

Calling
Titus 2:1-15
February 20, 2011, March 13, 2011
Lynchburg, Virginia

EXHORDIUM

We have established two things thus far in our sermons on work and calling.

1. All lawful work is acceptable to the Lord.
2. Lawful work is not the same thing as a calling.

I want to address that point today. What counts as a calling? What am I to do and how am I to know if that is what the Lord has called me to.

I mentioned in a previous sermon that you should do that work that you want to do. However, the realities of life may prevent you from being able to do exactly what you want to do. So, it is important to begin to clear the debris in our lives that prevents us from doing the Lord's will.

But what if I cannot possibly ever do that which I feel I am called to do?

First, you do not know the future. The only way you can know is to start doing what you know to be right, right now. You leave the future results up to the Lord.

Second, if it is true that you cannot do the work that you feel called to, then you simply are not called to that work. You need to change your mind. Let's say you think that you are called to be a missionary in Mongolia and this sense has been with you for many years. But the Lord has given you a special needs child that you must take care of for the rest of your life. Well then, I guess you were wrong. Let that vision die a peaceful death and ask the Lord to give you new desires.

I would like to add a word of caution from a wise old minister friend of mine. I have told you to imagine a job of your dreams that fits both your desires and skills. I have suggested that, barring the obstacle of money, that job is probably your calling. My wise pastor friend suggested to me that our fleshly desires often cause us to imagine vain things. This is true. You cannot even judge your own motives. He suggested that those desires that

internalize and stay with us a long time are more likely the leading of the Holy Spirit. I concur. So, do not take my words, imagine your dream job today, quite the Lord's provision, tomorrow and come and complain to me the next day. No, think about it, pray about it, see if it stays with you and is unshakeable. Then work towards obtaining the education and skills to be useful in your chosen vocation.

So, what does the Bible say about callings? What sorts of jobs does the Lord call us to?

EXEGESIS

I want to start with this passage for a particular reason. When many pastors talk about callings, they are trying to get young men and often young women to do the work of the ministry. Many pastors and missionaries do not consider regular work as part of God's calling. But the Bible speaks otherwise.

Exodus 31:1-11 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,

Filled with God's Spirit to do work. What kind of work is spiritual?

4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,

Some of this is art. It is cunning work. But some of this cunning work is simply practical, the brass of the basins on the altar. So, this is artistry that is a gift. But also metal work, say a machinist. A machinist is filled with the Spirit of God to do his work.

5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.

A man can be filled with the Spirit of God to do sculptures. He may also be filled with God's Spirit to do detailed wood work related to the Temple.

6 And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee;

But there are more men and more work that require God's wisdom and Spirit.

7 The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle,

We may argue for the artisan in the work of the mercy seat. But some of the furniture is much more utilitarian. Some of this work is work that a hand crafting wood worker would be called to.

8 And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, 9 And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot,

Some of these pieces were quite ornate and required great skill. But even the ordinary pieces were expected to be done with great care and fine work.

10 And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office, 11 And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.

It is not just sculptors, wood carvers and metal workers that are needed. The Lord also needs men who are skilled at designing and sewing clothes. This, too, requires the Lord's wisdom and Spirit.

Those who made the oils and incense also did so through God's wisdom and by His Spirit.

This is a key passage in understanding how the Lord has made us. These were skilled craftsman and we are told explicitly that the Lord had given them wisdom, understanding, knowledge by His Spirit to do their

work. This was not merely construction work. These men were both carpenters and artisans. They gave themselves to the work that the Lord had called and enabled them to do. It included sculpture, stonework, metal work, carpentry, wood working, candle making, cloth weaving and clothes making and the making of oils and spices.

These jobs no doubt had many layers of workmen from those doing design to those doing the finishing. So, even here there were essentially professional jobs as well as labor but all were called of the Lord to the work.

Ex 36:1-2 Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded. 2 And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the Lord had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:

V. 2- Heart is stirred up to the work- What is your heart stirred up to do?

General and Primary Calling

Rom. 1:1-7 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: 7 To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul called to be an apostle.

Y'all called by Jesus Christ.

Y'all called to be saints- holy.

Called by the Lord, Sent by Men and the Holy Spirit

Acts 13:1-4 13 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Paul and Barnabas are set aside for the work by the Holy Ghost but they are ordained and sent by men. A calling to ministry is recognized by other men. Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the church, having been ordained to the ministry from their local church.

But just like those called to do the work of the sanctuary, they were sent by the Holy Spirit.

A calling is not one that you get to hold privately. The Lord has placed people around you to recognize and authorize you in your calling. A church calling requires men of the church to ordain them to the work. Your pastor and session of elders are part of the Lord's means in determining such a call, or not.

This is true of many others sorts of callings as well. What do your parents think about your chosen calling? Do they agree that you have the skills and gifting to do that work? What about friends? Professionals in that line of work? Etc. Do not be afraid to get affirmation of your calling but also do not be afraid to be told that you should seek another calling. You want to find out what the Lord has gifted you to do and then do that.

A word of warning to those who are asked. Do not make a rash judgment on others. Listen and consider before giving an answer. If you do not know, then say so.

A Woman's Calling

Gen 2:15 And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Gen 2:18 18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Creational Calling- Adam is oriented directly towards his work. Eve is oriented towards Adam as his helper.

Titus 2:3-5 3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Young women oriented towards husbands, children, wise and godly discretion, keeping home. If this is not done, then the work of God is blasphemed.

1 Tim 5:14 14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Young women are to marry, bear children, be house despots, so that the enemies of the gospel cannot speak reproachfully.

Exceptional Woman not Normative

Prov 31:10-31 10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. 13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. 14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. 15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. 16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. 17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. 18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. 20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. 21 She is not

afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. 25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. 29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. 30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.

But what about all the work this woman is doing? Can we call her our hero and have it all?

This woman is highly capable and is doing all sorts of things, some of which involve transactions outside the home. She is doing real estate, trading, doing piece work to sell. This is true and lawful but not all women are capable of this.

Notice that she is still home centered. This is all done for her household and her husband and children bless her because they are blessed by her. This would not be the case if mother was not around.

V. 29- She excels them all. This may be the paradigmatic woman but it is the one who can get it all done. So, you have to work in rings of priority. Take care of your husband and children. Feed and clothe them. Help educate the children by home schooling or supporting them in their Christian School. Keep your house. If you are capable, help keep the books.

The fruit of your hands will the salvation of your household. The calling of a wife and mother is a difficult and high calling indeed. We honor you mothers because you have excelled above all the women in our culture who have abandoned having children or abandoned raising them.

EXHORTATION

What has the Lord called you to do? Perhaps in this sermon that is becoming clearer to you. If so, then commit to following and trusting the Lord in that calling and ask Him to mightily bless your work in it.

If your calling is something other than what you are doing, then ask the Lord to make a way for you to begin working in your calling as soon as possible.

Ladies, your callings are high callings, indeed. As your husbands calling becomes clearer in what the Lord has called him to do, then orient yourself towards him and his calling. Help him to fulfill the Lord's will for your lives as a family. You are already doing the things that provide a way for him, raising godly children, keeping your home. But also think in terms of his work. You are often fulfilled in him and his orientation in loving you but his orientation is different. He is fulfilled in doing that which the Lord has called him to do out there in the world, taking dominion. Do not compete with him for his time and effort. You are home centered but he is not home centered. He is vocation centered. So, help him to be fulfilled by doing his calling well.k