### Limited Resources

- What are some resources that we keep running out of?
- What difference would it make if our need doubled?
- What difference would it make if our resources doubled?
- What difference would it make if there were no limit to our resources?

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#### Two stories...

Elijah and the widow and her son

1 Kings 17:7-16

- Elijah asked for water, and a piece of bread
- She said, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive 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."
- Elijah said: First make bread for me. If you will, your oil and flour will never run out
- She did, and they didn't!

#### Two stories...

Elisha and the widow with her two sons

2 Kings 4:1-7

- When her husband died, their creditors were going to enslave her sons, so she asked Elisha for help
- Elisha asked: "What do you have in your house?"
- Her answer: "Your servant has nothing there at all, except a small jar of olive oil."
- Elisha: You need more jars!
  - "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."

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# Too Big for Us! Isaiah 49:1-7

bib.ly/Isa49.NIV tiny.cc/cmchandouts

#### Israel: God's Chosen People

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession." *Deuteronomy 7:6* 

"You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins." *Amos 3:2* 

"In that day I will restore David's fallen shelter—I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins—and will rebuild it as it used to be" *Amos 9:11* 

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#### Isaiah 49:1-3

Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations:

Before I was born the Lord called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.

He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me;

he made me into a polished arrow and concealed me in his quiver.

He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

#### Isaiah 49:4

But I said,

"I have labored in vain;

I have spent my strength for nothing at all.

Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God."

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#### Isaiah 49:5-6

And now the Lord says—

he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself, for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength—

he says:

"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

#### Isaiah 49:7

This is what the Lord says—
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—
to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,
to the servant of rulers:
"Kings will see you and stand up,
princes will see and bow down,
because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

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#### Isaiah 49:5-6

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and gather Israel to himself,
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"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept.

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

## The Big Idea

# God's glory is too great to fill anything less than all the peoples of the whole earth

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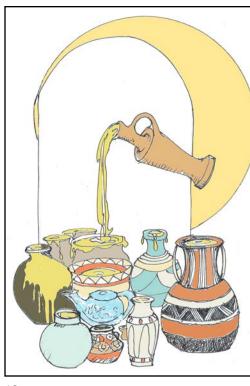


# Our resources so often feel so limited!

- Time, money, attention, emotional energy, physical energy, ...
- When you divide that over more people or more things, we will get even less!
- We are certainly ready to be generous
   ...once our needs and the needs of our people are met!

We so easily see God the same way

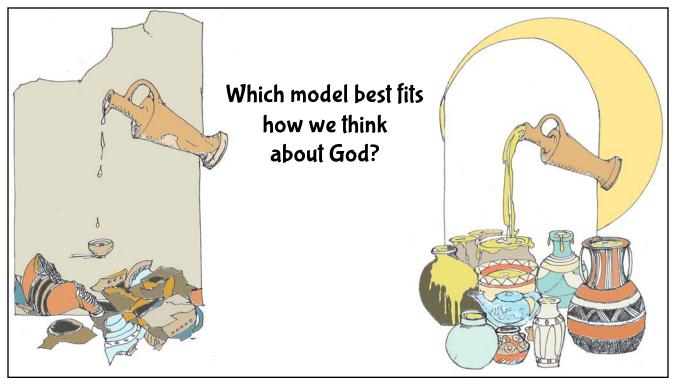
 If we give away what He gives us, there might not be enough for us



God's resources are unlimited!

- His glory expands to fill the space available
- The more jars there are to fill, the more we will see of His glory

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# The Big Idea

# God's glory is too great to fill anything less than all the peoples of the whole earth

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# Application

# Rejoice: We are the ends of the earth!

- God's plan included bringing the good news to us!
  - Others sacrificed so we could be included
- For some of us, especially in families and nations where Christianity has been prominent for generations, we can easily think of ourselves as being God's chosen people
  - Not so!
  - Rather: We are the "far off lands"!

# Application

# Turn from all forms of self-seeking

- Love is not self-seeking, and God will not be a part of it!
  - God is not especially concerned with any particular nation or people or church or family or...!
  - When we claim that God is (or should be) especially concerned for "us", it reveals how small we think God is!
    - "God does not show favoritism." Romans 2:11
  - One form of the error: Christians who see their tribe or country (or some version of it) as God's new "my people"
  - The new "chosen people" is **the global Church**
  - God will be glorified by nations and tribes as He chooses

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# Application

# Turn from all forms of self-seeking

- Paul loved His Jewish people group, yet he was called to bring the glory of the Gospel to Gentiles
  - He would have given up His salvation personally if He could have brought salvation to the Jewish people
  - Yet He followed God's call, seeking first God's Kingdom
  - "I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry in the hope **that** I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them." *Romans* 11:13-14

Talking to Gentiles: "If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches**. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. **Do not be arrogant, but tremble.** For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either." *Romans 11:17-20* 

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# Application

# Turn from all forms of self-seeking

- I am not saying that God doesn't care about a country or tribe or people
- I am saying that God is concerned for all countries, tribes, and peoples, no matter their size or wealth or power or need for grace
  - God told Jonah: "Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh" that worships other gods and whose "wickedness has come up before me"? Jonah
  - And this made Jonah angry
  - And this made the Jewish people furious with Paul!

### Application

# Turn from all forms of self-seeking

- The Gospel, and God's work in the world, is **not** about us or our church or our people group or our nation
- God's plan is about the global Church, with people from every nation, tribe, people, and language!

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### Application

# Join God's work to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth

- Intentionally put the good of others before ourselves
- Seek more jars to fill with the glory of God!
  - **Evangelism**: helping others see & know the glory of God
  - **Missions**: ...to the ends of the earth
- Our vision as a church
  - See the glory of God **fill more and more jars of more** and more kinds (rather than copies of our kinds of jars)
  - The **more different kinds of jars** we genuinely include means that **we will see more of His glory**!

### Application

# Persevere in difficulty with great hope

- "But I said, 'I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all.' " Isaiah 49:4
  - God's path is not the easiest path!
  - Yet it is the best path
- Our jars are <u>not</u> unlimited
  - The One who fills our jars is
- "What is due me is in the Lord's hand" Isaiah 49:4
  - We trust God to bring the needed strength and the promised reward
  - While we seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness

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### The Big Idea

God's glory is too great to fill anything less than all the peoples of the whole earth

