

SOUTH LANGLEY MB CHURFCH
Sunday, August 3, 2025

It was the spring of 1973 and I was on my way to the summit of the Roger's Pass, where the Northlander Hotel was located. I had just finished my 2nd year at what was known at that time as Trinity Junior College, a 2 year college (now it's better known as Trinity Western University). That spring, the Northlander hotel had done an advertising blitz at Trinity, to get university students to sign up to work at the hotel for the summer. The money was good as it also included "isolation pay", it meant being away from home and all the freedoms that brings, and it would be fun to meet other young adults, so I applied and was immediately hired.

In the interview, we were told they needed a variety of people for a variety of jobs. Therefore, we were to put down our experience and training, plus where we would like to work - house keeping, dining room, restaurant, front desk, etc. The previous summer I had worked as a waitress in a restaurant in Boston Bar, and had been taught the finer points of fine dining service. As well, for a couple of years, I had worked weekends for a caterer.

So with my restaurant training, background and experience, I figured I'd be a shoe-in for working in the dining room. That was one of the coveted places to work - you helped with prep work; you hosted and seated the guests; you worked in a lovely, elegant environment; and you got to keep a percentage of the tips...

I arrived at the hotel with several other students, got my assignment and nearly turned around and went back home. With all of my training, do you know where I was assigned? I was the official pot washer, relegated to a corner of the kitchen where the big sinks for washing pots and pans were located. It also came with a very tempermental industrial strength dish washer, which I found out I was also in charge of.

Now I wish I could say that after discussing things with the manager she realized I was in the wrong spot, and re-assigned me to a position that I was more suited for. But that didn't happen. I was there to stay - working with the 2 cooks who disliked each other intensely; plus working with a young couple who only had eyes for each other and were working to make money so they could elope.

Bottomline - It was a totally dysfunctional work team.

Yet I survived - it wasn't a wasted summer after all. Why was it not wasted? It was because of 3 lessons I learned that I still apply to myself, which I pray may encourage you in your walk of faith.

The first lesson is - there are no little people; in other words, there are no people who are unimportant; who are of no value or worth. And how do I know that? By believing what it says in **Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart."** By being a pot washer, I felt inferior. I wanted to be seen as someone who had it together; who knew what she was doing. Being a pot washer didn't show that.

I really like how **I Corinthians 7:17 in The Message** puts it: **"...don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there"**. I thought I was one of the "little people" - someone who didn't count, who had limited talent and ability. After all, I was just the pot washer. Yet that verse said I was where I was supposed to be. I was of value and worth.

In II Kings chapter 5, we read the story of Naaman, a commander of high rank and military success, but afflicted with leprosy. A young Israelite girl, probably captured in a raid, ended up as the servant to Mrs. Naaman. The young girl knew what's going on with Naaman and his leprosy. She went to Mrs. Naaman with a suggestion on how he could be healed. The end result is he is healed. (a great story by the way!)

But how much do we know of the servant girl? Do we hear what happens to her after the healing? Was she rewarded for her bravery for suggesting a solution? She would be what we would call a "little person", someone in an insignificant position, yet she had a powerful impact and it led to Naaman's conversion - **"Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel (II Kings 5:15b)**. If she had believed she was a little person and of no consequence, she would not have said anything ... and many people would not have known about God.

In **John 6:5-13, in the New Testament**, we read about the little boy with the 5

loaves and 2 fishes. The people had been listening to Jesus teach for most of the day and were getting hungry. The only food available in the crowd of 5,000 was a little boy's lunch - 5 loaves and 2 fishes. Now this little boy is unique - first - what little boy would spend a day sitting and listening to adults when he could be running around without supervision?

Secondly, how was it he, a child, had food when the adults didn't? We know he was generous - either well taught, or putting into practice what he had heard Jesus teach. We don't know his name, we don't hear of people praising him for his kind gesture. Probably the people didn't have a clue as to where the food came from. He had limited resources - just a few fish and bread; he was young; who would listen to a small boy? He would be considered a "little person" who didn't count. Yet, what he did was of great value. It affected more than 5000 people.

The 2nd lesson that summer taught me was that there are no "little places" - places that are small, not very glamorous, out of the way and not noticable. I had visions of me being anywhere but in the kitchen with my pots and pans, tempermental staff and equipment.

It was hot hard work, the kitchen was out of the way and didn't attract a lot of visitors, and there weren't many perks with the job. But for some reason this was where I was to be. **I Thessalonians 1:4 in The Message says, "God not only loves you very much but also has put His hand on you for something special."** Something special - even for a pot washer.

In Acts 8:26-40 we read about Philip, one of the disciples who was having a very successful ministry - preaching to many people about who Jesus was, doing miracles, healing the sick and demon possessed. Then he is suddenly told by the Holy Spirit to go to a desert road.

Now the tendency would be to say, "Wait - I'm busy. These people need to be healed, to hear about Jesus ... can't you send someone else?" But without hesitation, he goes. And when he gets to where he is going, instead of 100's like he was used to, there is just one person to talk to - an Ethiopian Eunuch, who was a high ranking official for the Queen of Ethiopia. For just one person, a lonely deserted road - was the journey worth it?

But Philip took the time to explain to the Eunuch what he was reading. And that resulted in the conversion of the Eunuch. We don't know what happened to the Eunuch after that, but what's important is that Philip understood that where ever God calls you or puts you - that is where you need to be- no place is too small or unimportant.

And the 3rd lesson I learned was God will not let me go. When I think I'm a little person of no value or worth; when it seems where I'm currently at is small and useless, God reminds me that He loves me and I am important to Him. He has a plan for my life. I like what **Isaiah 49:16** says, "**See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.**" He says I am engraved - imprinted deeply and permanently on His hand - I am actually tattooed on His hand! He will not let me go.

Some time ago a friend sent me a link regarding an interview with Dr Chuck Swindoll, on the occasion of his 88th birthday, For those who don't know who Chuck Swindoll is, he is known for his expository preaching, for being a lead pastor for over 60 years; has written more than 20 book; his "Inight for Living" radio broadcast is heard around the world. And the list goes on.

But in this interview he shares something that was unknown to virtually everyone who has heard of him. He was an unplanned pregnancy - parents already had 2 children and didn't want any more. Because of that, he wasn't wanted - he was neglected. He wasn't abused, starved or beaten. He was fed and clothed, but was just neglected - as if he wasn't there.

His mother doted on his older brother and his father doted on his sister. He never had a birthday cake or birthday party growing up; he can recount on one hand the conversations he had with parents. He was very involved in music, drama, many school events and his parents never went to any of them. He won many awards and kept them all in his school locker since the parents had no interest in him. To top it off, he stuttered. And as he got older, he wondered why was he on this earth?

But throughout the interview, Dr. Swindoll constantly comes back to the love and goodness of God; how God placed people in his life to help him understand he

was of value, that he was important; that he belonged in the world. God had him in the palm of His hand. **Jeremiah 29:11 says it best: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."**

As the seasons of life come and go and change, we will have to adjust how we view ourselves; we will have to adjust our perspective of what our place in the world looks like; and we will have to consciously choose to continue to hold fast to God's hand. So if there is anything I want you to take away this morning, it's this:

- * You are important to God, regardless of age, gender, talents and abilities.
- * God has a plan for your life; where you are is the place God's want you to be.
- * God will not let you go.