**Tool Day Church Service Talk**

***How you might use this talk***

*It would be great if you combined a Tool Collection day, perhaps on a Saturday with a Church Service. The service could act as a dedication service for the tools, as you commit them to their new life in Africa and also use the opportunity to take a special collection to fund them on their journey. This is such a tangible way to support God’s heart of compassion for the ultra-poor and such an easy way for all ages and abilities to get involved. If you have involved your youth work, brigades or scout/guide groups you could involve them in the service, perhaps bringing their tools to the front of the church during the service. It would be good to have at least some of the tools on display in the church.*

*There are so many opportunities to use this service to promote the tools being donated, the environmental benefits and your community engagement. You could invite everybody who donated tools to come to the special service. It could be a great outreach opportunity.*

*This is a short talk which you could combine with the ‘Name that Tool’ quiz. The talk can be edited to mention your own Tool Day experiences.*

*Reading: Matthew 14v13-21*

**The Tool Day Talk**

Welcome to our special Tool Day where we have been collecting tools on behalf of Tools with a Mission. They will collect these tools from us, volunteers will refurbish them, assemble them into tool kits and in a few months they will be in Africa. How amazing to think our tools are going to Africa!

But what a day we had collecting them. For me the highlights were……. *(please include your own experiences or ask one or two people to come up and share their highlights).*

But you might be thinking, could these old tools really make a difference to someone's life? Some of them do look a bit past their best and some are very old.

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Well, firstly looks can be deceptive. Here is an old wood plane used in carpentry.

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Here is the same plane after it has been refurbished by volunteers at Tools with a Mission. And honestly it is the same plane.

Secondly, little things, a screwdriver, a hammer, a spade or any number of tools we have collected can help to totally change a life. Small things have big power in the right hands. And although we are giving these to Tools with a Mission, we are really giving them to God and asking him to use them. And God knows how to use small things to work great miracles.

Jesus proved this to us, in what may be his most famous miracle when he was confronted with 5000 men, plus all the women and children out in the wilderness and asked to feed them.

The disciples told him to send them away to find food, even though they must have known in the evening in the middle of nowhere, there was no chance this could happen. Could you imagine how a local shop here would cope if 10,000 plus people suddenly turned up expecting to buy dinner?

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But in response Jesus said to them in Matthew 14v16-17

Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

You can imagine the desperation of the disciples in stating we ***‘only’*** have this kids picnic. What they are really saying is we are right and you are wrong Jesus, we can’t feed them, so please send them away.

Then Jesus did two amazing things, the first was he prayed, then started breaking the loaves and fish into pieces. The miracle was that he kept on breaking them into pieces and they never ran out until everybody had been fed and there was still lots leftover. Imagine, this must have been like an all-you-can-eat buffet, people used to going hungry would have stuffed themselves.

But the second amazing thing was what Jesus did with the loaves and fish when he had broken them into pieces. We’re told in verses 19 where we read:

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Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

Even though the disciples weren’t very encouraging, Jesus still chose to give them the pieces of bread and fish and let them give them to the people. This is the incredible partnership God offers all of us and what we see before us today.

God looks at the people he loves in Africa and says to us:

“You help them.”

*“But how can we help them?” we ask*

“Well what do you have?" he asks?

*“Well, we just have these old tools,” we say.*

“Well, give them to me and I’ll use them” he says

*“But surely you can’t use these, Lord?” we say.*

“Just watch me”, Jesus says.

Well, let's meet two people who were helped with tools. Two people who tell us about the power of unwanted tools to change their lives.

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First let’s meet Alkangel (pronounced Archangel). He lives in Uganda near the border with The Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a young boy he lost everything when rebel forces crossed the border and destroyed his village. Those who survived fled to refugee camps. Criminal gangs moved in and young people like Alkangel were forced into criminal activities.

To try and stop this the refugees started a small church in the camp and opened a skills training centre with TWAM tools. Alkangel went along aged 14 and was accepted on the carpentry course. He tells us his challenges, he says:

*“I have never been to school and neither have any of my brothers and sisters. We never had a house to live in, but we lived under a thatched cover which leaked during the rainy season. When it got wet the grass rotted and it was no good for us. When I heard about the training centre I came and asked if they would train me. I told them without training and opportunity I would die as carrying heavy logs to make charcoal is so hard and my body would give up.*

*They agreed and I loved learning and using tools. When I completed my training, I stayed in the project for 10 years helping them to train other boys. Then I needed to support my family so I started my own workshop. I make furniture and now employ six people. I have trained twenty people since I opened this workshop. They will be competition for me, but I just think of the situation I was in and feel very sorry for those still in that position and want to help them.’*

Alkangel was trained using tools nobody in the UK wanted. He was given his own tool kit full of more unwanted donated tools when he completed his course and he has never looked. Noone would have believed the traumatised young boy living in fear of his life under a leaking shelter in the midst of a terrible civil war would ever aspire to this. But this is what God can do with tools.

Just imagine the impact of the tools we have collected during our Tool Day?

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Secondly, let's meet Esther who is also from Uganda. She has a very sad story, growing up in an ultra-poor community and being married at an early age to a man who proved to be already married.

By the time she found out she had 3 children and when it became known her family disowned her, even though it was not her fault. Her life was desperate until she found out about a tailoring course being run by one of TWAMs partners, Mindset Development. She has graduated and been given a TWAM sewing machine. She tells us how it has changed her life.

*“I had no skills and just sat at home doing nothing,but you are not paid to sit at home. I could not send my children to school and my saucepan was empty. We used to go without food all the time, as no one would help us. My husband caused me great pain and still causes me great pain. I felt very alone.*

*But with my training and sewing machine everything has changed for me. I now have money for lunch and supper and my children go to school. I have so much love at Mindset and I now help them and have become a mother to the younger girls”*

Esther has seen her life and her children’s lives transformed by a sewing machine. She will never need help again, all she needed was training and the gift of a machine.

This is a modern day example of Jesus saying:

“They do not need to go away. You give them what they need.” “But we only have unwanted tools,” they answered. “Then give them to me and just watch what I can do with them”, says Jesus.

The amazing lesson for all of us is that whoever we are, God can use what we have. And while we are talking about tools today, that also means our skills, gifts, experience, whatever we have, even if we think it doesn’t mean anything, God values it and will use it if we offer it to him.

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This is Nic and Mary, they refurbish hand tools for TWAM and will probably work on some of ours. They have taken up the offer from God, an incredible offer of partnership. He says, I will work through you, using whatever you have to offer and I will do something amazing if you will let me.

They have offered their skills to God, which when they joined TWAM was simply time and enthusiasm.

So today, let's look at these old and unwanted tools and imagine where they are going and what they will achieve when they get there. But let’s also see ourselves in these tools and imagine what God can do with us, young or old, rich or poor, in work or out, in sickness and in health, through joy or tears, when we say to God:

“These is all I have to offer”

And Jesus replies; “That’s all I’m asking for and all I need”

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The feeding of the 5000 ends when everyone has eaten to the point where they can eat no more. The Bible puts it very politely and says ‘They all ate and were satisfied.’ We know what that means don’t we? So full they can hardly move!

The tools we have collected will achieve the same when they get to Africa. They will equip training centres that will help hundreds of people learn life changing skills. With those skills parents will earn the money to pay school fees and send their children to school. They will put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. They will pay for medicine when they are sick. And they will set up small businesses and train many more people like themselves,

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So thank you for donating these tools, for everyone who helped with the Tool Day and everyone who will help us pack them up ready to send to Tools with a Mission.

We have some leaflets from Tools with a Mission you can take away.

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As we finish let’s commit these tools to the Lord and into his safe keeping as they begin their long journey to Africa. Let’s pray they will be placed into the hands of people whose lives will be transformed by them. Let’s pray they will all eat and be satisfied through the gift tools.

Tool Day Talk 2023

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