

Lord, if it is you...Command

Matthew 4:22-30

This is my first official sermon to my new family at PACC. I thank God that He led me to come and serve you. Thank you for trusting me and Sevan to be your pastor and *yeretsgin* (pastor's wife). With the help of our Lord, we will do our best to serve you, while pleasing God and being faithful to His Word.

So what should be my first sermon to you?

I like to preach sermon series, eight or ten of them. So here is my first series to you. We all are **called by God to serve Him**. I know you are waiting for me to minister to you, but my role as a pastor, as a shepherd, is to help you find your call and disciple you to follow your call. Whether pastors or lay, clergy or congregation, we all are called to serve Him. That is why in the reformed tradition, the pastor is not a mediator between God and the congregation; the pastor is the facilitator who helps the people follow God who is the source of everything.

"You Are Called..."

Paul was called on the road to Damascus; and after he heard the call he asked: **"Lord, what do you want to do through me?"**

This morning I would like to take one character who heard the call, PETER, *Bydros* and Peter's encounter with Jesus. Jesus is inviting Peter to get out of the boat and walk on the water towards him.

How logical is this request? How dangerous is this invitation?

Have you seen people do adventurous risky actions that I would not recommend you to do? Jumping off a cliff and opening the parachute last minute? Surfing in dangerous places...

You are not called to take stupid steps. How about the invitation of Jesus to Peter? Have you realized what Peter is saying?

“Lord, if it is you, command me to come...” “Lord, if it is you... command me...” Peter asked Jesus for two things:

1. To confirm his identity, and 2. Command him to walk...

1. Make sure the Call is from God.

“If it is you...”

How do you discern that you are hearing the right call? What is actually God’s will for your life?

“If it is you...” still rings in my ear. Peter’s words to Jesus are so meaningful. There are many sounds around us. There are many calls around us. The sheep know the voice of the **Good genuine Shepherd**. This means you are in relationship with Him daily. This means you know God, so you can hear His voice. Biblically, to know means to have an intimate relationship with God.

Jesus gave the example of a shepherd. The sheep know the voice of their shepherd.

To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. for they know his voice. (John 10:3-5 ESV)

Sevan and I went through this many times. How do we discern God's will? I will elaborate on this topic another time. We came to you to this church because we obeyed God, and we said: "If it is you..." THEN:

2. When you hear the call, **Get Out**

Peter said: If this you Jesus, I am ready....COMMAND ...

When God tells you to get out, this means "**Step out.**" Some of us say, "**I need more faith to obey God.**" Let me ask you not to pray to God to give you more faith. **Pray that you will know God better.** Because the more you know God, the more your faith will grow and you will learn to hear the right voice and obey it. You will get out of your comfort zone.

In his book *Walk on Water*, Pastor John Ortberg tells about a park called **Old Faithful**. Old Faithful is a **cone geyser** located in **Yellowstone National Park** in Wyoming. I assume the name of this geyser is based on being faithful. **It is one of the most predictable geographical features on Earth, erupting every 35 to 120 minutes.** If you want to experience the eruption, you need go there and wait and yes it will happen. "**Old Faithful**"

Once you hear the call, get out and know that **God is faithful** to lead you to the next step. But one has to start from the first step...

3. Find out your gifts

I will help you find your gift if you have not already found it. Be careful not to make too many commitments. We are the body of Christ. Each has a unique gift. We have to learn to serve together. Remember we represent Christ not ourselves.

4. Know your Limits

Know your limits. Know yourself. Know whom you represent. (Even if we know the answer, we need to remind ourselves always).

-Example of the John the Baptist. His disciples came and were not happy that many of Jesus' followers had been baptized by John. John was not upset. He said he was the "best man", the bridegroom's friend. His role was different. He had a limited role.

'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. **The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.** Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease." (John 3:28-30 ESV)

The job of the groom's friend was to guard the bride until the groom came. Then his job was to step out and allow the groom to be united with the bride. John was full of joy; he had done his part. John the Baptist knew his role and no one would take that joy from him because he was second chair in the orchestra. He knew his limits. He passed the baton.

Do you know your limits? Do you know that this is His calling, His mission? You are SERVING HIM.

5. Do I have a passion towards this call?

A good question to ask when you hear a call from God: "Do I have a passion towards this call?"

"Your calling is where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need." Frederick Buechner

Each of us has a passion towards a mission, a service. Each of us has a gift different from that of the other. It is important thing is to have the desire to hear the call and obey God's command.

6. Pray about it.

Some people say to me: "Badveli, I do not have a call". Or "I do not know my call."

Do you pray about it? I heard a man who thought he did not have a specific call was challenged by a pastor who said to him: "Pray to God to reveal to you a specific call within six months." The challenge was this person should pray for this every day for six months.

Do you pray to God where to use you?

You prayed to God to have a new pastor. God answered your prayers. It does not stop here; it just began. I will rock the boat. I will encourage you not to sit relaxed on the church pews. I will help you to think out of the boat. How can we become a more mission-oriented church? How do we reach out to the Fresno community and beyond?

We will approach the Table of the LORD.

I look back at the story of Peter and I think. Who failed in that story? Some say Peter obeyed, but when he did not focus on Jesus, he sank in the water.

So let me ask you again, who failed in the story?

The eleven who did not do anything. They just watched the event. Maybe they even criticized Peter. Or even criticized Jesus.

We are here this morning to focus on Jesus. I am inviting you to get out of the boat. Get out of your comfort zone. What did Jesus do just before breaking the bread and blessing the cup? He washed the disciples' feet. That is an out of the boat experience.

So what is bothering you this morning? What is stopping you from giving your life to Jesus? Maybe you heard this message many times, but you did not take any step of faith.

Here I am, Lord. I am a new pastor this morning, challenging you to get out and come to the Table with humility and submission to God's will saying, "Here I am, Lord." He will give you new food, a new energy, a new vision to move forward in your life.

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clearness_committee