

FROM THE PASTURE TO THE PALACE

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Scripture: 1 Chronicles 17:7

Sometimes, life has a way of throwing curved balls that make us think of ourselves as 'less than'. And when that happens, we often respond in two ways, either by becoming overly gregarious and outgoing, trying to project confidence that we may not actually have or even feel. Or, we retreat inward, keeping to ourselves, kind of flying under the radar and doing our best not to make waves and get noticed.

But in God's wonderful creation, every one of us is significant, not because of what we do or how visible we are, but because God has written His purpose for each one of our lives into our very DNA. His purpose, a godly, divine purpose. The gifts and talents and attitudes and character that make us who we are have been put in by God Himself. So it means understanding why we are in this world, at this time, in this generation, among these people and in this family, has a divine purpose. We didn't and aren't here by chance.

But life as we know it has a way of knocking us off course and off balance. Hard blows, painful circumstances, betrayals, disappointments, losses, all of these can make us withdraw and hide sometimes or settle for being less than God intended us to be. and yet, beloved, this is not the place for a child of God. It's so important for us to recognize this truth. And this truth is this: that we are never to be defined by our circumstances. We can become who God designed us to be in spite of them. We must not and cannot be defined by our circumstances because God never intended that to be.

So this morning, I want us to look at our lives and then through scripture, and then see what God has for us if we can look through His lenses as well. We'll look at a few biblical characters who once felt small and unseen and even unqualified, and yet were shaped into men and women of great significance by the God who met them exactly where they were. This is my prayer for us as we journey through this morning's meditation, that we see ourselves not through the lens of inadequacy, but through the eyes of a God who calls us significant, chosen, and full of purpose.

1 Chronicles 17:7 God is speaking through Nathan the prophet. And He says this:

"Now, therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader over My people Israel.'" Powerful words – from the pasture to the palace.

When we open to this passage, we find that God is reminding David of where his story began. He doesn't start by talking about David's palace, his victories, or even his reputation. God begins by saying: I took you from the pasture, from the mountain slopes to the highest place in the palace. It's almost as if the Lord is saying to David, "David, don't forget where I found you. You weren't in a palace; you were in a pasture. You weren't wearing a crown; you were holding a shepherd's staff. You were unknown to the world, but were known to Me."

God meets us right where we are, beloved, in the ordinary, the overlooked, the fearful, and maybe even the broken. He sees not only who we are today, but the kind of person that we have become through our situations and circumstances, things that we have endured or may even be enduring today. Then, with infinite patience, He begins to reshape us into the kind of person that He originally designed us to be, bringing truth to Paul's words in Romans 8:28 *"He makes all things work together*

for good.” All things, every situation, every circumstance, everything that has confronted you, tried to belittle you or demean you. Everything. He makes all of them work for good because you love Him and are called according to His purposes.

In other words, God doesn't allow our circumstances to cancel out His purposes. He works through them, over them, and sometimes, in spite of them, so that His original design for our lives will still find the light of day. And this, beloved, is the story of grace.

So, I'd like for us, as we flesh it out a little bit, to look at what we've said so far through the grid of five biblical characters, starting with David, from the pasture to the palace.

1. DAVID – FROM PASTURE TO PALACE.

When God found David, he was the youngest in the family, so overlooked that when Samuel came to anoint a king, David wasn't even called into the house. He was out in the fields, tending to sheep. But God saw him there. While David was caring for his father's sheep, God was preparing him to shepherd His people. While David was fighting lions and bears, God was training him for Goliath. And while David was learning to play the harp, God was preparing his heart to write so many psalms that would touch thousands of people all the way down to us.

The pasture became the training ground for the palace. David didn't promote himself; God picked him up, piece by piece, and shaped him into a man after God's own heart. And God still does that today. He meets us in small beginnings and ordinary places. He takes our shepherd's staff and turns it into a scepter. He takes our obscurity and turns it into an opportunity. He takes our availability and turns it into anointing.

2. GIDEON – FROM FEARFUL TO FAITHFUL.

We meet Gideon in Judges 6. He's hiding in a winepress – hiding, threshing wheat in fear of the Midianites. He's afraid, he's discouraged, he's uncertain. And he says, “I am the least in the family.” That's what he calls himself. But God greets him differently. God says to him, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” This to one who's saying, “I'm the least. I'm the smallest in the clan of the tribes of Israel.” God says to him, “Mighty warrior!” God doesn't speak to Gideon based on what he is; He speaks to him based on what He will make him, and what He already scripted into him – to be a mighty warrior. Gideon saw himself as weak; God saw him as a warrior.

Isn't that just what God does? He meets us in our fear and calls us by the potential that we have. And maybe today, beloved, you're fearful. Maybe fear has wrapped itself around your heart, afraid of tomorrow. Not sure if this new job will pan out, not sure if you chose the right career path, not sure if that fragile relationship will stand. Just fearful.

But hear this. God meets you right there. He's not waiting for your fear to disappear before He steps in. He meets you in your fear and speaks courage into it. Because where fear sees uncertainty, God sees potential. Where fear whispers, “You can't”, God declares, “I, with you” and it makes all the difference.

3. RUTH – FROM GRIEF TO GRACE.

Ruth's story began in sorrow. She loses her husband, her home, and her future. And she follows Naomi back to Bethlehem, poor, widowed, and with absolutely no prospects. But in her grief, she

makes a faith choice. She says, “Your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God.” And God meets Ruth in her loss and turns it into legacy.

She began gleaning in the corners of the field. And by the end of the story, she owns the field through her marriage to Boaz. She becomes the great-grandmother of King David, and then forms the lineage of Jesus Himself.

God meets us in our grief, in our emptiness, in our weakness. And He takes our mourning and makes meaning out of it. He takes our ashes and makes them beautiful. You may be in a season of loss at this time. but remember, God’s story isn’t finished yet. God hasn’t finished writing your story yet. He can take what feels empty today and fill it with His grace and change things that are going on in your life.

4. MOSES – FROM EXILE TO ENCOUNTER.

When we meet Moses in Exodus 3, he’s in exile, a fugitive who once dreamed of being a deliverer. Now he’s 80 years old, tending sheep in the wilderness, convinced that his best years are behind him. But God meets him in the desert, in a burning bush that will not burn out. And Moses says, “Who am I?” And God replies, “I will be with you.” Just that wonderful phrase that changes everything. “I will be with you.” Moses offers excuses. “I can’t speak. They won’t listen. Send someone else.” Yet, God doesn’t give up on him. He meets Moses right where he is, in his insecurity.

All of us know what insecurity is. We all know what it means to feel insecure. It’s that place of misplaced identity. It’s what happens when we forget our source and start doubting our significance. Psychologists tell us that insecurity causes us to avoid risks because we fear failure or rejection. We stop going out on a limb. We stop taking risks. We stop doing things that might be a little difficult because we don’t want to fall or lose out

That’s exactly what Moses was doing. “I can’t do this. I’m not this. I won’t be able to.” All of it was his way of rejecting God’s overture, not out of rebellion but out of fear. But God doesn’t give up on him. He gives Moses a new sense of purpose. And the man who ran away becomes the man who leads a nation out of slavery.

Maybe, you’re saying the same things today. Maybe your answer to God this morning is: I can’t. I’m not ready. I don’t have what it takes. But like Moses, God isn’t asking for your ability. He’s only asking for your availability. When we bring our insecurities to Him, He replaces it with His identity, and that changes everything.

5. MARY – FROM OBSCURITY TO OBEDIENCE.

Mary was a young woman in a small town, unnoticed and ordinary. No one knew her name, but heaven did. When Gabriel greeted her, he said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you.” She didn’t have any influence, money, or status. But she had a willing heart. She said, “Be it unto me according to Your Word.” And through that simple obedience, God brought His Son into this world.

God meets us in our obscurity, wherever you are. Hiding maybe, not looking to get involved in anything, just marking time. God says, “I know you. I created you with a purpose, and that purpose is never to hide. It is to fulfill everything that I have endowed you with.” He is, after all, the potter, and we are the clay.

He never loses sight of His design, the design that He had in mind when He formed each one of you, each one of us. When the Master Potter put us together, He knew exactly what we were going to fulfill in our time, in our age, in this image, these situations and circumstances, to fulfill them. God built that package so that we could be a purpose-driven person. And all through life, He continues to reshape us, remold us, not by force, but by love, as we yield ourselves in His hands.

Each of these stories – David, Gideon, Ruth, Moses, and Mary – tell us the same truth. God meets us when we have lost our way, when we have become fearful, when we think we amount to nothing. He never looks at where we are. He always remembers our original design. Always.

Prophet Jeremiah reminds us in the 18th chapter, that God's hands never stop shaping. He doesn't discard the clay when it's flawed. He reworks it. He doesn't give up when it cracks; He adds water and starts again. And when He's finished, what once looked ordinary becomes extraordinary because the touch of the Potter has transformed it.

Maybe today, beloved, you feel like that cracked piece of clay, flawed, tired, or even forgotten. But take heart. The Potter's hands are still on you. He hasn't discarded you. He's simply reshaping you. And what feels like breaking, may actually be remaking and remolding. And when He's finished, your life will carry the unmistakable touch of grace. A story rewritten by grace.

God took David from the pasture to the palace. He took Gideon from fear to faith. He took Ruth from grief to grace, Moses from exile to encounter, and Mary from complete obscurity to obedience. And He can take you from wherever you are this morning and make you into what He alone sees that you can be. He can.

Maybe today, you feel unnoticed, fearful, broken, or even uncertain. But take heart. The Potter still works. He meets you in your present condition, but He sees your future completion. He doesn't wait for you to be perfect. He simply asks you to be pliable. God meets us where we are, where you are right now. And His promise is that He will not leave you there. He will take you; He will remold you into the kind of person that He knows that you ought to be. He will draw you out of your hiding place and place you on the mountain that He wants you to be.

So maybe this morning, you walked into church feeling like you're a nobody, just going through the motions, wondering if your life amounts to anything. But perhaps through this message, God's Spirit has been whispering, knocking on your heart's door and saying, "There are no nobodies in the kingdom of God. In God's kingdom, everybody is a somebody, chosen and created with divine intention.

I wonder if today could be a turning point in your life, a moment to pivot and change, maybe where you begin to see yourself in a new light, to say, "God made me. I know that. He made me with a purpose and God gave me the ability to fulfill that purpose through the power of His Holy Spirit. If that's where you are and what you're saying in light of this message, then there are two things that you need to do.

- 1) Give the Holy Spirit permission to do what only He can do. You need to give Him permission to bring change, healing, and renewal deep within you.
- 2) Yield your will to Him. Say, "Lord, I'm open. I'm open to thinking differently, behaving differently, living differently. I'm open to the truth that I'm not a nobody, but a somebody. And I will give you full rein, Lord, to shape me into the kind of person that You created me."

Two things: allow the Holy Spirit to work, and let your will align with His.

So if that's where you are this morning, I want to pray for you. I want to pray that heaven and earth will come together in each one of our lives, that His will becomes our will. And from this moment on, that if you walked in here thinking that you're just a nobody, that you leave here as a somebody, that you leave here as a son, as a daughter of the Most High God. A prince or a princess of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, built and placed on this earth for a reason, for a purpose that was scripted way before God put you on this earth. And you're here to fulfill a destiny.

Let us pray.

Amen.
