

Articles and Sermons :: Called by God - Zac Poonen

Called by God - Zac Poonen - posted by Christisking (), on: 2009/7/17 13:01

Called by God

Zac Poonen

There is a lot of difference between "a profession" and "a calling". Let me explain what I mean. Suppose there's a sick child in a hospital and a nurse looks after it for 8 hours on her shift-duty. That nurse then goes home and forgets all about that child. Her concern for that child was only for 8 hours. Now she has other things to do, such as going to the movies and watching television. She doesn't have to think about that child again until the next day when she goes back to work. But the mother of that child doesn't work 8-hour shifts! She can't go to the movies when her child is sick. That's the difference between a profession and a calling. If you apply that illustration to the way you care for the believers in your church, you'll discover whether you're a nurse or a mother!

Paul said, in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, "We proved to be gentle among you as a mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well pleased to impart you not only the gospel but also our own lives because you've become very dear to us". Paul not only imparted the gospel of God to those Christians but his life as well. Any ministry that is not done in this way is not really Christian ministry. Paul served God like that because he had a calling to the ministry. He didn't take it up as a profession.

It's wonderful to serve the Lord. It is the greatest thing in the world. Nothing on earth can be compared with it - but only if you're called. It cannot be reduced to a profession. God called me to serve Him (full-time) on May 6, 1964 when I was an officer in the Indian Navy. I handed in my resignation then to the naval authorities. But it was like Moses asking Pharaoh to let the Israelites go! The Indian Navy wouldn't release me. It took two years and repeated applications before they finally released me - miraculously - in God's perfect time. Being called of God has made all the difference in my life. First of all, it doesn't matter to me now, what people think about me or my ministry, because Someone Else is my Master and I have to answer only to Him. Secondly, I can trust God to stand by me and give me grace whenever I face any trial or opposition in my ministry - and that happens often. Thirdly, it doesn't matter to me whether I receive any money or not, and whether I get any food to eat or not. If I receive food and money, well and good. If I don't get any food or money, that's fine with me too. I cannot stop serving the Lord, just because I didn't get money or food - because God has called me.

I can't get rid of my calling. I'm not a salaried employee

who can stop working when IÂ'm not paid or fed! ItÂ's like the case of the mother and her child. A nurse will stop working if her salary is not paid one month. But a mother can never stop. She doesnÂ't get a salary in any case! And sheÂ'll look after her baby even if she doesnÂ't get any food or money! ThatÂ's how the apostles served the Lord. What a glorious thing it is to be called of God! You can never do the LordÂ's work, the way God wants you to do it, if you do it as a profession. It has to be a calling or nothing. Every other job in the world can be done as a profession. But not a motherÂ's, or a fatherÂ's, or that of a servant of the Lord! All these are the result of a calling. Paul told the Corinthian Christians that even if they had 10,000 teachers, they still had only one father (1 Cor.4:15). Paul was both a spiritual father and a mother to his flock. His was not a profession but a calling.

"Take this child and nurse him for me and I shall give you your wages" is what the Lord has said to me (Exod.2:9). He said that to me first of all concerning my own physical children. And then He said that to me concerning my spiritual children too. When we take care of GodÂ's children HeÂ's the One Who is responsible to give us our wages, not man. If we serve men, then let us look to men to pay us. But if we serve the Lord, then let us look to Him alone to provide us our needs, in whatever way He sees fit. And let Him also decide how much we should receive each month. There is a dignity about a true servant of the Lord. "Take these children and nurse them for Me", says the Lord, "Bring them up for me and I will give you your wages". Those wages will not be in terms of money, primarily. I believe the Lord takes care of our earthly needs, since He taught us to pray for our daily bread and He has ordained that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. So He will take care of all our earthly needs. But thereÂ'll be a far greater spiritual reward, in addition. Paul wrote to the Christians at Thessalonica that they were going to be his crown and his joy when the Lord returned (1 Thess.2:19). He found his delight in them, just as a father finds his delight in his children.

An elder (who is a spiritual father) will be delighted when he sees that believers, who came as raw material to his church once, have now become men of God. This is something akin to the delight a sculptor has when he has fashioned a shapeless rock into a human form. He had to chip away at that block for many months and years before the face and figure of the man came out of it! That is the work that God has given us to do too. We must never be satisfied with merely having instructed people correctly. If the image of Christ has not come forth in their lives, we have accomplished nothing at all.

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God bless,

Patrick  
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**Re: Called by God - Zac Poonen - posted by jameztree (), on: 2009/7/17 14:21**

Thanks for this. I recently read "the truths we believe" from poonen and cfc and was encouraged to do so:  
<http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/articles.php?display=article26>