

Call to Service

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:4 – 10 & Luke 13:10 – 17

Do you remember this picture during WWII? This was the poster that was used to call men into service during WWII. It has been used many times during our country history. I WANT YOU! It also could be used within the church except maybe the person pointing would not be Uncle Sam but it would be Jesus Christ!

Everyone who follows Jesus Christ is called to serve! Everyone who calls himself or herself a Christian is called to serve in order to advance God's kingdom here on the earth. For some, that is an intimidating prospect!

Ministry is serving in many ways that may include public speaking or comforting a person who has endured a physical illness. Serving Jesus Christ does require each of us to respond to our calling. It requires our willingness, our trust, and our obedience. The Lord will guide us into whatever additional formal training we need if any at all.

Ministry can come from a pulpit or a pew or a lawn chair! Ministry can occur in the Chapel or in our parking lot. Ministry can happen in a large group, small group, or one on one. Ministry can happen face to face or on a phone or in a text message.

So when I say 'ministry' I am not just talking about the pastor or leader of a church; I am talking about YOU! Yes – YOU! (Show poster again) Christ wants YOU!

We see ministry in God's calling of Jeremiah to become a prophet. In his case, Jeremiah, was indeed called to a public speaking ministry and it was a very dangerous one at that. What I find most intriguing about Jeremiah's calling is that when Jeremiah received the calling, he was in his late teens to early twenties.

He really had not been alive long enough to develop any great oratory skills. Quite naturally, Jeremiah was afraid of how he would be received if he accepted the call!

How gracious of God to engage young Jeremiah in a conversation. Jeremiah understood that in this vision he was voicing his own objections to the God of Israel. Without this intimate dialogue, it would be difficult to imagine Jeremiah would be willing to dedicate his life to doing something so far outside of his comfort zone. Jeremiah was sacrificing any possibility to get married and having a family as was common in his culture. Yet Jeremiah's interaction with God, though difficult, was probably strangely peaceful and comforting for him.

Very earlier in my time of being called into ministry, I met a wonderful preacher named Steve Sprinkle. He talked with me over a picnic meal about the 'barking dogs'. Let me explain the 'Barking Dogs'. Steve told me that often there are 'Barking Dogs' sent by God calling for you or chasing you. In ministry we often run to the 'Barking Dogs' or we are running away from the 'Barking Dogs'. After sharing with him about what had been happening in my life at that time, Steve looked at me square in the face and said – *My friend, the barking dogs are chasing you! What you need to decide is do you let them catch you or are you going to keep running away?*

I guess the 'Barking Dogs' caught me!

However God calls us to serve, we should trust the Lord well enough to respectfully voice our concerns or objections to him, even if not calmly! We should also understand that however unqualified we may think we are; God knows our strengths and weaknesses before he decided to call us into service.

I can remember my eldest son, Josh, telling me after I told him I was going into ministry as a second career that he was OK with being the son of a teacher but he did not sign up for being a PK (Pastor's Kid). He did not know that God knew his strengths and weakness; and I hope he knows now that he has been a blessing in my time in ministry.

God also knows what our objections would be and God knows how to put us in the right positions. Case and point – I moved to Delaware in August and within a short time I placed my papers in to your search committee to the pastor at our church.

God calls us because God knows that we will be willing, faithful, and obedient. God calls us into a partnership with him based on strengths God has already given us and the new strength that is on the way!

So what is God calling you to do? What ministry is God giving you the strength to do?

The BBCC (DOC) is a small congregation that defies a normal church model. A church of 100 or less usually is a pastor driven church with a small group of core people leading the church. A church from 100 to 200 is usually a committee driven church with many small groups directing ministry. And a church over 200 is a multi-staffed church with a head minister and some associate pastors to support the ministry.

Our church should be in the first category – a small church driven by the pastor but we are in the second category – a committee driven church which speaks well to our background and past.

So what committee is God calling you to get involved in? Our committees are – Worship, Outreach, Pastoral Relation, Social, Property, History, and Membership. What gifts and strengths has God given you to use? (Show poster)

Jesus Christ wants YOU!

Let us pray:

O God, you are moving in this world and calling each of us to your service. May we become your vessels. Let us trust in you O God, because we know you will be with us and let us enjoy this time of serving you. Let us serve with joyful hearts and let us experience the impossible which only you can provide.

May our service and calling in small and big ways make it possible for others to call you as their Lord and Savior. Let us look past our inadequacies and see your power O Lord. Let us go and make disciples of Christ for the kingdom of God. AMEN.