

Worshipping a Big God in a Small Church: Making the Most of Limited Resources

WGUK18 | Devon Kauflin

I. Introduction: Challenges of Limited Resources

II. God's Purpose for Limited Resources – 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16

A. The Message – 1 Corinthians 1:18-21

The word of the cross

B. The Messengers – 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

God chose what is foolish in the world

C. The Method – 1 Corinthians 2:3-4

A demonstration of the Spirit and of power

D. The Motive – 1 Corinthians 2:5

Faith in the power of God

III. Reframing Our Understanding of Limited Resources

A. Identifying Our Resources

B. Embracing Our Resources

1. The Word of God
2. The Spirit of God
3. The People of God

An Excursus on Excellence

A. Understanding Excellence in the Church

“Our witness is not in our sameness with the rest of the culture. Our witness and our power comes in the differentness of the kingdom of God which has an entirely different set of priorities. One of the small things that you and I can do . . . is to, within our own churches, step back from what we often call “a commitment to excellence” in which the person reading Scripture is going to be able to flawlessly read Scripture. And the person offering the prayer is going to be able to get through the prayer without disrupting the service.

What if in our churches we had the Scripture being read by a woman in the early stages of dementia with a shaking voice and we aren't quite sure whether or not she's going to be able to finish it on her own.

That might cause our services to go a little longer. That might cause a little bit of awkwardness within the service. But it would signify that the power that comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ is not a self-generated power. The power of God is found in what the rest of the world calls "weakness."

What if that child with Down Syndrome within our congregation, if we viewed him not as a charity project, but we viewed him as a future king of the universe, and we cultivated the spiritual gifts that he has, not only to be ministered to, but to minister to the rest of the body—to build up the rest of the body—so that when the rest of the world says, "Why would you have a child who is going to have a life of such difficulty and suffering, why would you not abort him?"

He is not an idea. He is not a project. He is our brother. And he has been gifted by the Spirit of Christ, and he is indispensable to us because Jesus has put him here and given him a calling and a vocation."¹

B. Defining Excellence in the Church

Excellence is the process . . . of becoming better than I once was. I am not to become better than someone else is or even like someone else. Excelling is simply—and radically—the process of improving over yesterday or, in the apostle Paul's words, 'pressing on' (Phil 3:14)."²

IV. Maximizing Our Limited Resources

- A. In Our Perspective
- B. In Our Planning
- C. In Our People
- D. In Our Prayer

¹ Russell Moore, excerpt from "How the Gospel Shapes the Sanctity of Life" delivered on January 21, 2016 in Washington, D. C.

² Harold Best, *Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, (New York: HarperOne, 1993), 108.