**What Can I Do?**

**Introduction**

Last week we looked at Nehemiah 3 and we saw that everyone was involved in the building on the wall. No one was an “expert” but everyone was willing to work because the work was needed. We made the connection that we all need to be working for the Lord and we cannot afford to sit on the sideline. But the question we often ask is, “What can I do?” We feel often feel limited in what we are able to do. We look at characters like Moses who lead the nation out of Israel and we think, “I cannot do that!”

This morning, I want to look at a few key characters and note some of the simple things that they are praised for. Instead of focusing on what we cannot do what are things that we can do to help.

**1. Paul**

When we look at all that Paul did in his life we might be tempted to think that we could never accomplish all that he did. But due to living for the Lord, Paul often spent a lot of time in prison.

* Acts 23:18: Paul the prisoner
* Acts 21-28
* Eph 3:1; 4:1; 6:20
* Phil 1:7, 13-14, 17
* Col 4:18
* 2 Tim 1:8, 16; 2:9
* Philemon 1, 9-10, 13
* Rom 16:7; Col 4:10; Philemon 23: Fellow prisoners
* Philemon 9: Paul the aged

a) Response to mistreatment

* Acts 16:25: Prayer and singing (praising God)
* Phil 1:12-14: Thankful gospel continues to spread
* We cannot control our circumstances but show how to respond in a godly way

b) During Paul’s times in prison sometimes he could continue ministry

* Acts 28:30-31
* Phil 4:22: Caesar’s household
* Opportunities might be limited but he sought to make the most of them

c) Paul wrote letters

* Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon)
* 2 Timothy

Even when Paul was old and confided by prison, he found ways to challenge and encourage others in the Lord.

**2. Tabitha Served**

Acts 9:36-43

All the disciples (9:38) are distressed and send two men to Peter and beg him to hurry and come to him. Peter has a hard time getting to the room where the body is because he is bombarded by widows who show him all that Tabitha did for them.

Servitude makes a lasting impact. We know nothing about her wealth or social standing, but we know that she was active serving. Wherever there is a need there is Tabitha.

**3. Barnabas encouraged**

* Acts 4:36: Son of Encouragement
* Acts 11:22-24: Encouraged those who were young in the faith
* Acts 14:21-22: Encouraged those going through difficult time

The world is filled with complainers and fault finders, we need encouragers. We need those who will teach the younger in the faith (Titus 2:3-5). We need those who will encourage others in times of pain and hurt (2 Cor 1:4).

**4. Epaphras prayed**

Colossians 4:12

Pray does much good (Hezekiah, 2 Kgs 19:20)

**5. Un-named Widow**

Mark 12:41-44

Gave what she could

**6. Epaphroditus**

Phil 2:25-27

Focus on others despite problems

**7. Conclusion…Can you:**

* Find ways to serve the Lord despite your limited conditions
* Serve like Tabitha?
* Encourage like Barnabas?
* Pray like Epaphras?
* Give like the un-named widow?
* Care like Epaphroditus?