

THEME: You are a supernatural, fruit-bearing child of God!

Woman we called: "**NaiNai**" - (Sandra King)

- Born in small country.
 - God saved her as a single adult.
 - Decided to open an orphanage in China —> didn't speak any Chinese language!
 - Opened several orphanages in different cities in China.
 - Helped over 300 "special needs" orphans get adopted - (all on donations)
 - Started a number underground churches; smuggled Bibles
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(Matthew 25:14-18; 22-23) - Parable of the Talents

- God gives the *talents* (measure of weight, not "ability")
- The talents represent our OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE.
- Not many people have received "five talents" worth of opportunity.
- All Christians receive at least some opportunity for ministry (two talents)
- God blesses and rewards your FAITHFULNESS, not the final outcome.
- God will be faithful to bless your diligence in ministry with even greater opportunity to influence people for the Kingdom of Heaven.
- "Two-talent people" receive the exact same blessing as the five-talent people.

14 "For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. **15** To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. **16** Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. **17** In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. **18** But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug a *hole* in the ground and hid his master's money.

22 "Also the one who *had received* the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' **23** His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

God uses the unpopular, the non-famous, and the "average" when He builds His Church!

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *"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 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."*

- * Every verse in Scripture is inspired, inerrant, and God-breathed!
- * Even the verses that mention people we don't know much about!

TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:19-21

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. **20** Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus. **21** Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, also Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brethren.

MAIN POINTS:

- I. Faithful Then Forgotten - (vs.19-22)
 - II. Lesser-Known Saints
 - III. God Knows Your Name
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I. Faithful Then Forgotten - (vs.19-22)

ILLUSTRATION:

- At my last church in California, a few of the pastors and staff went to visit the Fresno Rescue Mission.
- Some Christians there were faithfully serving the families, but you'd never see it or hear about it unless someone told you about it.
- People who taught the classes were written on a list, but I knew nobody!

A. "Prisca and Aquila"

- Paul met Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila (married couple) in Corinth on his second missionary journey.
- They had to flee Italy when Emperor Claudius ordered all Jews expelled from Rome (Acts 18:2).
- Paul stayed with them because they were fellow tentmakers.
- When Paul left Corinth, he took this married couple with him and left them to minister in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19).
- While in Ephesus, Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila met a fellow "*Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man who was mighty in the Scriptures.*" When they realized Apollos' understanding of the gospel was incomplete, they lovingly "*took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately*" (**Acts 18:24, 26**)
- (**Romans 16:3-5**) "*Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house.*"

B. "the household of Onesiphorus"

- **(2 Timothy 1:16-18)** *"The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me—the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus."*

C. "Erastus"

- **(Romans 16:23)** *"Erastus, the city treasurer greets you"*

D. "Trophimus"

- A native of the province of Asia, specifically the city of Ephesus, and had accompanied Paul from Greece to Troas (Acts 20:1-6).
- He was the unintentional cause of Paul's arrest for presumably bringing a Gentile into the Temple —>
 - **(Acts 21:29)** *"For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple."*

E. "Eubulus" - ???F. "Pudens" - ???G. "Linus" - ???H. "Claudia" - ???I. "all the brethren" - everyone else in the local church.

*All of these were Faithful while alive – then Forgotten!
Christianity is not about us Christians – but about Christ!*

II. Lesser-Known Saints

Onesimus - (runaway slave who later became Paul's helper)

(Philemon 10-11) "I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me."

(Colossians 4:9) "and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here."

*Social status, class, or cast does NOT matter.
God will use us if we're willing to be used for His glory alone!*

Tabitha (a.k.a. Dorcas) - seamstress who was raised from the dead

(Acts 9:36-41) "Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us." So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive."

ENCOURAGEMENT: God still uses the silver-haired saints today!

Barsabas - (Matthias was selected as an apostle instead of him)

(Acts 1:21-26) "Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us— beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us — one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

*Matthias is never mentioned again in Scripture, either!
Most of the apostles are NOT mentioned again, either!*

Phoebe - (one of the first deaconesses)

(Romans 16:1-2) "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea; that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well."

*Gender is no barrier to usefulness.
God uses people who are willing to do whatever and go wherever.*

John Mark - (initially abandoned Paul; later wrote the Gospel of Mark)

(Acts 12:12) "And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying."

(Acts 12:25) *“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark.”*

(Acts 13:5) *“When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper.”*

(Acts 13:13) *“Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem.”*

(Acts 15:36-40) *After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.*

(2 Timothy 4:11) *“Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”*

Take Aways

- God will use anyone for His glory, whether they even be slaves or those born into the “right family.”
- God can turn weakness into power and He can convert unsaved sinners into obedient children of God.
- The God of the Bible is the God of second chances!
- God sees you as useful, not useless!
- Faithfulness comes in all shapes, sizes, genders, and spiritual giftedness.
- History may not remember your name, but God does!

In fact, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, your name is written down in a very, very special book.

III. God Knows Your Name

- There are lots of people's names written in the Bible (read the Book of Numbers!). But only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will go to heaven.
- God knows those who are His; the great and the small. —> *He knows you!*

(Philippians 4:3) *"Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."*

(Revelation 3:5) *"He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."*

(Revelation 20:12) *"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."*

(Revelation 21:27) *"and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."*

INVITATION ———> Is your name written in The Lamb's Book of Life?

THEME: You are a supernatural, fruit-bearing child of God!

FINAL VERSE: **2 Timothy 4:22** The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.