

## THE CALL OF GOD

**What exactly is this mysterious encounter**—the "Call of God?" Perhaps it is not easily defined or relatable, but we are certain that every true preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ must have experienced—a Call.

*"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:"* (I Cor. 1:26-28)

God said to the believers at Antioch, to separate Barnabas and Saul for the particular task He had in mind. There were many others in the church at Antioch, but it was only Barnabas and Saul who received God's call to a specific task. He did not call Lucius or Simeon or Manaen or any of the others named in this church. The call of God is personal. He still calls particular people to particular places for particular purposes.

We must notice that Barnabas and Saul were "set apart for the work to which I have called them." This was something in the mind of God determined in ages past. Churches, neighbors, friends or kinfolk do not "call" the servant of God. Resumes and recommendations do not place men in divinely appointed positions. The call of God is providential. A man can no more send himself into the pulpit than he can send himself to China as an official ambassador from the USA. **A Gospel minister must be God-called.**

**Our first "call" of God was one of conviction**—it was the gospel's call to our sinful heart to abandon sin—all of God's children must receive and obey this call. However, the preacher's calling is not so much one of conviction as it is of apprehension—a true anxiety of spirit and mind—brought about by a spiritual awareness of a great spiritual need. The need? The need of the gospel's declaration. For the called man of God who once was called by the gospel from sin now finds himself the voice of the call of the gospel to sinners and the expounder of spiritual truths to the saints of the Most High.

**No prophet in the Bible applied for the job.** They preached because God called them. Preachers are called men of God not in a profession chosen by mere human preferences or occupied for personal pleasure or promotion—they preach out of necessity—a necessity divinely stimulated. 1 Cor. 9:16-19 "Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it. Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." A calling like Paul's, makes one feel, that preaching is a MUST.

**The Call creates an insatiable hunger**—a hunger for God's Word. God told Ezekiel to eat the words He was giving him to preach. Ezekiel was to take God's message and internalize it so he could preach it with conviction and power. Preaching was meant to be done with emotion, feeling, and conviction.

**A faithful preacher is a formidable weapon in the hands of God.** God told Ezekiel the people to whom he would be preaching were obstinate and stubborn, but he was to preach to them anyway. He was to preach and keep on preaching. His success would not be measured in terms of the people's response, but in terms of his obedience. To love to preach is one thing; to love those to whom we preach is another. A God who cares cannot be represented by those who don't.

**Which "call" are we speaking of,** the first call of invitation or the second call (some time later) of inspiration or the third call (much later) of introspection or the fourth call (much, much later) of inability or the fifth call (a lifetime after) of in-retrospect? or of (probably more to come) .... ?? After all it is a "calling"— indicating an ongoing process.

**The "call" is not just a one-time experience.** The "call" seems to go-with-the-man rather than become a historic one-time-event. Also, the initial "call" seems to be many divergent things that come to focus in time—more than an out-of-the-blue happening it comes as a result of many different ingredients converging on the heart and mind. The "call" only operates in certain spiritual atmospheres. Like rain, it must have the proper setting to become a reality.

**A call of God is more readily heard in a man's prayers than seen in his pulpit posture. The call can only be heard with the ears of the heart. The call is a quiet voice of divine guidance rather than the roar of a crowd. The call is the beckoning of God not the allure of fame. The call of God is an invitation to sacrifice rather than a program for financial success. The call—a mystery indeed but God's man will have experienced it and will forever be humbled to have heard it!**

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