

# The Ones God Calls

Matthew 4:18-22

Several years ago, in London, England the city was besieged with complaints about London's mass transit system. It seems that the city's buses tended to drive right past bus stops even though there were customers standing in line waiting to be picked up. Called upon to explain their actions, the London Transit Authorities released the following statement which has become infamous with public relations departments everywhere. It read: "It is impossible for us to maintain our schedules if we are always having to stop and pick up passengers."

What was wrong with that statement?

They got their priorities confused. They thought their job was to keep a schedule, when in reality their job was to pick up passengers and deliver them to their destinations. Because they got their priorities confused, they failed to do what they were hired to do.

I. What were you created to do?

What did God have in mind when He saved you? [Ephesians 2:10](#) tells us that when we were saved we were "created in Christ Jesus to do good works that He prepared in advance for us to do." In other words, God had something in mind for you to do when He saved you. He saved you to do "good works" and He prepared ahead of time for that to happen.

Some people mistakenly believe that God's purpose in their lives is for them to come & fill a pew every Sunday morning - and that is what they are satisfied doing. And they have no intention of doing anything more.

You see, it is possible for us to confuse our priorities. There are tasks to be done - and if you and I don't do them they may not get done.

Just like the schedule WAS important to the Transit authority in London, so also, going to church IS important for us. But that's NOT our main priority. Our main priority should be serving Jesus.

II. Some might say - but I'm too busy to serve God right now, and I can appreciate that concern.

One Sunday the leadership handed out their "ministry service sheets", one man handed his in and his wife said, "Now before you go signing him up for anything - you be sure to talk to me 1st."

Why would she say this? Well, because her husband was a busy man. And he loved to serve God. She wasn't objecting to him being involved in the church, she wanted to make sure he didn't burn himself out.

We don't want to burn anybody out. We don't want to have a FEW people "doing everything in the church. BUT, we do want everybody who can do something in the church do something in the church. And being too busy with other things in life isn't really a good excuse.

Back in 1985 Pulpit Helps had the following article written by a preacher.

Recently I approached a member of our church for help in one of our programs.

Her reply was: "I don't have the time to give." When I heard her say this I thought of the following lines I'd read somewhere:

"God never goes to the lazy or to the idle when He needs men for His service.

When He has work to be done He goes to those who are already at work. When God wants a great servant, He calls a busy man

\* Moses was busy with his flock at Horeb.

\* Gideon was busy threshing wheat by the winepress

\* Saul was busy searching for his father's lost donkeys

\* David was busy caring for his father's sheep.

\* Elisha was busy plowing with twelve yoke of oxen

- \* Nehemiah was busy bearing the King's wine cup
- \* Amos was busy following the flock
- \* Matthew was collecting customs
- \* AND James and John and Peter and Andrew were out fishing & mending their nets

Now, why would God do that? Why would God pick on "busy" people? Because - when you need work done, you need to find someone who knows how to work. You need to find someone who has shown they can be responsible.

God is looking for "responsible" workers. That's why Jesus said in [Luke 16:10](#), "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."

III. You see, that's the pattern of how God chooses and trains His people. He gives a little responsibility and then sees how we handle it, then He gives more and more tasks in accordance with their faithfulness and abilities.

Let's reread our passage for this morning - [Matthew 4:18-22](#)

Now, if you were to read only the Gospel of Matthew on this encounter, you'd think that this was the 1st time, Jesus had ever met Peter, Andrew, James and John. But that's not true.

The Gospel of John tells us that they had met some time before this, Jesus had met (at least) Andrew and Peter in a different way. Turn to [John 1:35-42](#)

You see - Jesus didn't just pick 12 men and suddenly employ them as His disciples. IN FACT, the pattern (at least with Peter and Andrew) was gradual.

1. He met with them.
2. He called them

3. He prayed over His choice of them as his followers
4. He worked with them for 3 years
5. And over those 3 years He gave them increasingly more difficult assignments
6. Until, at last, at Pentecost, Jesus allowed them to lead and take care of His most precious possession - the Church

You see - that's how God works.

As one person once said - God doesn't look at your "ability" God looks for your "availability"

And if you're "available" God can AND God will do great things through you.

The purpose of this lesson is to get your to realize that your purpose (as a Christian) is not fulfilled by going to church and filling a pew... You can ONLY fulfill God's goal for your life, when you begin to Serve Jesus.

CONCLUSION: You never know what you can do for God, until you are willing to wait upon Him and be used by Him. Give yourself to God in the small things of this life and wait and watch as He does great things in your life.

The story is told that every Sunday for nearly 3 years Walter had a routine. Just before 10:00 AM he would open the doors to the Epworth church building and prepare it for worship. If the weather was cold, he would build a fire in the old wood stove. If it was hot he would open all the windows and distribute the hand fans with a picture of Jesus on one side and an ad for a local funeral home on the other.

Next, Walter would open the Bible located on top of the wooden pulpit and read the selected scripture for that week. Then it would be time for prayer. Often there were folks in the community included on Walter's list. The latest national and world news would be mentioned. But always, Walter...

... ended every prayer with a plea for God to remember and bless his beloved church.

Every Sunday, Walter had a routine... but what makes this story so unique is that

with very few exceptions, Walter began and ended the Sunday morning worship service... all alone.

Alone? Why? Many years ago, Epworth church was built on land donated by a neighboring farmer but if for any reason they stopped meeting regularly - if Walter stopped opening the church building doors every Sunday - the property would revert to the original owners... the Epworth church would cease to exist. So what was the big deal? If Walter was the only one bothering to attend, let him go somewhere else OR stay at home. Why not face the inevitable & allow Epworth to quietly disappear? What harm would it do? But, for Walter, it was a big deal. He believed God had a divine purpose for his life & for the church he loved. But for now, Walter felt he had to be patient, to be faithful... and to wait. But, wait for what?

"To wait" is not one of my favorite verbs. I define wait as "waste"...as in waste of time. I become frustrated just waiting in line at a grocery store. So, according to my definition of wait, Walter was wasting his time at Epworth, refusing to face reality by waiting for something to happen that would never happen.

Walter waited. Not me! I would have moved on. So would most of you. Yet, you and I, in our impatience and lack of faith would have missed the miracle of Epworth church! Every Sunday for three years Walter opened the doors to Epworth church and worshipped... alone. Why? Because, as far as Walter was concerned, God had a divine purpose for him and the church he loved. So, Walter was patient, and faithful, and he waited.

Maybe it would help us to understand what is meant by the word, "wait"? My tendency is to think of waiting as idle time doing nothing such as waiting for a movie to start. Actually, waiting is more like receiving word that an honored guest will soon be visiting. You busily clean and decorate your house, prepare special foods, take a shower and search through the closet for just the right outfit. In other words... waiting on God is essentially an eventful time of preparation and anticipation.

Psalm 40:1 declares: "I waited patiently for the Lord to help me and he turned to me and heard my cry." Waiting is learning to trust in God's leadership and competence.

Isaiah 40:31 says, "But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary." Waiting renews your strength.

Hebrews 9:28 says, "This time he (Christ) will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for him." Waiting is a sign of faith and faith in Christ is the source of our salvation.

One Sunday morning a young family, new to the area visited Epworth and after meeting Walter joined him in worship. They found something unique about this little church nestled among the trees and the old man who faithfully opened her doors. On the following Sunday they came back and within a few weeks the children were bringing friends. At year's end a minister was hired.

Today, Epworth is a small family church situated between several farms and hidden among the trees. Every summer they offer Vacation Bible School for the neighborhood and each Christmas is celebrated with a pageant performed by the children. Many of the original members have died and some of the children have moved away, but the miracle of Epworth has never been forgotten.

On the first Sunday of August, people come from across the U.S. to visit the church of their youth and relive the miracle of the old man who refused to let his beloved church die.

I want to encourage you this week, if but for a moment, to put down your papers, stop reading your reports, turn off your computers, and listen for the Lord to call you into His service. And then challenge yourselves to answer that call as Isaiah did in Isaiah 6:8, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'here I am, send me!'"