

***THE CALL IS FOR YOU***  
**Jeremiah 1:4-5; Ephesians 4:1-6**

**(Read Ephesians 4:1-6)**

**Intro:** Let's pray:

"Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;  
 Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—  
 Truths unchanged from the dawn of time  
 That will echo down through eternity.  
 And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,  
 And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.  
 Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built  
 And the earth is filled with Your glory." Amen.

Waaaaaay back in the Stone Age, when I was in college, we had a phone on each floor of each dorm. When the phone rang, someone from the floor would answer and yell down the hall for whom the call had come. Back in those years we actually survived without the instant access we have now with cell phones and texting. Isn't that amazing?! How did we ever do it?!

For the most part, if I wanted to talk to Kathy about something, I'd wait till I saw her at meal times, or, if it was more urgent, I'd walk the quarter mile over to her dorm and have someone retrieve her from her room on the third floor. God-forbid I go get her myself – I would have been kicked out for going into the women's dorm.

Then there would be the times my parents or another family member would call. This didn't happen often because long-distance calling was expensive. So you had to have a good reason to call; if you had something to communicate that was not so urgent you did something that cost just a few cents, you wrote a letter. But when a call came for me, I'd hear the phone ring down in the common area and then I'd hear, "Dad (having been out of school a number of years, I was as much as 4 years older than many of the other guys on dorm, so they called me Dad), the call is for you!" And I'd go see what was so important that I'd actually gotten a call.

Today, as we continue in our series REVIVAL: Living the Gospel and Restoring the World, I want to remind us that for any of you who are Christ Followers, the call is for you.

You see, many Christians are under the terribly mistaken impression that only preachers are called to be ministers. This could not be further from the truth – WE ARE ALL CALLED TO MINISTRY! It's just that yours is different from mine. Yes, I proclaim the good news, but you are supposed to do the same – it's just that your pulpit may not look like this one. Let me explain. . .

**What you do for a living isn't just a job, it's a vocation set aside for the kingdom of God.**

- Let me refer back to Zacchaeus again; notice that Jesus didn't tell him to quit his job as a tax-collector. We don't know what he did after his meeting with Jesus was so transformational for him, but maybe he stayed on as a tax-collector who was full of honesty and integrity. Maybe he showed both his countrymen who hated tax collectors and the Romans who didn't care how they got the taxes, just so they got them, that a God-fearing tax collector was not a contradiction in terms.
- Look at the short text Karen read from Jeremiah. God's call came to him when he was still young and he felt that his youth precluded him from being able to speak into the lives of anyone, let alone his elders. But no! God's response was "*I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations.*" Jeremiah 1:5b. You see, God's appointment is enough. His response to our protestations and excuses is like what he said to Moses when Moses protested that, as a stutterer, he was not a good candidate to be God's spokesman and leader to the Israelites. God's response was, "Who made your mouth?"
- God tells Jeremiah, "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart.*" Jeremiah 1:5a. That word "formed" is from a Hebrew word picture of a potter at work. As the potter, begins to work on a lump of clay he or she visualizes what it will become. Or like a sculptor who looks at a block of marble and sees what is in it to be brought out. Or as Ken Abell has told me about the novels he writes – the first series of six books about Deacon Coburn was completely formulated in his mind before he wrote the first word. That is what God has in mind for the ministry he has for each every one of his followers. He saw it from eternity.

- All of us have been set apart. That is the very definition of sanctification – you have been set apart and reserved for God’s purposes for the transformation of humanity. In the Message, Peterson joyfully paraphrases verse 5 to say *Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you*. Holy plans! For you! For me!
- It’s not about being called to be a preacher, it’s about being called to ministry. So don’t think you have about go into pastoral ministry—full-time ministry is simply serving God where you are with what you are gifted. You see, as per God’s promise to Jeremiah, God doesn’t give us a commission without the goods to do it. If he’s called you, he will equip you for any eventuality.
- So, let me just say to you Church, we must not retreat from culture and give it up to the enemy. Let’s serve with all we’ve got. In Chuck Colson’s words, we Christ Followers need to realize our responsibility to . . .

**Not only build up the church but also build society to the glory of God**

- That means we need to use whatever vocation we are in, to do the best ever job. Our job is to do the best possible, because of the One we represent.
- That is what Paul is urging the Ephesians to do. In their society the odds were stacked against them. They were considered atheists because they did not worship Caesar. It was public policy to hate them. Did they crawl away and lick their wounds and whine about how they were mistreated? No!!!! They were a healing salve for a hurting society. I’ve told you before that infants born with defects or unwanted baby girls were thrown in the dump to simply die, but Christians snatched them up and helped them grow and flourish. When disease ran rampant and the population stayed off the street to avoid being infected by the plague, it was the Christians who ministered to the sick, often catching the disease themselves and dying. But they were following Paul’s call to work worthy and to be completely humble and gentle.
- They could have screamed in a kind of 1<sup>st</sup> century Facebook style rant about their lack of freedom and how they were persecuted, but that is the polar opposite of keeping the bond of peace. Instead they ministered hope, patience, gentleness, and humility. And what happened? Were they overrun for such wimpiness? NOPE! They turned the world upside down with the love of Jesus.
- The odds are increasingly stacked against us. It’s not exactly public policy to be hated, but it is certainly that way in the popular media. What is the best response to that? Is it whining and paranoia? NEVER! The response is love. The response is agape. Kill the hatred with kindness. Be Jesus.
- One mere thing then. In addition to your vocation, you may have a significant calling . . .

**Your role is unique – it is what you have been called to do**

- In fact, that is the exact meaning of Rick Warren’s words that you find on the front of your worship folder, *“What on earth am I here for?”*. Because, as a follower of Jesus, every one of you has a purpose and calling.
- Another person has put it this way, *“Where your talents and your heart come together, this is where God has called you to be.”* (Pete Richardson) This is what we call “passion” in our Network Training class. Passion is what drives you. Where your passions, talents and deepest burdens come together, you wind up with a calling.
- That is why, if may not be your job in a factory or in an office or a classroom – though, as I’ve pointed out your must serve with excellence. Instead you may be a stay at home mom, or on a mission to provide safe water sources in Sub-Saharan Africa. Or it may be going to another country to start a business that helps the populous when all the while it helps them see Jesus reflected in you.
- What is it that you do best? Do that! F. B. Meyer says *“Each saint has some grace or gift; use it.”* And they he goes on to say that we should *“center on what we do best.”*

**Conclusion:** Let’s take back the territory we have ceded to the evil one. Not by force, not by legislation, and certainly not by bellyaching until we get our way. Not one of those things will succeed. Let’s do it by doing excellent things in the workplace and with our passions – it’s what we are called as the people of God to do. The call is for us? Are you going to take the call? Amen.