

“Simon and Andrew, James and John”

Mark 1:14-20

25 January 2009

The Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

[The Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church](#)

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “**Follow me and I will make you fish for people.**” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Prayer.

God does the calling.

It isn't about us,

you or me,

(though, to tell the truth,

we would like it to be

all about *selfish-me*.)

It is by God's initiative

and by God's initiative alone

that we are named

that we are invited

to the table

to join

in relationship

- give and take -

in a relationship

between our Creator

and ourselves.

God takes the bold stand
to claim us for His very own
whether we like it or not.

Questions of motive or means
are unknowable
without Divine revelation.

So don't beat yourself up
with questions.

If answers come,
simply respond with thanks.

We only know what we've experienced.

We only know the knock
when God is standing
at our door.

God establishes the standards.
Expectations are low.

The likelihood of success is high.

Failure is not remembered in God's kingdom.

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The depths of hell
are filled in and paved over
with one simple utterance of repentance.
The trouble wrought by the Devil himself
is wholly righted
simply by the majesty and power
of a forgiving and loving God.

God calls the ordinary
the plain and simple;
fisherman and farmer,
merchant and trader
soldier and sailor
the widowed and the divorced
blue collar, white collar,
and every type of collar in-between.
God calls the sinner
and the saint alike.
God calls the best and the brightest
and the least and the dull.
If God can call the least of these,
- If God can call someone as foul as me -
than I assure you
God can call you, too.
In fact,
the mere fact
that you are here
(with apologies to those who are reading this)
is proof positive
that God is calling
your name
the same way Jonah was called
the same way Simon and Andrew
James and John were called.

“Not worthy?”

Please.

Save your protests
save your whining
for some imbecile
who might be suckered in
by such insincerity.
It does not say anyplace in my Bible
that God reviewed Jonah's past work
experience
that Jesus asked to see a resume or
curriculum vitae
of anyone chosen or claimed
for His apprentice program.
No psychological testing.
No background checks.
No physicals to pass.
You are worthy
just the way you are.
You are worthy
no matter where you've been
or what you've done.
You are worthy
so, as my doctor once told me,
“it's time to grow up.”
Stop behaving like a child.
Stand up like a man or a woman
and take the authority
God has already given to you.

God provides
all the necessary talent, education, and tools.
There is a reason you can do some things
well.

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There is a *Divine* reason you can do some things well.
It's because God has already been at work in your life
making plans and preparations
from the time when you were in the womb
your foundation has been under construction.
A strong back
a sharp mind
an artistic touch
an inventor's creativity
are each equally important
gifts from a loving
heavenly Father.

Do you think
doors have magically opened for you
throughout your life?
Open you eyes!
Wake up and smell the coffee!
God has been opening doors for you
all your life.
God has brought teachers and mentors
into your life and mine
to help us develop the skills necessary
for successful discipleship.
This education comes at the incredibly low
price
of turning around and teaching the next
generation
everything that had been given to us.

Whether your tool of choice
is a pipe wrench or a computer,
a hammer or a stethoscope,

a pen or a shovel,
God has provided every tool you'll ever need.
God has provided everything -
in the past
in the present,
and will continue to provide for your every
need
in the time that is yet to come.

What is in your toolbox?

Into everyone's toolbox
Is given Jesus.
He is the UNITY that gathers us as one.
He is the Body, supporting us from our birth,
Sealing us in our baptism,
And guiding us with His Holy Spirit
from this moment
going forward to eternity.
The Spirit of Christ
Is our guide,
Our guardian,
And our friend.
The Spirit is our help
In every time of trial or trouble.
The Spirit is our source of grace;
The well into which we can dip our ladle
And drink of His love.
We can taste his forgiveness
- water without price -
if only we humble ourselves
and open our lips to drink.
The Spirit of Jesus is the one and only
Who will take us by the hand
One day

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And lead us home to glory
Into Thy eternal peace.

Into everyone's toolbox
is given the Bible.
The written Word of God,
sacred in every way.
Though often overlooked
and ignored
the Bible is the best all-around tool available.
Use it.
Use it liberally.
Use it as your guide to life.

Understanding is not required.
Complete comprehension is not expected.
I don't understand it all,
ordained as I am,
and trusted with the keys to the kingdom.
If the preacher doesn't understand it all,
how could you be expected?
Fact is
faith isn't based on insider knowledge.
Faith isn't based on certainty.
Faith is based on watching
and passing on
what has been observed.
Accept the fact that
with God there is always that which is
mystery.
With God there is always the unknown.

Good works result from faith.
Jesus and his apostle, Paul,

both knew that we would forever get this fact
backwards.

Faith is not the by-product of good works.
You can't earn your way to heaven.
People do good
by God and by neighbor
when it is faith doing the talking.

Answering the call
is not about being a preacher.
Answering the call
is about following Jesus
and putting to use
the tools in your toolbox.
All that is required from us ,
To start fresh and new each day,
is the ability to say "yes,"
"here I am."
"I will go where you send me."
"I will do what you want me to do."

God's time is fulfilled
the moment acceptance comes,
the moment we submit
our will
to the will of Christ.

Be assured,
belief comes in time;
it builds with time.
Likewise, be assured,
belief never becomes complete.
Belief is never perfected in this life.
Questions will always remain.
Tomorrow will yield a new dawn

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a new day
fraught with temptations, trials, and snares.
Even still,
tomorrow will yield a better day
simply because
we have decided to answer His call
to drop the net
and to follow Him.

Dearly beloved, these are the words God has
impressed upon my heart. Amen.

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