

Fleming

One of the most profound thoughts we can think is ‘God can and wants to use *me*’. Our hands, feet, mind and voice – when submitted to Him – become His instruments for good in the world.

More than that, most of the time we don’t have to go looking for ways to serve God: they come to us. God puts them in our paths and hearts. Our task is to live so close to God that we can both recognize and respond to those opportunities. And the wonderful thing about being a “worker together with God” is that God often takes one good deed, one act of kindness, and multiplies it.

A case in point comes in the story of a poor Scottish farmer by the name of Fleming. One day while working the land he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He went to see what the matter was and found a young boy mired to his waist in black muck. The farmer immediately set about to save him from what was sure to be a slow and terrifying death. He was successful and sent the boy on his way.

The day after an elaborate coach pulled up in front of the farmer’s house. It was the boy’s father, a nobleman of some wealth. Finding Fleming, he told him that he had come to thank him for saving his son’s life and to repay him for his act of kindness. The farmer waved his hand and said he could not possibly take anything from him.

About that time, the farmer’s son came to the door. “Is this your son?” the nobleman asked. The man nodded yes.

“I’ll make deal with you,” the nobleman said. “Let me take your son and give him a good education. If he is anything like you, he’ll grow to be a man you can be proud of.”

The farmer agreed, and in time the boy graduated from St. Mary’s Hospital Medical School in London. The boy was Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin.

But the story does not end here. Years later, the nobleman’s son was stricken with pneumonia and was saved by penicillin. The name of the nobleman was Lord Randolph Churchill, father of Sir Winston Churchill.

“God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform,” says the hymn writer William Cowper. The amazing thing is that God is still in the business of using ordinary people – people like you and me -- to accomplish his purposes in the world.

The apostle Paul, speaking to Christian believers, says: “Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.” Christ is no longer physically in the world. Thus, if He wants an elderly person cheered and cared for, He ordinarily uses one of these “members”.

The same is true if He wants a child nurtured in the way of truth and goodness . . . or, if He wants a boy mired in the mud pulled out.

What might our response be to this thought? What about:

*Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee. Amen.*
(Frances Ridley Havergal)

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