

1. 1 Peter 2:9

We are chosen and we have been appointed a job. The church has always been missionary. In UK, we have risen to this much better in the past. We have to proclaim His excellencies, and we have done this. Many men and women have been called out of darkness and experienced a transfer to marvellous light, and this has propelled them and motivated them to share the blessing. We need this experience of God to propel us afresh today. But where are we today? If we miss the call, there are consequences. If we are in the fish, it is time to pray for deliverance, and release into our true purpose.

2. Answering the call...

a. Acknowledge the destiny!

- i. YOU ARE NOT AN ACCIDENT.
- ii. GOD CALLED YOU BEFORE YOU WERE BORN. JEREMIAH 1:5
- iii. GOD MADE A COVENANT THROUGH HIS SON GEN 22:15-17, ISAIAH 22:22
- iv. WE ARE MEN AND WOMEN OF DESTINY
- v. GOD GAVE US PROPHETIC NAMES
- vi. GOD OPENED A BOOK FOR YOU AND EVERY DAY IS A PAGE AND YOU HAVE TO WALK IN EACH DAY'S PROMISE.
- vii. GOD KNOWS THE END FROM THE BEGINNING, HE IS A SMART BUSINESSMAN. ISAIAH 46:9-10
- viii. HE IS OUR SURE SOURCE OF SECURITY, SELFWORTH AND SIGNIFICANCE
- ix. HE PROMISED TO BE WITH US IN OUR CALLING- "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU"

b. Align your vision with God's activity in your life

- i. A divine calling is first birthed out of conviction. God miraculously does a work—either immediately or progressively—on a person's heart, and that work propels the person into action. Many refer to Paul's Damascus road experience as the immediate heart-change of God. Certainly, this is where the Holy Spirit arrested Paul, and later under Barnabas, the Holy Spirit entered Paul's heart. However, the Father had been progressively and relentlessly pursuing Paul long before then. Paul's heart had always belonged to God; his vision was just distorted.
- ii. Before Paul had an intimate encounter with Jesus on the road, the Father was preparing Paul through his birthright, citizenship, faith tradition, language studies, work, education, and life experiences. God's sovereign hand was at work in Paul's life from the beginning, aligning every piece to build Paul's character so he would be the faithful man God called to preach good news to the Gentiles.
- iii. **Many people have the moment with God, but fail to commit to the lifelong process. Answering the call is about aligning ourselves with all that God has invested in us so he can achieve through us all that he wants to call out of us. It begins with a moment, but is a lifelong journey of getting to know God.**

c. Cherish the Anointing of the Holy Spirit

- i. **ANSWERING THE CALL COMES BY THE ANOINTING ACTS 1:8**
- ii. Once convicted, the anointing (or symbolic power and presence of the Holy Spirit) is what passionately drives the leader to faithfully continue the work.

A true calling can be sustained only by abiding in Christ and totally depending on him. If "ministry" efforts can continue without a leader drawing near to God through constant surrender in prayer, and the faithful study of his Word, it is not real ministry at all, and it's most certainly not a calling. A divine calling cannot be self-contained by any human being. A true calling requires God to jump-start the effort and God's presence to sustain it.

- iii. The privilege of being called and anointed is a great responsibility, and it is also a reminder of how deeply we all need God. (1 John 2:27b).
- iv. Ask! Prayer is crucial – ask every day for the Holy Spirit to fill you – Jesus said we should ask for Holy Spirit.
- d. Pursue the vision with passion and faith
 - i. **Through alignment and anointing, God sets us on track to pursue the vision and purpose he has for each of our lives. Our acceptance of that calling means that we say yes to God and fearlessly abandon anything that does not work toward his ends. God created us for his work, has already prepared the work for us to do ([Ephesians 2:9](#)), and will glorify himself through the work of our hands ([Matthew 5:16](#)).**
 - ii. PASSION, PURPOSE AND POWER IS KEY IN YOUR CALLING.
- e. Be prepared to sacrifice
 - i. **Sacrifices that Release Life.**
 - ii. **Sacrifice of Obedience (1 Sam. 15:22), (Jer.7:22-23, 11:7)**
 - iii. **Sacrifice of Location (Deut. 12:13-14), (Gen.12:1, Psa.45:10).**
 - iv. **Sacrifice of Love (Mk.12:33, (Rom.13:8-10) .**
 - v. **Sacrifice of Righteousness (Psa.84:11-12, Psalm 4:5) – being a Christian, but still doing what we want?**
 - vi. **Sacrifice of Our Isaac (Gen.22:2) – the thing we love too much**
 - vii. **Sacrifice of Thanksgiving. (Psa.116:17, 107:22), (Heb.13:15) – give up complaining. Medad's reflection that we have an anointing for grumbling!**
 - viii. **Sacrifice of a Broken Spirit (Psa.51:16-17, Ezek. 36:26) – so much arrogance around, invaded Western world since age of Enlightenment – perhaps we don't know better.**
 - ix. **Sacrifice of Joy. (Psa.27:6)**
 - x. **Sacrifice of Praise. (Psa.116:17, 107:22). (Heb.13:15)**
 - xi. **Sacrifice of Our Very Life (Rom 12:2, (Isa. 53:7,1 Peter. 2:23, 2 Tim.4:6)**
 - xii. ***These are the sacrifices that deal a death blow to Satan, for they are sacrifices he cannot make.***

3. Jonah: Man of destiny

- a. Born to fly – a prophetic missionary name
- b. Son of a priest, called to be a prophet.
- c. Ninevites had led 7 raids on Israel by time Jonah called to go there. It is in Iraq, on banks of Tigris, near modern-day Mosul. Biggest city of ancient Assyrian empire. Imagine horror of seeing fellow countrymen die. In Iraq that Christians been threatened with death, and some have been beheaded, dismembered and crucified – because the Qu'ran says so and because Mohammed did so. Why do you think he

ran away? What would you have done? I doubt any of us has any idea. We have records of Nineveh bragging about the corpses left in their wake. They slaughtered multitudes, burned cities, impaled, dismembered and pillaged. They built a huge pyramid out of the human heads they had conquered – and they boasted about it in their writings. From the days of Nimrod, who founded the city, there was blood on their hands. Jonah had witnessed these activities. “Go to these people? They massacred my friends! They deserve vengeance! I saw them do it.” Of course he runs!

4. Fact or fiction
 - a. **References to Jonah in [2 Kings 14:25](#); [Mt 12:39-41](#); [Lu 11:39-32](#) - 793-753 B.C.**
 - b. **One of four Old Testament prophets referred to by Jesus. The others were Isaiah ([Mt 15:7](#)), Elijah ([Mt 17:11-12](#)) and Elisha ([Lu 4:27](#)), all real historical people.**
 - c. **4 chapters, 48 verses and 1328 words**
 - d. **It is not the prophecy at issue, but the prophet.**
 - e. **There is no prophecy in the book except the prophecy that God will destroy Nineveh.**
5. Man of character
 - a. Bitterness, resentment and unforgiveness killed Jonah’s call. Childhood wounds, teenage wounds, marriage wounds – we are a nation of wounded and bitter and angry people – and we can only give of what we have. Hurt people hurt people.
 - b. We need to pray and cry for our leaders, our country, our schools, our churches, our families. It is true the hurt people hurt people, but it is also true that God chooses the hurt and the wounded, the fearful, the critical, the bitter, the disobedient. Consider our calling brethren – not many noble, not many rich, not many wise, not many of high status and repute – God calls the weak, the poor, the foolish, the things that are not – to nullify the things that are. (1 Corinthians 1:27). We cry for this. For many of us the starting point is not great, but that inadequacy qualifies us. And for the next generation? God, save our children from what we have brought on them.
6. Jonah: Man on the run
7. Jonah: Called to Nineveh
8. Jonah: Why run from God? Mixed motives, and pretty much all bad!
 - a. **JONAH REFUSED TO ANSWER THE CALL AND DECIDED TO GO TO ANOTHER CITY CALLED TARSHISH IN SPAIN. ...BUT WHY?**
9. 1 Samuel 15:22-23: The point is obedience!
10. Facing consequences. Jonah made his choice. We all are free to choose. But we can’t choose the consequences. Jonah let his mixed motives get the better of him and rob him from moving in his call. We can let our mixed motives get the better of us and miss our call. But God doesn’t give up. And there are consequences. So many times, the word “down” is used. If we don’t follow the call, we go down.
 - a. Jonah paid a price. He paid the fare to escape, but it cost him more than he was bargaining for. There is a price to pay, and we don’t always see what’s on the ticket beforehand – that’s how the devil works. With temptation, he hides the price tag when presenting the lure.
 - b. If we’re not on board the call, we are on board something else

- c. How did he sleep while the boat was sinking? How can we sleep while our nation is sinking? While our village is sinking? Asleep in the light?
- d. Storms woke him up – a severe mercy from God
- e. His sin found him out – he was picked up and thrown overboard. He almost drowned. He was swallowed whole.

11. 3 DAYS IN THE BELLY

- a. Like Jesus 3 days in the tomb – Friday, Saturday, Sunday – like us here in Letton
- b. Our God is a God of second chances. Sometimes we need to come away, to carve out the space and time to commune with our Heavenly Father.
- c. What a retreat!

12. Running towards God – a real 2nd chance. What a comeback!

13. Running with God – result!

- a. Jonah was forgiven, equipped, his faith deepened & he accepted his calling.
- b. This is our time now, here this weekend, on our retreat – not quite as unusual a retreat as Jonah's – not quite as solitary – but this is our time to receive forgiveness, to be equipped, to wake up, to deepen our faith, to open our eyes, to pray, to weep, to identify and embrace our calling, to overcome our misgivings, and to make a difference that we wouldn't have dreamed was possible.
- c. As we consider certain meals in the Bible, we've started with this one where the prophet was the meal – but God meant it for good.