

## Interactive lesson



picture from

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/girl-celebrating-her-birthday-9628320/>;

photo credit: Ivan Samkov

What is this girl doing? <Let them respond>

What would you wish for? Why? <Let them respond>

Do you usually need what you wish for?

<Let them respond>

How do your circumstances affect what you wish for?

<Let them respond>

Have you ever held back from doing something because you did not have what you needed? If so, what?

<Let them respond>

Have you ever gone ahead with something in the hope that what you needed would turn up? If so, how did that go? <Let them respond>

Did you ever miss an opportunity because you did not know what was available? <Let them respond>

How much does God bless us? <Let them respond>

Does God grant wishes? <Let them respond>

If we want God's help, what do we do?

<Let them respond>

How do we know God supports what we have in mind to do? <Let them respond>

When we are called to do God's work, God blesses us with the spiritual gifts and resources needed. Do not

fear to stretch outward in God's love, for God has greater plans than we imagine or wish for. Let God lead us into the glory of the Holy Kingdom.

## Gospel lesson

Just prior to this reading, John the Baptist had been questioned by Pharisees about who he was, and he told them that he was preparing the way for the Messiah.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/john-baptist/>

### John 1:29-42

NRSV

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

<sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'

<sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel."

<sup>32</sup> And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.

<sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

<sup>34</sup> And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

<sup>35</sup> The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,

<sup>36</sup> and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.

<sup>38</sup> When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

<sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

<sup>41</sup> He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed).

<sup>42</sup> He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

*The word of God for the people of God*

<Hymn “I Will Trust in the Lord”

UMH #464>

## Message: Not Lacking



background picture and overlay from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/glimpses-of-the-kin-dom/second-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-a-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Great Provider of all things,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we learn to trust more fully in Your grace and bounty. Amen.

We continue the “Glimpses of the Kin-dom” series today with “Not Lacking”:

“Our text this week includes Paul’s assertion that the church has everything it needs to be the church. That’s an amazing and powerful statement of faith.

Too often, we spend time wishing – wishing we had more people or more resources or more volunteers or more activity. But what if, instead, we were simply thankful?”

My parents were children of the depression. Born in

1929 and 1930, they recalled having to be extremely frugal with everything. [Probably the closest I can relate to that was having to be frugal with toilet paper and cleaning products during the pandemic when stores had limited supplies.]



*picture from MacKenzie family collection*

Having six kids and living on Long Island, my mother ran our household with an eye for savings. She would buy things in bulk and make us eat up the last of whatever was not-quite-so-fresh before getting more.

I remember sometimes wishing for things the cool kids had. We did not have designer clothes – the Sears catalog got a lot of business from our family – and we rarely had brand-name products, but we never lacked for food, clothing, shelter, or love.

From the way they acted, I do not think many of the cool kids could say the same. They tended to be self-centered, with a what's-in-it-for-me mindset. Some even delighted in putting others down, as if to make themselves look better. They were not thinking about how much they had and how they could make others' lives better by sharing, or even just by cheering others on in what they did.

I think we see that in the ancient biblical stories,

too. The psalmist talks about being stuck in mire, a pit [of sin]. In Isaiah, the Chosen people were scattered, not praising God as they should; they had a narrow-minded focus on getting the kingdom of Israel restored at the expense of their conquerors.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jeremiah-scroll/>

God had a different view. Despite all their sin, the Israelites were still alive. Despite being captive, they kept their identity as Abraham's descendants, the Chosen people of God. They were able to live, to learn, even to flourish in some ways in captivity.

The prophet at first was focused just on improving the faithfulness of the Israelites, but God said that was too light a thing. God wants the whole world to know our Creator's saving grace, not just some "Chosen" fraction. Jesus came for everyone.

John the Baptist was tasked with preparing the world to recognize and to accept the Messiah.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/john-baptist/>

We do not hear a lot about his ministry, but I suspect he understood the global nature of the Messiah's mission because he chided Israelites not to rely on having Abraham as their ancestor for

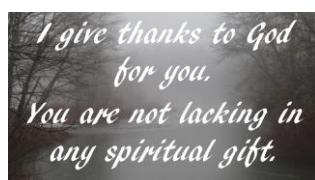
salvation.

John could have focused solely on his baptizing of people, ignored what Jesus did after John baptized Him, or striven to keep his own followers focused on John's baptismal ministry even as Jesus gathered disciples. However, John was faithful to God and understood that God called him to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah - and some of his disciples followed Jesus instead of staying with John the Baptist.

John was not working out of a scarcity mentality, in which selfish hoarding can hurt others and may even hurt oneself. He was working out of an abundance mentality; he recognized that God had blessed him with all he needed and would bless his sharing as well. John's baptismal ministry grew so strong that King Herod viewed him a threat and jailed him.

Too often we think our work for God is an either/or call about supporting ministries. Instead, God calls us to choose a focus for our work and to support what others do for God when they focus on something else. God supports us when we answer God's call.

Paul reminded the Corinthians of that, and I believe it applies to us today:



*background picture from MMMS collection*

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him

...just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift...

He will also strengthen you to the end...God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Do not fear to stretch outward in God's love, for God has greater plans than we imagine or wish for. Pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit's wisdom. If you think of "can'ts" because of a lack of resources, look for circumventive "cans" that God provides.

So much is broken in today's society. Reach out to help restore people and communities, through direct action and through supporting others, such as you were invited to do on this Human Relations Day - and give God thanks for successes and blessings.

Let God lead us into the glory of the Holy Kingdom. God ensures we are **not lacking** in what we need to do God's work.

Now let us respond with

**A Statement of Faith of the Korean Methodist Church**

UMH #884



We believe in the one God,  
creator and sustainer of all things,  
Father of all nations,  
the source of all goodness and beauty,  
all truth and love.

We believe in Jesus Christ,  
God manifest in the flesh,  
our teacher, example, and Redeemer,  
the Savior of the world.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
God present with us for guidance, for comfort,  
and for strength.

We believe in the forgiveness of sins,  
in the life of love and prayer,  
and in grace equal to every need.

We believe in the Word of God  
contained in the Old and New Testaments  
as the sufficient rule both of faith and of  
practice.

We believe in the Church,  
those who are united in the living Lord  
for the purpose of worship and service.

We believe in the reign of God  
as the divine will realized in human society,  
and in the family of God,  
where we are all brothers and sisters.

We believe in the final triumph of righteousness,  
and in the life everlasting. Amen.

*<Doxology>*

*<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>*

Let us pray:

Good and generous God, we bring our gifts to you this day and pray you might dedicate them to your work.

We confess that we have too often missed being the church you wanted and needed, and we have placed the blame on “not having enough” money, members, talent, time, or power.

We needed to be reminded by the apostle Paul that we have all that we need, whatever our circumstances.

Renew us, loving God, and give us a new day and another chance.

(above prayer from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>)

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:

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- Thanks for

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- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.

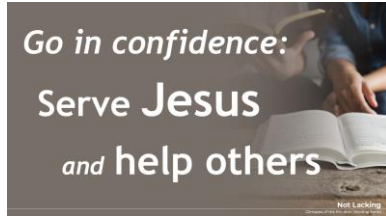
- Family far off
- Travelers

- Lord, please help all people who struggle, especially those to whom we remain oblivious.
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
  - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
  - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we lift up in Your holy name, praying as you taught us to pray: *<Lord's Prayer>*

*<Hymn "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God" UMH #712>*

*<Benediction>*



background picture from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/glimpses-of-the-kin-dom/second-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-a-lectionary-planning-notes/second-sunday-after-the-epiphany-year-a-graphics>

Go into the world with confidence;  
you are not lacking in any spiritual gift  
needed for you to do God's work.  
Welcome the Holy Spirit, serve Jesus,  
and help others to life in Christ with us,  
that all may be strengthened by the Kingdom of God  
in the here and now. Amen.