

Too Big for Us!

Isaiah 49:1-7

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?

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!

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."

Isaiah 49:1-7

The Big Idea

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

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

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

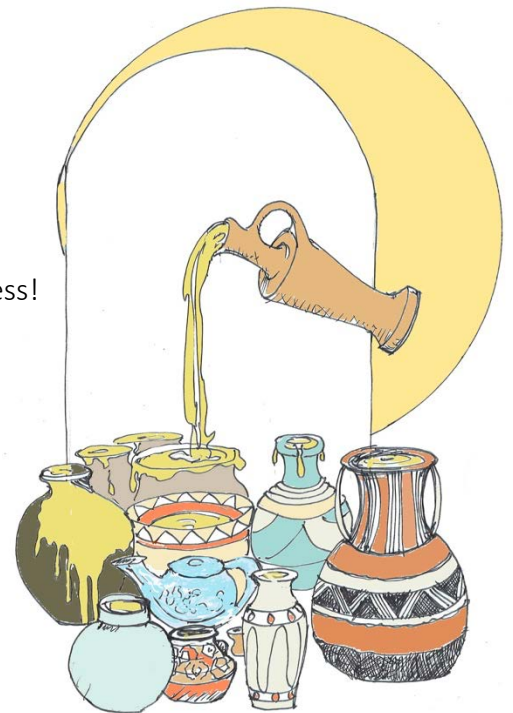
Not so!

Rather: We are the "far off lands"!

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

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*

Romans 11:17-20

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!

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!

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!

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 not 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

The glory and the grace of God multiply when they are shared

So let’s share them freely and broadly!

Like the widow, we need more jars to hold His glory!

Reflection Questions

1. What do our hearts and our lives reveal about our view of God’s heart and resources?
2. Where have you seen the glory of God expand to see the varieties of jars available?
3. Where is it tempting for you to claim God’s special concern for a certain people group?
4. What does it look like for you to join God’s work to bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth?