tentmakers) - Act 4:14

Acts 4:14 - And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.

III. *What Does It All Mean?*

- A. This lesson is not to be as poor and ignorant as possible in hopes of serving God
 - 1. No special virtue in either poverty or ignorance
 - 2. Must not hope to serve God by huddling in a dark corner, renouncing all worldly possessions and shunning all contact with the lost world.
 - 3. Being a common man does not mean that at ALL.
- B. What it DOES mean is this: we must seek to please God and not ourselves, no matter what social status is.
- C. When we have His will in our hearts then He can use us to do great things
- D. Peter wasn't a preacher, he was an uneducated fisherman (if we were door-knocking, would probably skip his door)
 - 1. Jesus made him a fisher of men - Matt 4:18,19

Matthew 4:18-19 - Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

- 2. This only happened AFTER his conversion

- E. We might not be corporate executives or company presidents...most aren't. We might not be doctors, lawyers, bankers...most aren't. (Affluence has affected the church)
- F. We MUST be Christ-like (remember Isa 53:1-3)
- G. When we have our Lord's desire to do God's will, then He can use us to His glory and power
- H. Remember: God took Peter where he was and used those abilities for His glory (outspoken. Act 2)

IV. *What Can Common People Do?*

- A. Let's not think we are of no use to the Lord because we have little wealth, education or talent.
- B. The only deficiency that can prevent our serving God is LITTLE FAITH.
- C. "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something I can do" (Edward Everett Hale).
- D. Again, what can we do? Evaluate Your Gifts - Rom 12:4-8

Romans 12:4-8 - For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

1. Do what God expects of ALL Christians
 - a. Worship faithfully...no special talent required
 - b. Study and pray regularly (the more we study, the more we see to do)
 - c. Live pure lives...talent or wealth not required
 - d. Be kind, thoughtful, helpful
 - e. Give as prospered (remember widows, Macedonians)
2. Bring others to the Lord
 - a. Hannah brought Samuel - 1 Sam 1-3
 - b. Andrew brought Peter - John 1:41-42

John 1:41-42 - He found first his own brother Simon and *said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

3. Take some initiative
 - a. Joseph asked for Christ's body - Mk 15:43-45

Mark 15:43-45 - Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

- b. Priscilla and Aquila corrected Apollos - Act 18:24-26

Acts 18:24-26 - Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

- c. Some sit on their hands because never given anything to do

- 1). Whose job is it to parcel out the work (who told Good Samaritan to take care of man)
- 2). Each bee must find his own flower and bring honey to the hive.
- 3). Use the opportunities God gives you - Gal 6:10; Eph 5:16

Galatians 6:10 - So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

Ephesians 5:16 - making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

E. Working people are happy people

1. Idleness is still the devil's workshop
2. The church grows strong when members are contributing, not sapping, strength

Conclusion:

A. Give yourself to God and let Him make of you what He wills - 1 Cor 1:26-31

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 - For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."