

This is for Real
August 25, 2013
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Paige Convis

Text: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Our God is not a God...that messes around.

It is from God that we live and move and have our being, and it is from God that we have purpose.

When God formed us in our mother's womb, we are known, God knew what we would do, what we would feel and the calling on our life, because God created our lives, God ordained our calling and will surely see it through.

We are not accidents. Our births were no mistake or mishap, and our lives are no fluke of nature. Parents don't always plan babies, but God does. God wasn't surprised.

God also created for a reason and purpose. In the 139th Psalm we are reminded: "You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book!"

Because of our identity as children of God, we are called by God to do something very real in this world.

Everything that is made has its purpose, even those things that are only made by humans and we were made for a mission. God is at work in the world, and wants all of us to join. We were put on earth to make a contribution we weren't created just to consume resources – to eat, breathe, and take up space. God designed us to make a difference with our lives.

These truths are made more real and more evident to us in events of celebration like today as a community we lived more fully into our calling as people of Christ as we, by the power of the Holy Spirit and welcomed Esther and Isaac into this covenant people through the waters of baptism.

Baptism as a visible signs of God's invisible Grace and God by the Holy Spirit reassures us with water, something tangible that we are Christ's own, created in God's image and perfect plan and now posses a calling to live in the way according to Christ.

This, This church, this ministry, this calling to be people of God, changed by Christ shaped by the Holy Spirit in a world that is so in need of words and acts of love and grace is real, preplanned, and strong God's kingdom, is not a kingdom that can be shaken.

Friends, in our calling as people of God to participate in this kingdom we find ourselves having been caught up in the incredible whirlwind of God's redeeming work in the world. Calling is a word that is thrown around a lot in church, it has some pretty heavy weight tied to it, and we know to never take a calling from God lightly from examples in scripture and And so Today, when we read of Jeremiah's call narrative, I couldn't help but get excited about what this says for the call that God has placed on all of our lives in Christ!

Jeremiah is a 620 something BCE teenage boy, destined to become a priest who hears God's voice calling to become a prophet to the nations at a very politically charged time in history.

A call is indeed a very big and important and possibly scary thing, the unknown of what the future could hold, the sure uncomfortableness for what the calling means.

The feelings of fear, feelings of inadequacy, are bound to come up

I mean we see these feelings in Jeremiah, and in most call narratives that we find in scripture.

Think of Moses who when God called to him from the burning bush said he couldn't speak well enough to go before Pharaoh. Or when God sends an angel to Gideon to tell him that he will be a mighty warrior and Gideon answers with saying he is way too small for that kind of call.

The pattern is this, God calls, humans protest, God reassures that we really are healing a call, and then God sends the person with the message to do the good work in which they have been called

And as we come to realize our call as Christians more deeply and what the means in this world, we often get stuck in the protest.

Mark, an ex-felon heard God's call to start a ministry for young teens that are in trouble with the law. God called Mark to show love to these young people in ways that could change their lives.

But God Mark asks,

Is my past too marred, am I too messed up?

Elaine is a 14 year old high school student who everyday at lunch made it her goal to sit with a kid at lunch who was sitting alone.

This calling God,

Am I too young to make a difference?

Larry, a high school dropout, who has recently received his GED feels called to go to college and learn how to teach.

But God,
Am I too ordinary, too unintelligent?

Mae, now 85, and living in a retirement home wants to start sending cards to the people she knows who are struggling

She asks, God,
Am I too old to serve you anymore?

The answer we need to hear is No, of course, you aren't too messed up, and you aren't too young, or ordinary or old. No, of course not! Go, do what you are called to do.

But maybe...

But what if we are, what if Mark is too messed up, or Elaine too young to make difference, what if Larry doesn't possess the intelligence... or Mae the years in her life to respond to this call. Maybe our protests are true.

Ah, Lord, Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy!
Jeremiah was young and hadn't developed the skills yet to be an excellent speaker.

Maybe if we remind God of who we really are, maybe God will no longer require us to live and love and serve in community for the kingdom of God...

The thing is that God isn't interested in using us because we are the perfect age, have the natural ability to speak well every time, are extraordinary and perfect...

God call us to participate in the Church because God did exactly that, called us, in our baptism for this participation.

God is God and we are not.

We see in Jeremiah's call narrative that God points the action back to God's self. God says "Do not say that you are only a boy, for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you."

This call that God puts on Jeremiah's life has little hinging on what Jeremiah can do or can't do. But everything hinges on what God had done, is doing and will do in and through Jeremiah's life. God understands that this can be overwhelming, and says "Do not be afraid", but then reassures the prophet "I have put my words in your mouth."

God says, I am not kidding around with you, I will do this, to which I have called through you, with the gifts I have given you, especially for this exact thing that I have called you to be.

Jeremiah's call speaks to our call as Christians. We are all called by God from the moment of our creation in the womb for one purpose: life with God. Witness through our words and actions are our "yes" to God's call.

While we might not be called to be an international sign like Jeremiah, we are called to make a difference in our world through Christ.

We are called to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, we are called to love and serve and be in community with each other.

This calling, to make a difference in our world, to truly be the Church to the broken is a calling that we are too young, too old, too ordinary, too uneducated, too emotional, too slow, too awkward, too messed up, too whatever, we all are called and yet we are all too something for it.

But the beautiful thing is that God knows it, will use all of that mess that we call our lives to work out completely whatever God has planned!

So friends, live into your call from God, in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the way you treat others at work or school, in the job that you are doing to earn a living, in the way you live in neighborhoods, wherever God is calling you to be remember you will not be qualified, not even in the least bit, you will probably be too something, or not enough of something else.

We are a people forever inclined to resist, object, fear, rationalize and generally make ourselves miserable avoiding doing and being what God created us to be and do. So let us find peace that God has ordained and created and gifted us and will complete the good work started in us to carry out God's mission in this world and to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord to all nations and then just go and do it.

Amen