

## The Call to Preach

Unlike secular occupations, the ministry is not something that \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ choose to do. Often people will ask a preacher what it was that caused him to choose that line of work, but preaching is something that God chooses for us—not the other way around. And often, God selects the most unlikely candidates for a reason. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

If you are looking for a position where you get a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ applause \_\_\_\_\_, preaching is not for you. For though it may seem like that is the case, God can only use those who are willing to let God work through them. John 6:63, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

However, if you are looking for a task that will bring \_\_\_\_\_ eternal \_\_\_\_\_ results, then preaching is that task. Has God called you to preach? Are you willing to do so if He does?

### I. Biblical Examples of God’s Call to Ministry

#### A. Moses: Exodus 3:1-10

1. Notice that Moses was shocked by God’s call. Anyone who struts around bragging about his call to preach is more than likely \_\_\_\_\_ self \_\_\_\_\_-called.
2. Moses had no prior \_\_\_\_\_ training \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ teaching \_\_\_\_\_ or reputation for leadership prior to his call. Exodus 3:11-12; 4:10-12
3. God’s presence and \_\_\_\_\_ provision \_\_\_\_\_ always accompany His calling.

1 Thessalonians 5:24, “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

4. There are no acceptable \_\_\_\_\_ excuses \_\_\_\_\_ when God calls.

Romans 11:29, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

#### B. Samuel: 1 Samuel 3:1-11

1. God may call at a young age. Spiritual maturity and \_\_\_\_\_ training \_\_\_\_\_ are not necessarily a pre-requisite. God can train after He calls.
2. God’s call will come to a willing and obedient heart. Don’t run from His call—remember \_\_\_\_\_ Jonah \_\_\_\_\_?

Psalm 95:7-8, "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart. . ."

Proverbs 28:14, "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief."

3. As long as we are tender and not resisting God's call, it is okay to ask God to reconfirm it over and over so that we are sure of it. (Gideon's fleece)

C. Amos: Amos 3:7-8; 14-15

1. Amos was not from a long line of preachers in his family.
2. God usually calls someone who is already doing something and is not afraid of work.

1 Timothy 3:1, "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

2 Timothy 4:5, ". . .do the work of an evangelist. . ."

D. Isaiah: Isaiah 6:8

1. God calls men according to the need.

Matthew 9:36-38, "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

2. God will take volunteers!

E. Ezekiel: Ezekiel 3:4-11

1. God's call does not guarantee reception or results.
2. God does promise strength according to the task.

2 Corinthians 12:9, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Ephesians 4:7, "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

F. Peter, Andrew, James, and John: Matthew 4:18-22

1. Notice the priority of God's work over man's work.
2. These men were willing to leave everything—occupation, family, etc. They got into trouble when they went back to it. See John 21:3.

3. Their response to God's call was immediate.

G. The Twelve Disciples: Mark 3:13-14

1. God called those that He wanted.

2. Their call involved being trained and then sent.

God may use someone to preach who is not called, but a lifetime of preaching requires a definite call of God to the ministry.

Powerful and effective preaching can only come as a result of God's calling, equipping, and anointing.

II. Basic Requirements for a God-called Preacher

A. He must be converted.

1. God's hand could be on a man before salvation (Samuel) or even before birth (John the Baptist). Judas Iscariot participated in the ministry without being saved to be sure, but it only makes common sense that one cannot effectively preach Christ without knowing Christ.

John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

2. C.H. Spurgeon said, "How horrible to be a preacher of the gospel and yet to be unconverted! Let each man here whisper to his own inmost soul, 'What a dreadful thing it will be for me if I should be ignorant of the power of truth which I am preparing to proclaim.' Unconverted ministry involves the most unnatural relationships. A graceless pastor is a blind man elected to a professorship of optics, philosophizing upon light and vision, discoursing upon and distinguishing to others the nice shades and delicate blendings of the prismatic colors, while he himself is absolutely in the dark! He is a dumb man elevated to the chair of music; a deaf man fluent upon symphonies and harmonies! He is a mole professing to educated eagles; a limpet elected to preside over angels."

B. He must be committed.

1. As we have already seen, God's calling is without repentance. God doesn't change His mind!

Luke 9:62, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Philippians 3:13-14, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but his one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 1:12, "... nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

C. He must be consecrated.

1. The preacher's life must be free from the baggage of this world.

2 Timothy 2:19-21, "...let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

2. In the verses surrounding this text, several things are listed that should not be in our lives if we are going to be a clean vessel. (Profane babblings, youthful lusts, foolish and unlearned questions, striving, etc.)

3. God insists that His preachers be blameless. The word means "without handles."

1 Timothy 3:2a, "A bishop then must be blameless..."

Titus 1:7a, "For a bishop must be blameless."

\*The higher one goes in leadership, the narrower the road becomes.

D. He must be in communion with God.

1. Someone who is called to preach is going to need a growing relationship with God.

Philippians 3:10, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

Genesis 5:24, "And Enoch walked with God..."

2. A preacher must know the heart of God in preparation and delivery of the message.

Conclusion:

We have taken a little time to lay down this foundation before we get into the actual sermon-building process because you cannot separate the preaching from the preacher. Someone once prayed, "Lord, hide

the preacher behind the cross as he preaches today.” The truth is, there isn’t a cross big enough to hide us! We are a part of the message! Two elements: truth and personality—and they must work together.

Is the preacher perfect? Not by a long shot! (David, Jonah, Elijah, Peter, Thomas, Apollos, and Paul are all ample examples of this truth.) But to be a preacher, one has got to be out in front of those that he is endeavoring to lead in his personal walk with God. He is a sinner saved by the grace of God, but growing in that grace.

It is my desire that during this week you will not only grow in preaching skills but you will grow as a Christian.