

God Fulfills the Call

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2 Sam 2:1-7

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Synopsis:

Today we finish our sermon series on David: Called to Mission. The people of Judah gather to proclaim David king. Proclaiming David king is the end of a process that begins with a shepherd boy watching the sheep. Even though David's coronation is one moment in time, God has been at work in each moment of David's life, both good and bad, to fulfill his calling. As well, God has been at work in each moment of your life, both good and bad, to fulfill his calling.

I.

One of the hallmarks of our Reformed Tradition is that God calls each human being to a task. During the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church had narrowed Scripture's emphasis upon God's call to the religious, meaning clergy and the like. The Reformers: Luther, Calvin, and others went back to the source, the Bible, and saw that in Scripture God calls each human being, not just priests, to a task. This means that you, not just Tom, Bob, Carolyn and I, have a calling in life. What is it and how has God been preparing you for it?

II.

In today's story, the people of Judah anoint David king over the house of Judah. But we know better; God has anointed David king a long time ago. God calls Samuel to go the Bethlehem and anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the new king (1 Sam 16). But it has taken years for David to fulfill this calling. In the process God has been preparing David for this role. God uses David's gifts, values, mentors, and experiences to fulfill this call. What do I mean?

We first encounter David as the shepherd who watches after the flock of his father Jesse. Here is a young lad, who sits beneath the trees composing songs while watching after the sheep: David, the guitar player, Israel's Johnny B. Goode, who sits in the shade "strumming out the rhythms that the drivers made." God calls the shepherd-guitar player to Saul's court. David's God-given talent prepares him for the moment (1 Sam 16).

After playing his guitar to soothe Saul's mental condition, David comes to the battlefield bringing his brothers food. While there he hears the taunts of Goliath. Hearing this challenge he rushes to fight the giant, but won't don the armor of the king; instead he uses a shepherd's sling and a rock from the creek bed. Where did he learn how to use a sling? From watching after the sheep. God has prepared David for this moment (1 Sam 17).

David defeats Goliath not through his wits but through deep trust in Yahweh. David's first success points to one of his core values, trust in Yahweh. David is "a man after God's own heart." God is preparing David to be king.

Not all of David's experiences are positive however. Saul tries to kill David numerous times (1 Sam 19). These must have been very difficult moments for David, moments of doubt and fear: "Does God really have a calling for me? Am I to be crushed by the jealousy of a megalomaniac king?" God even uses these difficult moments to prepare David. God doesn't waste a hurt.

When David finally flees from Saul, he runs first to his mentor Samuel (1 Sam 19). Samuel along with the priests at Nob (1 Sam 21) protect, feed, and encourage David, assuring him that God has not abandoned him but is using each moment to prepare him. God is preparing David through his mentors.

When David leaves Samuel he forms a band of outcasts, who roam about the country guarding villages from the raiding Amalekites. But Saul continues to pursue, coming unawares upon David in a cave, where David is tempted to rise and kill his enemy (1 Sam 24). David refuses due to the honor he holds for Yahweh's anointed. Honor and trust are two of David's core values. God uses these to fulfill David's calling.

While roving about the country, David encounters friends, foes, and fools. Nabal, whose name means *fool*, insults David and his men, inciting David's anger. This time a female mentor, Abigail, wife of the fool Nabal, cautions and counsels David (1 Sam 25). David listens to Abigail. God uses this episode to prepare David for his calling.

Not all of David's experiences are positive. In fact, most of them are difficult. He wants to help his nation, but Saul threatens. In desperation David goes over to the enemy, to the Philistines, joining them in protecting the southern cities from raiders (1 Sam 27). David must have thought God

had abandoned him when he had to leave his countrymen: “Where is God? Why if I am to be king does he have me with of all people, the Philistines?” But God is yet at work, using even this difficulty to prepare David.

In one last difficult moment at Ziklag, David draws not only the anger of Saul but even that of his own men. The past two weeks we have looked at the Ziklag episode. David returns home to find his town burned, his family gone, and his men ready to kill him (1 Sam 30). Yet God is at work, even in this seeming defeat to prepare David for his calling.

Why am I retracing of David’s life? I am doing so because God has been at work in David’s gifts, values, mentors, and experiences both bad and good, to prepare him to be king. We know this because we can look back at David’s story and see God at work. I bet you that David had his doubts that God was at work:

- Guitar playing? Oh, that’s no big deal; anyone can do that!
- Shepherding? Anyone can be a shepherd!
- Goliath? Well, everyone has their 15 minutes of fame!
- Saul trying to kill me, going over to the Philistines, Ziklag? These are hardly highlights of my life!
- Trust and honor? I do have a few good inclinations!
- Samuel, the priests at Nob, Abigail? Everyone has friends!

David did not see God at work in his life until he began to look back. Once he did, and once we do through reading his story, we see God at work to prepare David for this moment.

III.

God has been at work in your life and in the life of this church all along for this every moment. You and I have a calling from God: Each gift, each mentor, each value, and each experience both good and bad prepares us.

What is your calling? What is our calling as a church?

E.g., Tom and I with CRM

-Refocusing process

-Assumes that God has been at work to prepare us

-How do we see this?

Post it notes: people, experiences, moments (yellow/red)

Time line

Divide life into 4-5 periods

Lesson learned during those periods

Biblical purpose statement (being)

Vision statement (picture of the future)

We were exhausted but fulfilled.

Over the next year and a half we will be going through the CRM process with the entire church. I have written to you about this in the Geneva Press. Starting with the leadership and building out to the core constituency of Geneva, we will be asking how God has been at work preparing us for our calling. I am excited. Tom is excited. Your session is excited.

Let me urge you to begin looking back at your life:

What gifts has God given you?

What are your core values?

Who have been your mentors?

What have been your experiences, both good and bad?

Write it down on paper. Put together your own post-it notes and time line. What is your biblical purpose and vision based upon your gifts, values, mentors, and experiences?

IV.

The Reformers rightly taught that God is at work in each human's life calling them to a particular purpose. You have a purpose for which God has prepared you. We at Geneva have a purpose for which God has prepared us.

Even Jesus had a purpose for which God prepared him. Listen to his mother singing about her son's purpose:

And Mary said,

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor,
on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.
(Luke 1:46-55)