

The call to follow Jesus

God's call on my life.

Matthew 4: 18 – 22; Luke 5: 27 – 32

1) The method of God's call to follow Jesus

- The call of God isn't primarily to do ministry. It's to follow Jesus – to be His disciple
 - It's synonymous to being called to Him in salvation
 - Romans 8: 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.
 - His primary calling is into relationship with himself. Not to be passive followers but to be interactive disciples in a dynamic relationship with Himself.
- We are all individuals and God doesn't deal with everyone in the same way. However His call is always in the imperative and not a request – in other words it's a command to be obeyed and not an option that we can opt out of if we so wish.
- When Jesus called his disciples He used the imperative form – Come, follow me.
- Let's have a look at the different ways God called different people to himself and the work that he had for them.
- Job 33: 14 – 18 For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword
- **Direct word**
 - Jesus' disciples
 - Jeremiah – The word of the Lord came to me saying...Jeremiah 1: 4
 - Preaching of the Word – faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10: 17)
 - This is the most common way that God speaks to us when He calls us
- **Dramatic**
 - Moses and the burning bush in Exodus 3
 - Sometimes God uses dramatic ways to get our attention especially if He's been speaking to us and we haven't been listening
- **Dreams & visions**
 - Joseph, the husband of Mary to flee to Egypt
- **Circumstances**
 - Joseph was sent to Egypt beyond his control – a subject of circumstances – or so he thought. God was calling him according to His purpose in Egypt.

2) The purpose of God's call

- Jesus doesn't only call us to follow Him but He adds a purpose to that call – I will make you fishers of men
- In the account of Jesus calling Levi (Matthew) Luke elaborates on it in a practical way by including the account of Jesus at a banquet with a large crowd of tax collectors.
 - He ends the account by quoting Jesus saying that He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. He came to be a fisher of men.
- As stated earlier God's call is firstly to Himself and secondly to fulfil His purpose for our lives.
- Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men.
 - We come as we are and He transforms us into the people that He wants us to be.
- Ephesians 2: 8 – 10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- All the men and women of faith lived according to God's purposes for their lives
 - Abraham was to be the bedrock of a great nation which would be a blessing to all nations.
 - Noah was a preacher of righteousness who built an ark to save the animals and the line of man.
 - Moses became the deliverer of the people of Israel from Egypt.
 - Joseph saved Egypt and the surrounding nations from starvation during the famine.
 - David was called to be the king through which the Messiah would come
 - Jesus came with the purpose of dying for the sins of the world
 - Jesus' disciples took the message of the Gospel to the world
- What is your God given purpose in life?
- What is it that God has called and created you to accomplish?
- Are you doing it?

3) The obstacles to God's call

- There are always obstacles to obeying the call of God
- It seems that the disciples were ready to drop everything to follow Jesus at His first instruction. However it isn't always like that.
- What are some of the obstacles?
- **Family**
 - James and John had to leave their father Zebedee in the boat.
 - Others don't want to leave their families
- **Scepticism**
 - Nathaniel – can anything good come out of Nazareth?
- **Lack of confidence of who you are**
 - Moses – Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out? (Exodus 3: 11)
- **Lack of confidence in your God given abilities**
 - Moses - Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue. (Exodus 4: 10)
 - Actually Moses was a powerful speaker – Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.(Acts 7: 22)
- **Age**
 - Abraham was too old – but God
 - Jeremiah considered himself to be too young - "Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 1: 6 – 8)

When God calls there is no excuse that is acceptable to Him. He wants our obedience – our loyalty – to Him and His purposes for our lives