

A young boy with dark hair and eyes is peering through a hole in a wooden door. He is looking directly at the camera with a curious expression. The door is made of dark wood and has a large, irregular hole cut out of it. The boy's hands are visible, holding the edges of the door around the hole. The background is dark and out of focus.

Reluctant Servants of the Lord

Matthew 21:28-31

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- “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, The first.”

Reluctant Servants of the Lord

- John Mark would not go to the work, but later he excelled in the work
 - Acts 15:36-38 - “Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing. 37 Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.”

Reluctant Servants of the Lord

- John Mark would not go to the work, but later he excelled in the work
 - Acts 13:13 - “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.”
 - 2Tim. 4:11 - “Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.”

Reluctance Is Not Necessarily Wrong

- There will always be a need for leaders to have a God-honoring reluctance. What is a reluctance that honors God?
 - Realizes that the task before us is too big for a man unaided by God
 - Acknowledges by faith that God has the power to accomplish His will through any instrument, regardless of how flawed it may appear to us

Reluctance Is Not Necessarily Wrong

- A spiritually healthy, reluctant leader is one who repents of and confesses his own sins
- He conscientiously works to be free from selfish motives and attempts to build up his own name
- It is the kind of reluctance that goes to the work, but also makes God great and the servant small

Reluctant Leaders

- Moses argued on the basis of speech
 - Ex. 4:1, 10 - “Then Moses answered and said, But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you... 10 Then Moses said to the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

Reluctant Leaders

- God's answer
 - Ex. 4:11-12 - “So the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? 12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.”

Reluctant Leaders

- Gideon argued on the basis of inadequacy
 - Judges 6:13-15 - “Gideon said to Him, O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you? 15 So he said to Him, O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.”

Reluctant Leaders

- God's answer
 - Judges 6:16 - “And the LORD said to him, Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”

Reluctant Leaders

- Isaiah argued on the basis of his sinful nature
 - Isa. 6:1-5 - “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory! 4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 So I said: Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”

Reluctant Leaders

- God's answer

- Isa. 6:6-8 - “Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said: Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, And your sin purged. 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us? Then I said, Here am I! Send me.”

Reluctant Leaders

- Jeremiah argued on the basis of youth
 - Jer. 1:4-6 - “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations. 6 Then said I: Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”

Reluctant Leaders

- God's answer

- Jer. 1:7-10 - “But the LORD said to me: Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD. 9 Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. 10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.”

Reluctant Leaders

- Ananias argued on the basis of rumor
 - Acts 9:13-14 - “Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”
- God's answer
 - Acts 9:15-16 - “But the Lord said to him, Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.”

Reluctant Leaders

- Reluctance to serve is predicated on self-assessment.
- Willingness to serve is predicated on God-assessment.

Overcoming Reluctance With A Plan

- The desire to go toward... in the direction of work
 - Acts 8:26 - “Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is desert.”
- The desire to teach in spiritual deserts with no expectation of results
 - Acts 8:26

Overcoming Reluctance With A Plan

- The plan is put into action
 - Acts 8:27 - “So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship”
 - Judges 5:15 - “Among the divisions of Reuben There were great resolves of heart.”
- The refusal to waste time after receiving orders.
 - Acts 8:30 - “So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, Do you understand what you are reading?”

Overcoming Reluctance With A Plan

- The readiness to challenge.
 - Acts 8:30 - “...Do you understand what you are reading?”
- The start from the point at where people are
 - Acts 8:35 - “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him”

Overcoming Reluctance With A Plan

- The one true message.
 - Acts 8:35 - “...preached Jesus to him”
 - 1Cor. 2:2 - “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”
 - Gal. 1:8 - “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”

Overcoming Reluctance With A Plan

- The exposition of the Scriptures for understanding of hearers.
 - Acts 8:37 - “Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- The proclamation of Christ wherever people are found.
 - Acts 8:40 - “But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”