

Message

Sunday, 14 January 2024

“JESUS ENABLES US TO PICK GOD’S CALL”

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A tired pastor was at home resting, and through the window he saw a woman approaching his door. She was one of those too-talkative people, and he was not anxious to talk with her. He said to his wife, "I'll just duck upstairs and wait until she goes away." An hour passed, then he tiptoed to the stair landing and listened ... not a sound. He was very pleased, so he started down calling loudly to his wife, "Well, My Dear, did you get rid of that old bore at last?"

The next moment he heard the voice of the same woman caller, and she couldn't possibly have missed hearing him. Two steps down, he saw them both staring up at him. It seemed truly a crisis moment. The quick-thinking pastor's wife answered, "Yes, Dear, she went away over an hour ago. But Mrs. Jones has come to call in the meantime, and I'm sure you'll be glad to greet her."

Dear Friends! We are so engrossed at times in missing out the calls from our church members and others in the world. We also end up at times missing God’s calls.

What calls have you missed lately?

In 1 SAMUEL 3:10 “God calls Samuel 3 times, and he wakes up thinking his master has called him and he goes to his master and says Here I am why did you called me? He missed 3 calls from God. Eli understood it was God calling and so he said if you get another call pick it up and say, “speak Lord for your servant is listening.” God was persistent in getting through his call, as Samuel was again fast asleep, God called him the fourth time and Samuel heard the call, picked it up, and said speak Lord for your servant is listening.

THE THEME “JESUS ENABLES US TO PICK GOD’S CALL”

Eli was a priest and Samuel is in his apprenticeship under Eli. The word of God says the lamp was still burning when God called which means it was dawn. It’s very interesting to hear that Samuel received a call from God during a time when prophets were very rare. There was not much of divine communication taking place. It sounds very much like our time today. We live in a very secular world that doesn’t understand God. We live in a world where a lot of them never feel called by God because they imagine it as something very dramatic. “When did you sense God called you?” **Look back at your life. How many times have you missed God’s call?**

How amazing it is to know that God comes to us and calls us! God called Samuel, Abraham, Moses, David, all the patriarchs, prophets, kings, judges, and priests. **In the Gospel reading we heard Jesus calling Andrew, Philip and all the disciples.** The word of God says Jesus found Andrew and called him. Isn’t it marvellous to know that God has found each one of us and calls us by our name. Prophet Isaiah says **God has called us and redeemed us by our name, child you are mine. When you walk through the waters or fire I will be there. Fear not for I am with you.**

But most often we miss God’s call. We are so busy that we live in our own world and become slaves to different gods and idols in life. During the time we miss God’s calls we are so busy answering the work calls. Paul proclaims in his letter to the church at Corinth **6:12-20 “The Church turns out to be a marketplace when we have missed God’s call”**. Paul reminds the congregation that they have missed God’s call and have polluted the church with virus by picking up calls that has contaminated the body of the Church. **Our phones, our bodies are infected with virus attacks like pornography, eBay, sports, music, computer games, Facebook, twitter etc and we are deafened that we can’t hear God’s call.**

Eli's sons were in a similar situation. They disobeyed their father, broke all the laws and were drinking and having fun with commercial sex workers. God looked at his children and he wanted someone to pick the call and so He chose Samuel to receive God's call and be God's mouthpiece.

As a Jew, Paul would never separate the body from the soul/spirit as the Greeks would. God's Spirit changes our bodies as well as our souls. The physical is sanctified. Paul says our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. In the transforming mission of Jesus, even our bodies will look different. Faith in Jesus transforms our whole body, mind, and soul. God has found us through our baptism and has called us to be his disciples. He calls us every morning when we get up reminding us that He has gifted us another day in our lives. He calls us throughout the day protecting us from any virus. Have we forgotten that we are called by God?

Dr. Donald Carr of Persia was asked how he got the call to serve the Lord as a missionary in Persia. His reply was, 'I had no call to stay at home, but I had the command to go' (Matt. 28. 18-20).

I think it was C H Spurgeon who had a lady come to him saying that she felt called to the ministry. Spurgeon asked about her home and family and when he heard she had 13 children he exclaimed, "Well, praise God, not only has he called you to the ministry, but he's given you a congregation as well!"

Paul warns us that we are called by God through our baptism, and it is the sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus that has given us a 24/7 wireless connection with God. Just as Jesus found Peter, Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel and called them, Jesus calls each one of us to join God's family. The Holy Spirit leads us to pick God's call.

What we are called from and called to:

- I. Called from labor to rest (Matt. 11:28)**
- II. Called from death to life (1 John 3:14)**
- III. Called from bondage to liberty (Gal 5:13)**
- IV. Called out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9)**
- V. Called from bondage to peace (1 Cor. 7:15)**
- VI. Called to the fellowship of His Son (1 Cor. 1:9)**

What we are made by obeying the call:

- I. We are made sons of God (John 1:12)**
- II. We are made the children of God (Gal. 3:26)**
- III. We are made the servants of God (Matt. 25:21)**
- IV. We are made God's saints (Col. 1:1)**
- V. We are made God's witnesses (1 Thess. 2:10)**
- VI. We are made workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1)**
- VII. We are called to a high calling (Phil. 3:14)**
- VIII. We are called to a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9)**
- IX. We are called to a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1)**

In the Gospel reading we heard Jesus' call Philip and Philip received the call. But the interesting thing is Philip immediately goes and calls Nathanael. Nathanael is believed to be the same person as the disciple named Bartholomew. When Bartholomew is mentioned, Nathanael is not mentioned. It is logical to assume they were the same person. His full name might have been Nathanael Bartholomew. His last name, Bartholomew is a compound Greek word: "Bar," meaning "son" and "Tommal". Together they mean "son of Tolmal. Peter was called "Simon Bar Jonah," It means, Simon son of Jonah.

Interesting when Philip called Nathanael, he was a bit cynical, and he said what good can come from Nazareth. But Philip said come and see! In our world we have a lot of people who only believe when they come and see, and Nathanael was one of them. Once they receive Jesus, faith transforms them to believers who believe in the unseen. Nathanael was sceptical until Jesus tells him he saw him sitting under a fig tree. The moment he heard Jesus say that Nathanael identified Jesus with three titles Rabbi, Son of God, and King of Israel!

Dear friends! Like Philip God has commissioned us to go and help others pick God's call. Philip helped Nathanael pick God's call. Nathanael missed God's call when was resting under the fig tree. But Philip went and called him. All of us have received God's call and are called to go and help others pick God's call. The good news is the Holy Spirit guides us to pick God's call and to help others pick God's call. May we be a channel of blessing to people around us and pick God's call through the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen