

What Can One Person Do?

Joe Slater

7.9 Billion people now inhabit this planet! What difference can one person (you) make? Oh, sure, the President of the United States is only one person, but he can make a huge difference. A multi-millionaire can make a noticeable difference. But ordinary folks like you or me – do we really matter?

In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus said, *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* Our Lord was talking to men whom the world would classify as nobodies. They weren’t rich, famous, or highly educated. They were ordinary working-class people. But did they ever make a difference! And so can you and I!

A little salt can go a long way. Just a sprinkle on bland food makes it palatable. But the salt must not remain in the shaker – it must contact the food to produce the desired result.

Just a small light gives guidance in an otherwise pitch-dark room. The psalmist said God’s word was a lamp to his feet and a light to his path (Psalm 119:105). As our behavior models God’s word and as we share His word with others, we illuminate a world darkened by ignorance and sin.

Be not dismayed; you are salt and light!

Sufficient Grace

“Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:7-9 NIV).

Because I’m a Polio survivor, this passage has become very personal to me, and that, no doubt, colors my interpretation. I know about my own “thorn in my flesh,” and “pleading with the Lord to take it away from me” (more than three times). I used to think, partly because I thought that this was God’s answer to my prayers, God’s answer to Paul was “No!”

I now see that I was wrong. God’s answer was not “No.” His answer was (and is for me) “My grace...” That’s far from “No!” We usually think of grace only in terms of the basis of our salvation. That it is, and we should sing loud Hallelujahs for that! But God’s grace means more than that. It means God’s awesome presence in our lives, which we should receive with awe. It is His power by which we face and move through every day, and every circumstance victorious in His grace. Now, that’s a profound answer!

There’s more. There’s the reason for the thorn and how God will use the bearer of the weakening thorn. Beyond keeping Paul and all God’s thorn bearers humble, weakness is the ideal condition for the presence of God’s perfect power. Now, “Why Me?” becomes “Why not Me?” Being ashamed of my weakness becomes glorying in God’s use of my weakness.

Understanding that changed and guided my life. Maybe that is why Paul shares this detail of his life. Many more lives than mine have been changed by understanding the ongoing power of God’s grace. Perhaps it has changed or will change your life.

--Tim Kelley (Littleton, CO)

I THANK GOD FOR YOU ALL

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all” (Romans 1:8). “I thank my God always on your behalf” (1 Corinthians 1:4). “I thank, my God upon every remembrance of you” (Philippians 1:3). “We give thanks to God always for you all” (1 Thessalonians 1:2). “We are bound to thank God always for you brethren” (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

Paul loved the brethren. He thanked God for them. He did not take the brethren for granted. He did not write disparaging things to them or about them. He did not condone evil lives. He did not tolerate false teaching. He loved the brethren and, by the Spirit, wrote those things they most needed, and at the same time thanked God for them.

We should thank God for the brethren because they have been born again and are children of God (John 3:3-5). *“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).* What a privilege to be brethren in the Lord!

We should thank God for the brethren because of the advantages of fellowship. *“That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, that you may also have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:3).* Faithful brethren are in fellowship with one and other and with God and His Son.

We should thank God for brethren because of what we mean to one another. We can exhort one another (Hebrews 10:25), pray for one another (James 5:16), love one another (Romans 13:8), and comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

There is no way to put a price tag on such valuable considerations. I thank God for you all.

--Don Deffenbaugh (via *Old Paths*)

I think things at church began to go downhill when preachers took “Study” off their door and put up “Office” instead.