



## WHATCHA' GONNA' DO WITH WHATCHA'

# GOT?

By Richard (Rick) Sessoms

*"Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." - The Apostle Peter*

"The world has yet to see what God will do with, and for, and in, and through, and by the person who is totally committed to Him."

When the person who heard those words was a little boy, his father died. The family was left so poor they lost everything they had. The creditors came and even took the family's firewood. They were so poor that whenever they went to church, their mother made the children carry their shoes until they were in sight of the church steeple. Maybe that's why Dwight, when he was old enough, began his own shoe business. The more involved he became in the shoe business, the less interested he was in God. But God didn't give up on Dwight, and one day in the back of his shoe store, Jesus Christ found him. His Sunday School teacher led Dwight to Christ. After years of drifting, he started to church again.

Dwight wanted to join the church, but he failed the membership test. The elders of this church asked him, "Dwight, what has Christ done for you?" And at that moment, Dwight couldn't think of a single thing. The next year he took the test again, and he failed again. But the church fathers felt sorry for him and let him in anyway.

Dwight was excited about what the Lord had done for him. He started inviting his friends to church. He brought children to church. But that congregation didn't like children, or at least not these children. So, on the shores of Lake Michigan, Dwight started his own Sunday School.

On one occasion, Dwight was in Dublin, Ireland on shoe business. He heard about a revival meeting being held on the outskirts of the city. He decided to go. That night, the preacher, Henry Varley, said, "The world has yet to see what God will do with, and for, and in, and through, and by the person who is totally committed to Him."

Dwight thought, "He didn't say a great person. He didn't say a learned person. He just said simply 'a person.' And

there lies within me, if I really commit myself, to be that person."

History records that 100 million people heard the gospel through this shoe salesman. Dwight Moody was never ordained; no organization ever appointed him to leadership. But he responded to God's invitation, and people affirmed his leadership as he touched more lives with the Good News in the 19th century than anyone else.

Those who knew him said, without question, that his availability far outweighed his ability. He was a huge man, and he stuttered when he talked. After he had preached his very first sermon, two of the church deacons came to him. One of the deacons suggested that Moody never preach again. The other said, "You make too many mistakes in your grammar."

Moody replied, "I know I make many mistakes, but I'm doing the very best with what I've got." Then he turned to the deacon and said, "Sir, you've got grammar enough; what are you doin' for the Master? Whatcha' gonna' do with whatcha' got?"

In the third chapter of Acts, Luke records the story of a man who had been crippled since birth. His handicap couldn't be hidden. He had never remembered a day when he hadn't been a burden to somebody. And it gnawed at his dignity. He couldn't walk so he couldn't work. All he could do was ask for handouts. So every day this man sat in front of the temple. With others like himself, he held out his hat and begged.

One day, two men passed by. The crippled man gave them his usual request: "Please pity the lame. Mister, would you spare a little pocket change, enough to buy a crust of bread."

And Peter, the fisherman said, "In the name of Jesus Christ

of Nazareth, stand up and walk.” There was no gradual cure. He was healed in an instant. He went just skipping and dancing through the streets of Jerusalem. But there are questions. Why this day? He had sat there so many days before. He had sat there for years. Why the healing now? And why did God use Peter and John? Many religious people went in and out of the temple every day and passed by him. It seems that God channeled His very best through these two disciples for several reasons.

First, they were willing to be interrupted. In Acts 3:1, Luke recorded that Peter and John were going to the temple to pray. It was three in the afternoon, and they had an appointment to pray. But as they approached the entrance, the familiar pitch they had heard many times before: “Hey mister, have a denarius to spare?” And a dozen hats were turned upside down blocking their pathway to the temple door.

They were interrupted. God uses people who are willing for their plans to be interrupted. Several years ago, my wife, Tina, and I were missionaries to Indonesia. Most mornings while we lived there, I would get up early and pray, “Lord, let me serve somebody today. Send people in my direction so that I can influence them for Your glory.” I think it was an earnest prayer.

And God would send those opportunities, but often at the wrong time. For example, Markus was a student at the Bible school where we taught. Markus started coming to our door. Markus had needs, but I hated seeing Markus. I’d see him coming, and I’d think, “Oh, no.” I didn’t hate Markus, but he seemed to always show up at the wrong time. He would come at meal time, or he would knock on the door while I was trying to prepare my sermons on love. I tried to be polite to Markus, but he discerned my impatience. And he stopped coming.

Some of our best opportunities for ministry happen when we’re willing for our plans to be interrupted. It’s interesting how Peter and John could have responded when the beggar made his pitch. They could have said, “Well, you know, it would be nice to help this guy, but the service starts in five minutes - and we’ve got to get in and find a seat. Friend, we see you have a need, but you caught us at the wrong time. Could you come back when we don’t have something else scheduled?”

Or John could have said, “Hey, look at all the other people around here. There are hundreds of folks going to church this afternoon. Why can’t one of

them help? Am I the only one around here who knows how to provide some leadership! Do I have to do it all?”

Or Peter turns to John and says, “Yeah, this guy has a need. I know what we’ll do. Let’s go in and tell the temple administrator. Administrators are supposed to take care of this kind of thing, aren’t they?” God channels His best through those who are willing to be interrupted with Kingdom opportunities.

Of course, I don’t know that Peter and John had these thoughts. But I know we often think this way. **We wait for someone else to take the lead, for someone else to legitimize the ministry through appointment. But God often channels His best through those who obey the prompting of God and are affirmed through the response of people.**

Verse 6 is the central message of Luke’s text. Peter said, “Look here.” When the lame man looked up, expecting to get something from them, Peter said, “I don’t have a nickel to my name, but what I have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!” God channels His best through those who use what they’ve got.

By Peter’s own admission, he was powerless. He shouted at the lame man, “By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Peter must have been thinking, “Lord, I can say the words, but I can’t make him walk. So please God, do something . . . now!” God blesses people who trust Him for what they lack.

So what are you doing with what you have? The world is still amazed to see what God will do with, and for, and in, and through, and by the person who is totally committed to Him.



Rick Sessoms

