

**Body Building - Part Three**  
**“Caught Empty Handed” – Dealing with Obedience**  
*Pastor Dale Campfield - May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011*

**Intro:**

**Matt 28:19** “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

**ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve**

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

**Premise of Series:** To Build up the Body of Christ in Order to Make a Kingdom IMPACT.

**Thoughts:** Why does the church exist? What is our purpose? I am convinced that the first & most important part of our purpose as a church is to seek to win the lost.

And I'm certain that as long as we recognize that as our ultimate purpose, the reason we exist, is to reach the lost, then as a congregation we will continue to grow. And I tell you unashamedly, "We plan to continue growing."

In the 2nd chapter of Acts, the church in Jerusalem began on the Day of Pentecost with 3,000 members, & by the 4th chapter it had grown to 5,000 men, not counting women & children. The Bible tells us that the Lord was adding to the church daily "those who were being saved." It was a growing church, & they had a concern. "How do we take care of all these new Christians?"

One of the most exciting times in life is when a baby is born. The parents rejoice, & we all "ooh" & "ah" over it. Then they take the baby home, & reality sets in. They're changing diapers & losing sleep & trying to figure out what's wrong with the crying child. The joy of new birth is followed by the responsibility of caring for & raising that child.

It's the same way in the church. People come to the Lord & we rejoice. But then comes the responsibility of bringing these baby Christians up in the Lord. Who is going to nurture them? Who is going to teach them & pray with them? Who is going to counsel them? Who is going to encourage them?

The early church evidently did a fairly good job of that, because we read in Acts 2:42 that these early Christians "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching & fellowship, in the breaking of bread & prayers." You see, there is a second part to our purpose, & that is to make disciples, to nurture, to build up the Christians, to help them be all that they can be in this life. Thus we need, "Body Building"; so that the body of Christ can go forth, in unity, making an IMPACT for the Kingdom of God in making disciples of all in the path of their lives.

**Theme Verses: Eph. 4:11-16**

**Key verse 12**

"Prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

**Question:** Why is this important?

**Answer:** Because the return of Christ is coming soon, and we, as the body of Christ, must do everything we can to make as great of an IMPACT for the Kingdom of God in the hearts of the people in the path of our life that we can. (Show our path to Discipleship here)

**Series Overview:** Here is what we will be dealing with during this series...

Part 1 – “Caught by God”...	...Dealing with Intimacy
Part 2 – “Caught Red Handed”...	...Dealing with Sin
Part 3 – “Caught Empty Handed”...	...Dealing with Obedience
Part 4 – “Caught Loose Lipped”...	...Dealing with Strife
Part 5 – “Caught without Excuse”...	...Dealing with Confusion
Part 6 – “Caught Silent Lipped”...	...Dealing with Worship

Let’s continue.....

### **Part 3 – “Caught Empty Handed”...      ...Dealing with Obedience**

Go ahead, hold up your hands. What kind of hands are they? Are they servant’s hands? Are they metaphorically dirty, calloused from years of service? Or are they pampered hands, carefully manicured, soft, clean, and smooth? Are you right or left handed?

A lot of things come to mind when you think about your hands.

**For example...**

The song, “Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the waters.”

The song, “He’s got the whole world, in His hands.”

Hands can clap.... Make motions... etc... Talk to the hand... protect... slap and make harm...

Holding hands with Butch the first time...

How about the old game ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors,’?

Today the Question is **“What is in your hand?” Have you been caught empty handed?**

Christians are unfruitful because they believe they are not qualified to do what God calls them to do! We look for something that will help us feel we can do the job God calls us to do....but that something is usually something we don’t now have.

Satan’s fear is not our being a Christian, it is our getting involved in ministry as a Christian...for if we stay unproductive or sedentary, Christianity will quit spreading.

There is no doubt about God’s call on our lives...it is a call to be active in ministry...the question we struggle with is "how to do it". The Bible will teach us that we possess whatever is necessary to do what God calls us to do, we just need to let Him touch those areas of our life supernaturally to become effective for Him.

**Ecclesiastes 9:10**

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all of your might.”

We look at what we have in our hands, what’s in our hands, how can we use what we have by God for His kingdom, etc. we often times get the following thoughts...

**THOUGHTS OF WHAT I HAVE IN MY HAND**

**I. What I have may seem INSIGNIFICANT**

**Let me introduce you to Samson.**

Let me tell you about a man who took something insignificant in his hand, and God made it miraculous. There was a man of God named Samson. God had set him apart and made him a judge over Israel. Samson had super-human strength which was given to him by God and God had given him many victories.

Samson finds himself in real trouble. He has been bound and is going to be delivered into the hands of his enemies, the Philistines. As he was being delivered into their hands, God’s Spirit moved, and the ropes which bound him broke.

Judges 15:14-15 (KJV) Jdg 15:14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

Yet he was still surrounded by a great host of trained and armed fighting men. If you and I had been there we would have said " Samson, give up. You don’t have a sword or a shield.’ But the Bible says Sampson grabbed a nearby object and used to kill 1,000 fighting men. What did he grab? Was it a sword or a spear? No, it was the jawbone of a Donkey.

You might say what could Samson possibly do with a jawbone? Samson couldn’t do anything with it, but it was all he had in his hand and he trusted God with it. And God took that insignificant object and wrought a great victory.

**Judges 15:15**

*Samson found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.*

What brought that victory? Was it the jawbone? No it was the man who held the jawbone who was willing to let God use what was in his hand. No matter how insignificant it seemed.

The devil is telling you that the thing which God has in your hand, time, talent, or treasure is insignificant. And it is insignificant if you try to use it in your own strength or hide it away. But take that which seems to be insignificant. That which seems to be nothing but a jawbone, and give it to God. And God will take that which He has placed in your hand to bring a great spiritual victory.

## II. What I have may seem TOO SMALL

What I Have May not seem like Enough.

### Let me introduce you to a Widow.

Some think they don't have enough TIME, ENERGY. I could be faithful to church but that cuts into my time. I could teach that class but I don't have enough energy. Lets look at a lady who learned to give all that was in her hand.

Elijah, the man of God, had been dwelling by a brook and was being fed by ravens. Then the brook dried up and God told him to go to a city called Zarephath and to find a widow woman who would feed him. Elijah found the widow woman and told her what God had said.

But when she looked at what was in her hand, it didn't seem to be enough.

### 1 Kings 17:12-15

**12**“As surely as the LORD your God lives,” she replied, “I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

**13**Elijah said to her, “Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. **14**For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.’”

**15**She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. **16**For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

What would have happened if she had hoarded that which was in her hand? They would have starved. What happened when they gave it to God? He multiplied it over and over.

Christian, are you hoarding your time? You are using it for yourself instead of giving it to God. You can spiritually starve to death.

Give what you have to God and let Him multiply it and you will be spiritually full and running over. The reason many think they are starving in a church is because they are keeping their time and energy for themselves.

## III. What I have may seem LAUGHABLE

That Which God Has Placed In My Hand May Make Others Laugh. You desire to be used of God. You desire to win victories for Christ. You desire to fight a good fight. But what God has given you is just laughed at by the world. How can one person make a difference with what God has given you?

### **Let me introduce you to David.**

The Philistines were set to do battle with the Children of Israel. A Philistine giant challenged Israel day after day to send out a man to fight him. No one was willing to fight him except a shepherd boy named David.

#### **1 Sam. 17:42-44**

<sup>42</sup> He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. <sup>43</sup> He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup> "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

And when David went out to do battle, the giant laughed at him. All David had was a sling shot in his hand. But when the giant fell from a stone in his forehead no one was laughing anymore and a great victory was won.

People may laugh at what God has given you. They may tell you it is impossible for you to do anything for God. But you remember David and say, people may laugh at what I have but God it's yours. And He will use it to defeat some great giants.

### **IV. What I have may seem OLD AND UNQUALIFIED**

What God Has Placed In My Hand is OLD AGE and UNQUALITYFIED in an Unimportant Place.

### **Let me introduce you to Moses.**

Look at Moses: 80 years old working for his father-in-law, keeping sheep, on the back side of the desert, in a foreign country.

Look at the EXCUSES

- 1] Who Am I?! - Exodus 3:1-12
- [2] Who Should I Say Sent Me?! - Exodus 3:13-22
- [3] What If They Don't Believe Me?! - Exodus 4:1-9
- [4] But I'm Not Eloquent! - Exodus 4:10-12
- [5] Lord, Send Someone Else! - Exodus 4:13-17

#### **Exodus 4:2**

Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied.

We all know the Rod was something that he used every day controlling the sheep but when Moses gave it to God, it led the Children of Israel to the Promise Land.

A. To think that Moses called it "JUST A STAFF."

So What do you have in your hand that God could use? We can find many other instances of others who thought they didn't have much to offer, but God used what they had mightily.

#### B. THERE WAS NOTHING EXTRAORDINARY ABOUT MOSES OR THIS ROD

1. The rod was just a simple shepherd's rod
2. Without the rod Moses was just like any other man
3. The rod didn't make Moses unique from all other Shepherd
4. The rod in Moses hand was just another rod, But given to God from Moses hand it was used to do the miraculous
5. God can't use anything you've got until you let go of it
6. God doesn't have you until he has what's in your hand
7. As long as you're in God's hand, all God needs is what's in your hand

#### C. ONCE GIVEN TO GOD THIS ROD WAS USED IN THE HAND OF MOSES

1. To confront to soothsayers of Pharaohs court (7:12)
2. To turn the waters of Egypt into Blood (7:17-20)
3. To bring frogs upon the land (8:5)
4. To cause lice throughout all the land of Egypt. (8:16)
5. To bring thunder and hail throughout the land (9:23)
6. To bring an east wind that brought the locusts across the land. (10:13)
7. To cause the waters of the Red Sea to stand up like a wall (14:16)
8. To cause the bottom of that sea to dry up so they could pass
9. To cause the waters of the Red sea to come back upon Pharaohs armies
10. To bring forth water from the rock at Horeb to supply their needs (17:5)

### V. What I have may seem TOO VALUABLE TO GIVE UP

#### Let me introduce you to A Small Boy.

I can't help but think of the small boy with the five loaves of bread and two fishes for lunch. That was his lunch! If you had lunch, in the desert, hot and thirsty, no restaurants around and your mom packed you a lunch – you'd want to eat it! "It's MINE!", is what children learn to say real quick.

#### **John 6:9**

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?"

WHAT IS THAT IN THINE HAND, LAD? - Five loaves and two fishes Not much you say, but given to God it was used to feed 5000. What if the Lad had held on to his lunch?

### VI. What I have may seem CONFUSING

#### Let me introduce you to Gideon.

WHAT IS THAT IN THY HAND, GIDEON - lamps, pitchers, and trumpets.

**Judges 7:16**

And he divided the 300 men into three companies and put trumpets into the hands of all of them and empty jars, with torches inside the jars.

Nobody would ever in their right mind plan to go into battle the way Gideon did. Thank God he was willing to take what was in his hand and use it the way God said use it. God can do wonders when we give him what is in our hand.

**Conclusion:**

What do you have in your hand?

God takes the weakest instruments to accompany his mightiest ends. A rod, a ram's horn, a cake of barley meal, an earthen pitcher, a shepherd's sling, anything, in short, when used of God, will do his appointed work. Men imagine that splendid ends can only be reached by splendid means, but such is not God's way. He can use a crawling worm as well as a scorching sun, a gourd as well as a vehement east wind.

There may be a talent in your hand, so to speak, that God is waiting to use for his service: Can you cook? Play the piano? Do math? Hammer a nail? Strike up a conversation? Organize? Repair? Cut hair? Clean? Draw? Rock a baby? Act?

"What is that in your hand?"

What talents, what natural abilities and propensities do you already have which God is longing to use for his appointed work?

I believe God would also ask you that question this morning regarding:

**It's not what's in your hand, it's what you let God do with it! OBEDIENCE!**

And as you do.... You wait, you watch, you'll see!