

God's Waterboy

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[0:00] March 14, at some point as I was growing up, my dad or maybe my family went through a puzzle phase. We had a ping pong table in the basement and it was covered with the assembly of a thousand piece puzzle.

We were stationed in Kitslow Air Force Base in the upper peninsula of Michigan and winters are horrible up there. We kept two to three feet of snow on the ground about six months out of the year in the yard.

And so you could, why not? Well, let's just put a puzzle together, I guess. And so it was always fun to do and participate in all that stuff unless you're missing the last piece.

It's amazing how you have 999 pieces in place and there's one piece missing.

Dad had three boys in the house. We were pretty young at the time. Can you imagine getting to the end of this deal and one piece missing? You can't see the other 99, 999.

[1:09] You just see the one missing. It's kind of like missing a front tooth, you know. I mean, it's just one tooth, but it is, you can't help but see it. And so hard not to see.

In a football game, we have a tendency to look at the quarterback or the star players, but there's a lot of other important roles going on that make the stars what they are.

Linebackers block. They tackle. The cheerleaders cheer that sets the atmosphere for that. The band members play.

Set an atmosphere for that. There's probably no one there more important than the PA announcer. Spoken as the voice of the blue flying. No one that is except the water boy.

If the water boy doesn't bring them relief, they can get too hot.

[2:15] They can dehydrate. They can fall out. And water boys are just a small piece of the puzzle. They may not seem that skilled, but timing is everything.

And when timely and precise and dedicated, they make an extraordinary difference. Well, God has his own kind of water boys.

And I want us to look at one today, and I want us to learn from him. It's in Mark chapter 14, beginning verse 12, and it says this, On the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?

And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, the teacher says, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?

And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. They're prepared for us. And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them.

[3:39] And they prepared the Passover. I bet you've never thought about the water boy. He is unnamed.

This gospel was written by Mark, also called John Mark. And in Acts chapter 12, it tells us that the church met in Mark's mother's home.

So some believe that this upper room may have, this occasion, may have been the beginning of the church meeting in that area, and that this may have belonged to Mark's family.

If so, this is very possibly a servant of that household carrying out this duty, or I would even suggest that it may be Mark himself.

Although I will admit I'm almost alone in that. Interestingly enough, later in this chapter, there's a young man following Jesus and that company of people that have arrested Jesus and are taking

him to trial.

[4:49] And when that young man is seized, he drops the linen cloth that he's draped in and runs away naked. And many believe that person is Mark.

I bet that got you attention this morning, didn't it? Not as many believe this is Mark, but yet related to his family, possibly like a servant.

But I will tell you, whoever it was, it was a huge task. Why? It was huge because partially it was because it was such a small task. I want to explain that this morning.

For the water boy could have turned this down because the assignment is minute. All this man was to do was carry a jar of water.

Not much. But in reality, it's a lot bigger than it looks. Because women carried water jars. Men didn't carry water jars.

[5:50] They carried water skins. And it's a social difference between a wallet and a purse. I mean, when I need to hold Dawn's purse for something in public, I carry it like it's a live chicken.

You know? Awkwardly and out front. Not sure what to do with it. Even with that, it seems like this is such a minute job.

Just carry a water jar. I'm thinking most men would have tried to get out of it. Why? One, because the task is too easy. If I'm carrying a water jar, I'm not using my skills.

I've got skills. I'm more talented than that. We have a tendency to want the big stuff. You know, we pray for God to give us an opportunity. And then when one comes along, we go, come on, I need more than that.

I need some real responsibility. And oftentimes, we'll discount the moment at hand. I mean, the disciples did. They leave this upper room.

[6:59] They go to the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus. They discounted the whole experience. They slept through most of it. Their job was to watch and pray.

May not seem like that big a task, but it was huge. And they couldn't handle it. Some people turn down the task because it's too easy. He probably could have got out of this because the task seems unrelated.

I mean, God often asks folks to do things that seem unrelated. If you don't believe that, ask Noah. I mean, what about building a boat on a land when rain has never come?

That seems kind of unrelated. But God had a plan. Now, Noah's job was huge. He was to build a boat that was approximately the size of one and a half football fields long, as wide as a football field and four stories tall.

Not a small task. But it was much bigger than he ever thought. It was much more related than he ever felt. Because God would use him and that ark to save humankind through Noah's obedience.

[8:18] In reality, God's plan is so complex, we don't know the half of it. But I bet this task was unattractive.

It would have been easy to forget it because the task goes unseen. We like being recognized. You know, when somebody acknowledges us.

The Lord's work can be like that too. People want to do something where people see it. I'm always appreciative of those who do the work that no one sees.

I got here about 8 o'clock this morning. An hour before the 9 o'clock worship. But when I got here, the signs were already put outside.

Those things that are in the road to help people crawl safely were already out there. There were people already working in the building in different areas. Securing the building and making coffee.

[9:19] There were musicians in here already practicing and playing. Things nobody really sees but are significant.

Now I want you to be clear that whatever you do for the Lord will be seen. Whatever you do for the Lord will be seen. Sometimes it might be seen by other people.

But I want you to remember always that we serve an audience of one. We do what we do for the Lord.

Even though it may be a task that feels like it's unseen. He could have easily turned this down, the task, because he would be ridiculed.

A dude carrying a jug of water. What's that about? You could hear the snickers. It would have been easy for him to say, I'm not doing that. I mean, what are people going to think?

[10:23] I'm not doing that. Last week I challenged you to pray. I asked you particularly to pray for four people.

That God laid on your heart. Four people to invite to join us in worship on Easter Sunday. We gave out this card. It's a large card hooked to a small card.

You were to write four names on that card that you're willing to simply pray about inviting. I didn't tell you to invite them yet. I just said pray about it.

Write those four names down. You keep the big card. Write four names on this side. Turn in the small card. You put them down here at this cross. And I promised you last week that if you would do that and begin to pray for these people, that I will join you in prayer.

And so this week, I came up here and I took those cards that had been scattered around that cross. And I put them in a stack. I sat down on that front row. I put them in a stack and I went through every one of them.

[11:38] I looked at those names and I prayed over those names. Some of those cards had more than four people on it.

Some had less. Some had people who they wanted me to pray for salvation. They were not in this area. They're not going to be here for Easter.

They knew that. But they wanted me to pray for their salvation. And so they wrote that over to the side. One particular card had about 12 or 13 people on there. Lost people to pray for, people to invite. Some people turned in the big card because they can't follow instructions.

But I pray for those too. And pray for the person who turned in the big card. Some people turned in blank ones.

I understand that. It could very well be that, Pastor, in my heart, I'm going to commit to this. But either I didn't find the pen that was in the pew.

[12:41] Or either those names aren't coming to me right now. But I believe in this and I'm committed to this. And I want to be a part of it. If you wasn't here last week or couldn't be a part of it, there are these cards on the information center in the back.

It's not too late. I'll spend time on this front row in front of this cross with these names. Hundreds and hundreds of names.

I counted them. Some people are on more than one card. Sometimes the family prayed for the same people because the cards were all together.

And then ten later, somebody else prayed for the same people that family had prayed for. That's when God gets in this, folks.

I want to ask you to do something else this morning. I want you to act on those prayers. And as you leave today, at each one of the front doors, there's a stack of these cards.

[13:58] This is four cards, invitation cards, that are hooked together. They're perforated. It says what time our worship is.

It tells that child care is available during both worship hours. It gives our website if people want that information. It gives our address. As you pray for these four people, I encourage you, I ask you to take these cards, tear one off, and give it to one of those people.

I don't mind how many cards you take. You can take a lot more cards than what you put out on that list.

On April the 6th, those cards will do us no good. So take them. We can probably get more made if we need them. Just take them.

If you'll use them. Don't put them on the back of a toilet hoping somebody sees it.

[15:10] Individually hand it to someone. It can be somebody through a drive-thru. It can be somebody in a grocery store. It can be somebody that cuts your grass.

It can be somebody that you see walking down your street. It can be your neighbor that you don't know how to approach. It can be your family.

Whoever God lays on your heart. It's a minute task. It really is.

It's not a big deal. Some of you are better than this. It's just too easy. You can do better than this.

So why bother doing that? And sometimes it seems unrelated.

They probably won't be interested. It may seem like you'll be ridiculed for it. I'm telling you, God works through prayer.

[16:14] Prayer changes things. Not only does it change the people we're praying for, but it changes us as well. And when we act on it and actually do something with it, it's amazing what God can do.

They're at every door in the front. They're on the offering boxes. They're at each table. I set the stacks out there myself. What will people think?

Others may say it's too easy. It's not me. It's not what I do. I can't relate. I can't relate. It might seem minute.

But sometimes when we see the minuteness of a task, God sees the importance of it. Never know what kind of bridge that little card may build in somebody's life. You never know that. The reality is the assignment is huge.

Seems mine to you, but the reality is the assignment is huge. Why is it huge? How is it huge? It's necessary. There are no mistakes and accidents or waste in God's economy.

[17:14] Everything that he tells us to do is for a reason and is of great magnitude, greater magnitude than we could ever imagine. When God speaks to us, we obey him.

It could be huge. I want you to go with me for a minute. What if this water boy did not follow his simple assignment? He was to carry a water jar.

Not a man's job, but he was to carry a water jar. What if he had not done that simple assignment? They would not have been guided to the room to prep it for the Last Supper. The Last Supper may not have even taken place.

The longest lesson that we have that Jesus teaches is in John chapter 13 through John chapter 17, possibly would not even have been taught.

[18:15] A lot would have changed if he had been disobedient. Now, I know that some of you are going to say God would have another way.

You're right. God could do it another way. He sure can. But why should he? Why should he have to? Why does God have to work around us to get done what he wants to get done instead of working through us?

I mean, I hope you're like me. I want God to use me. I want God to work through me. May the Lord not have to work around me, but instead when he can work through me.

The obedience of the water boy didn't just change the life of the disciples. Folks, it's changed our lives. The impact of somebody carrying a water jar and just going where he was assigned to go because Scripture says they just followed him.

Just him carrying that out. He was just simply faithful. Maybe to do an awkward task. But man, it was necessary.

[19:29] And his assignment was huge. It was huge because it was necessary. It was huge because it was obedience. And I'm going to tell you something. It is in the plan of God that we are obedient.

And our obedience makes a difference. I've already picked on Noah. Let me do it again. God told Noah, be obedient and build a boat. That's a strange service.

Yet the lives of every coming generation rested on his construction of that. You don't know your influence. We don't know the influence we've had.

60 years ago, this sanctuary was placed here by the sacrifice of a generation that had the foresight to look to coming generations.

To be able to worship the Lord here adequately. And as we deal with maintaining and improving and one day, if the Lord will, maybe even expanding what God has given us on this campus, let us be faithful.

[20:37] Let us be obedient and see how God can use us in just a small way to do huge tasks. Let us take a moment to look around us.

And I don't mean this rhetorically. I want you to take a moment to look around. Crane your neck. Go ahead. Your mama told you not to, but go ahead.

Look around at other people. Let me ask you a personal question. What influence are you leaving on those around you?

What influence are we leaving on those around us? God's placed us here to make a difference.

Small difference. Minute task. But huge. Our daily walk with God is monstrantly important to the kingdom and those that need Christ.

[21:57] Small steps of obedience on a faithful walk with Jesus make up for great strides in the kingdom of God. It does. When God tells us what we're to do, the task is huge.

Do you know why it's huge? Because the task is the plan of God. Let me explain. Either Jesus told them to meet this man and follow him to the room because Jesus knew that man was coming even before he ever left.

In other words, Jesus told them to do it based on his foreknowledge of the events. Or either Jesus orchestrated a plan for the man to look conspicuous enough for them to recognize him, follow him, and carry out the needed instructions.

Theologians. Theologians tend to agree that it was not based on the foreknowledge of Christ. Not because he was not able to do it that way, but they believed that it was not due to the foreknowledge of Christ, even though it could have been, but instead that Jesus had pre-orchestrated the whole matter.

[23:20] Why would he pre-orchestrate this task? I can give you three reasons, at least. One of them is the Lord's Supper. He instituted the Lord's Supper.

This was the last supper that he would have with him before his death and resurrection. He would explain how the Passover meal would forever be changed. After the cross, the bread and the drink would no longer represent the Passover.

After this meal, from now on, the bread and the drink would represent the body and the blood of Christ. A significant event.

Not only that, but the Holy Spirit promise. Because in that teaching, the longest that we have of Christ anywhere in Scripture, in that room, he told them of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

He promised them the helper would come. The spirit of truth. That the Holy Spirit would teach us what we need to know.

[24:27] Listen to this. This is a blessing. He would help us to recall those things that his word teaches us. He would help us to be a witness that God has called us to be.

That he would enable us. That he would empower us. It's all there. He said it all in that room. The last thing he said to them before he prayed for them and headed out to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and be arrested was this.

In John 16, verse 33, I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation.

But take heart. I've overcome the world. This task was important because the Holy Spirit promised. The third reason is because of the coming betrayal.

By going to this room early and setting it up the way that Christ had them to prepare the room, the other disciples did not know where the room was.

[25:31] If they had known, they wouldn't have needed the guy for the water to take him to you. Okay. So they didn't know where it was. And you know who else didn't know where it was? Judas. Judas didn't know where it was.

And Judas, at the same time, was setting up the price of betrayal to betray Jesus and to lead them to arrest Jesus where other people, a crowd, would not be swarming around Jesus and so they would not gain attention.

Judas was setting all of that up and then he gets back to the disciples. After the room is prepared, they all go together to the room. As the Lord's Supper is being administered, Judas takes off after Jesus confronts him and brings those who have paid him to the garden where they have gone to pray.

If Judas had known ahead of time, this time together in this room would have been interrupted with an arrest. It would have been easier to do it in that room in a contained spot than it would be out in the woods in a garden.

It would have been a whole lot easier. If so, no Lord's Supper possibly. If so, no teaching on the Holy Spirit. If so, no promise of his continued presence.

[26:50] Get this. This young man carrying a woman's pot of water not only carried water, he carried out a huge plan of God that was much more than he could ever imagine.

And do you know what? God has a great plan for our lives. God has a great plan for our lives. God has a great plan for our lives. I'll tell you one thing he's laid before us, Pickens First Baptist Church. We're to invite people to worship with us on Easter Sunday.

because it's an open opportunity that many will be open to consider who would not otherwise be open to consider at other times.

However, I will tell you, many, even most, will not come if they're not personally invited. It makes a difference.

[28:17] That's just one task, and that's small, folks. It's awkward, maybe, but it could be huge.

What is it that God wants you to do? I've given you one example, one that's burdened on me because I think we need to take advantage of the opportunity at Easter. I really do.

Great time for somebody to hear the gospel. Let's open to it. An exciting atmosphere, positive atmosphere, and y'all put your best clothes on, too. I mean, you know, it's a good atmosphere.

But I realize that it could be that God's telling you something else beyond that, in addition to that. It could be that you've never given your life to Christ, never surrendered your life to Christ, been affiliated with the church, maybe even led some things in the church.

But the reality is you've never acknowledged your sin before Christ and asked him to save you and forgive you and change your life.

[29:28] You've never done that. And if that's the case, I'm going to tell you, it is not the will of God that any should perish. And today is the day of salvation.

He will not turn one away who submits to him. If you've never given your heart and life to Christ, I encourage you to do that today. Maybe you have, but you've never acknowledged that publicly. Jesus, by his commission and by his example, tell us to follow that with baptism. We plan on doing that next week. And so if you've never been baptized, you come, say, Pastor, I want to be baptized. I've given my life to Christ, but I've never publicly acknowledged it the way I need to acknowledge it. And I want to make sure that's right. Come, do that. Maybe God's drawing you to pick in First Baptist Church.

This is where God would have you to plant your life. And if that's the case, you come, and I'll be happy to guide you in that. But I also know there's other tasks in this room that I have no idea what they are.

[30:43] And they may seem really small in your life, and they may seem really huge in your life, and they may seem really awkward, and they may seem somewhat unrelated. I'm telling you, whatever God's telling you to do, you trust him.

Trust him. Your disobedience not only gets in the way of you, it gets in the way of us. It affects us. So whatever God's telling you to do, I encourage you to surrender that today.

Whether you do that in the pew where you stand in just a moment, or whether you do it at this altar, or whether you want me to pray with you. Whatever it is, let's just tote the water.

Just carry the jug where God wants us to carry it, and do what God wants us to do, and trust the rest of him.

Heavenly Father, I love you. I thank you, Lord, for your love for us. Thank you, Lord, for your guidance. I thank you, Lord, for the conviction of the Spirit of God. I thank you, Lord, for the boldness that you give us.

[31:48] I pray, dear God, that we'll act on all of those things, and be obedient to follow you today, and exactly what we're to do right now. In Jesus' precious name, amen.