

FOCUS: The Good News is God calls, prepares, and supports us in our calling.

In the Name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Martin Luther frequently said that all vocations held by Christians were callings from God, and thus were right and holy. This was in stark contrast to the “conventional wisdom” of the centuries that only vocations within the church—priest, monk, nun—were truly vocations to which those serving in those roles were called by God to do so. Luther’s view was radical, yet few of us today would think so. We are called to our vocations by the power of the Holy Spirit, regardless of the vocation.

Jeremiah wasn’t too excited about his call to be a prophet. Like many others called to serve, Jeremiah had a bunch of excuses why God shouldn’t be calling him. Like Moses, Jeremiah tried to play the “I’m too young” card to no avail. He tries to use the “I have no authority or ability to speak” excuse, only to be told “Sorry, that doesn’t work, either, Jeremiah.” Jeremiah, resigned to his fate, chose not to ignore God’s call to him, and assumed the role to which he was called.

Like many prophets, Jeremiah’s message was not one that folks always wanted to hear. In fact, his message would be one of destruction and overthrow at times and one of proclaiming the Hebrews are part of God’s building and planting. It’s not an easy or comfortable position for Jeremiah, but as we know through the record of Scripture, it was a calling he accepted faithfully and into which he grew over time.

Jeremiah was eventually forced into exile because of the message that he carried to the people. However, before and after his exile, God traveled with Jeremiah. That is what is remarkable about God’s call. God not only calls us to our vocations, but he promises us that he will be with us in the good times and in the tough times. In this promise we can find great comfort.

Before you exclaim, “But Pastor, I’m not called by God to be a prophet!” let me offer this observation to you. While you might not be called to carry God’s *prophecies* to the world, you *have* been called to carry God’s word into the world. Jeremiah, for example, carried God’s message of salvation to his people and other nations, and told them of things to come. Jeremiah told the people what they needed to do in order to be saved from God’s wrath and anger and punishment. Jeremiah didn’t really worry if the people paid attention, because he knew that they did so at their own peril. He also didn’t worry about what to say, because God put the words into Jeremiah’s mouth.

In a similar manner, all of us are called to carry God's word into the world. As the Great Commission is given to us, we are called to make disciples of all nations. To make disciples, we need to carry God's word to others so that they might hear that word and be moved to become students of it as well. To make disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ calls upon us to share God's word with others. We aren't called to make others *believe* God's word, however. Belief comes by the power of the Holy Spirit acting in the lives of those touched by God's word.

As a congregation, we are a group of disciples gathered together to hear God's word and share in the sacraments God has provided to us as signs of his grace and love. We are called to go out into the world after gathering together here and share the word which we have heard with others, so that they may become disciples as well. Not everyone will hear the message we take into the world, but that's OK. Even Jeremiah was ignored from time to time. If you are afraid that your neighbor might want to push you over a cliff, as Jesus' friends and neighbors attempted in our Gospel lesson this morning, don't worry. Like Nazareth, there really aren't any cliffs near here, and besides, like Jesus, the Holy Spirit is walking with you and not only providing your words, but protection as well.

Yes, I am making light of this a bit, but I hope that in levity you, too, will see the truth. We have a great message to share—God's love and grace come to us freely given and wholly undeserved through God's only Son, Jesus Christ. Life everlasting is available to *anyone* who believes and is baptized. This is a *wonderful* thing and one which we should be eager to share with others.

Each Sunday, we end our worship with the words, "Go in peace. Serve the Lord. Thanks be to God!" Today, *do* go in peace, and when you are outside these comfortable surroundings, facing the challenges and opportunities in the world, *serve* the Lord your God by sharing the Good News with at least one person in the coming week. Make an intentional effort to not only invite a person to come and hear what God has to offer her or him, but encourage that person to come and see what God is doing in this place as well. Promise her, if you want, that you are not trying to convert her or make her believe what you believe. Belief is God's work. Your and my job is to make disciples. Thanks be to God.