

DON'T MOVE UNLESS YOU ARE "CALLED".

"God called me to preach!" "Are you called?" "I am called to preach!" "Well, I would like to preach but God has not called me." "Well, my spiritual phone rang one time but I did not answer it." This is what is going on in many circles and it is confusion to young people. I know because it confused me at age twenty four. Whomever came up with this unbiblical requirement certainly did muddy the waters in the service of the good Lord. This "called" or "not called" has been the ministerial philosophy of many Baptist "rulers" for several generations. I believe it takes the form of "control". This idea destroys the individual priesthood of the believer in serving the Lord. A couple of questions need to be answered to those who control. Who decides who has the right to decide if you are called? What right do they have to decide if you can serve? What can a Christian do if he is not called? Early in my Christian life I was victimized by this control theology. I suffered frustration and wasted much precious time trying to analyze, rationalize, and balance this theology with simple Bible. I respected my elders and mentors and those who had the rule over me, but what they were insisting and requiring of me they could not support with clear Bible. It was definitely a turning point in my spiritual life when I finally came to the realization, "Let God be true, but every man a liar". Allow me to insert some of the introduction to a book that I have written which is also used as a syllabus for my class in preparation and delivery of sermons class in our Bible institute. This book is entitled "The Ministry" and can be read or downloaded free on my website at

www.streetpreaching.com .

"In Col. 4:17 Paul admonishes Archippus concerning the ministry. If I can make much of the specific wording of the preserved Word of God in the King James Bible, and I believe that I can, note carefully that Paul says that Archippus received the ministry "in the Lord." Paul could have used the word, "of" or "from" but the wise translators preserved it as "in." If you are "in the Lord" in the sense of 2 Cor. 5:17 and have "received him" in the sense of Jn. 1:12, then the ministry awaits your reception. "It is a truth that stands out with startling distinctness on the pages of the New Testament that God has no sons who are not servants." -Ward

In other words, if you are in Christ you are in the ministry. The only question that remains is to what degree you will fulfill your ministry. I cannot emphasize the importance of this concept of the ministry. It is out of sync with the teaching and thinking of mainstream fundamentalism. If a Christian man or woman can ever bring the course of their vessel to line up with this doctrine they will realize the full meaning of the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ when He said, "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" John 10:10. A careful reading of Acts 8:1-4 will exemplify this Biblical truth.

"In this theater of man's life, it is reserved only for God and angels to be lookers-on."-Pythagoras

In my early Christian life I served in a fine unit of spiritual military headed by a great general. I quickly found service there and filled many gaps in the hedge. However, all of the brass in this unit received their training and commissions from institutions where a

common Biblical error was taught without question. This being, that if you dare to enter the field of preaching without a call from God you are likely to cause a great deal of damage. The standard line was, "If you can be happy doing anything besides preaching then you are not called of God." This unbiblical theology gendered two great evils. First, those who "felt the call" were instantly given a commission and treated as officers while those who did not "feel the call" remained non-commissioned; thus producing somewhat of a caste system, the roots of which seek nutrition from Calvinism. Secondly, it gently excused those who, in their sincerity, examined themselves and though they may have had the desire, lacked initial courage, example, and challenge to pursue an officer status for fear that they might add to the category of "mama-called and papa-sent" hypocrites already flooding the ministry.

If you are saved, the ministry awaits your embracement; and the blessings, provisions, fruit, rewards and longevity of your ministry will be paid in proportion to your faith and zeal.

Certainly, there are different fields of service within the ministry just as there are in the army. Within the army there is work for all to do. There is work that suits the ladies; there is work for the simple man. There is a place for the brave at heart and there is opportunity for the timid to serve. The work of the ministry among the saints requires a great variety of gifts and services; Eph. 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: as opposed to the simpler ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5: 18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; This particular work of the ministry offers employment for all who are in Christ, both men and women. The variety of services both challenges the talented and welcomes the faithful beginner. A wise man once said, "Successful is the man who, after he finds a job, looks for work." Christian, you have a job; now you must look for work.

As a young Christian, I heard Dr. John R. Rice preach that God took volunteers. I immediately signed on. I began basic training by studying the manual, as well as field training with a buddy. I was invited to accompany a veteran on door-to-door witnessing. I was to be his prayer warrior as he ministered the Word of God to the enemies of our Lord. Soon I was the veteran and had my own prayer warrior. I was assigned to a platoon on the front lines. These brave ministers drew blood with their sword (Jer. 48:10) as they publicly preached the message of the gospel. I never dreamed I could be that brave but with the undertow of righteous camaraderie, combined with the tender draw of the Holy Spirit, by the end of the day I had become addicted to this exhilarating form of the ministry of reconciliation".

Now, let's ask these questions mentioned above. First, Who has the authority to determine who is called and who is not? I would quickly say, The Lord! And with that I would quote the Lord in **Jud 1:1** Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and called:*". Check out YOUR qualifications for the job of the ministry just as you would in a secular job. Are you sanctified by God the Father? And are you preserved in Jesus Christ? Then it would surely follow that you are called.

Notice in Acts 8:1-4 there was no rebuke either from the Lord or the early Bible believing brethren when these, without a proper call, began serving the Lord. And notice that when “any man be in Christ”...he is given the ministry of reconciliation. What is this new Christian allowed to do without being called? Think...can he give his testimony? Can he witness, go door to door, can he hold a scripture sign on the street corner, can he pass out tracts? How is he to bring forth fruit which can testify of his salvation and that will remain? How is this new Christian to show himself unashamed of His new Master? What is he allowed to do for his Saviour, Lord and Master before he is, if ever, called? And who is to decide this? I thought the Lord said that every tongue would confess to God...but what if they are not called?

Is there any record of the saints in Thessalonica being called to follow their example Paul to such a degree that the witness of Paul is no longer necessary?

And the arguments these controllers put forth to prove their argument that you must be called are just silly. They will quickly run to **Mat 9:37** Then saith he unto his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Mat 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.** This seems strange to me that the word chosen by the Lord is labourers. The definition of this word is anything BUT exclusively chosen and specifically called folk to do a special job.

Mat 22:14 For many are **called**, but few *are* chosen. If this verse pertains in any way to serving the Lord or preaching I have missed something. This is a wedding of a king and it looks like if you are called then you are not chosen. What does that have to do with preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God?

1Co 1:26 For ye see your **calling**, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: If this relates to preaching or serving the Lord then it must mean that those that are called are mostly not wise, mighty or noble. Does this mean that if you are wise, mighty or noble then chances are you are not called to preach and serve the Lord? Sorry, I don't get this.

It is quite interesting that in Mark chapter nine verses 38-41 the disciples who were **called** find one who is casting out devils in the name of Jesus. John says that he told him to quit because he was not called. But Jesus rebukes him and says, “Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.” Mark 9:40 “For he that is not against us is on our part.” Then Jesus goes on to include giving a cup of water in His name and also giving the gospel to little children without being called. Is this to instruct us that casting out devils and giving water and witnessing to little children is ok to be done without a calling? If so, where is the line to be drawn

as to what can be done with or without a calling? Maybe this was a foretaste of power and control which John expressed more strongly in Matthew chapter 20. He got his mama to persuade Jesus to **call** him into that position. It is all about unbiblical control and we are warned about this in 1Pet. 5:3.

I believe the great King would be honored to have any subject of His kingdom brag about him and preach the good news of salvation and encourage others who are on their way to hell to turn to the King for their salvation. It makes no sense at all to limit those who would desire to spread the news to those who have experienced a second work of grace and have had an unbiblical, charismatic "call" to do the job of a servant and labourer.

Finally, allow me to say that I certainly do not disallow that Lord to call specific servants to specific ministries at specific times. To do this would do disgrace to the calling of the apostles and Paul and many other heroes of the faith throughout NT church history. I also have experienced a specific call to come to the Philippines to teach "Sound Doctrine." This is an unforgettable happening in anyone's life but this does not change the argument that every Christian is called to serve in any category of service within the parameters of God's Word.

If you disagree let's disagree agreeably. Give me a "call" and we can debate it.

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