

Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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Faithful is He that Calls You

When God truly calls us to do His work, most of us respond with, “I can’t because....” Then we offer our favorite excuses: “I’m not (old, smart, holy, educated, strong, eloquent, or whatever other word we can think of) enough to do your work.” We hope our choice of the right word will justify our disobedience to His calling. The great prophets of the Bible were no different.

The life work of Jeremiah, for example, was determined before he was even born. He was called to be a prophet:

4 Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,
5 Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and
before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified
you, and I ordained you a prophet unto the nations.
-Jeremiah 1

Jeremiah objected to his calling. He said I can’t do it because I’m just a child:

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord Yahweh! behold, I cannot
speak: for I am a child. -Jeremiah 1

Yahweh told Jeremiah in effect, “You can’t use that excuse to avoid your calling.” He told him not to worry because He would be right there with him as he prophesied. You won’t be alone, He added, because “I am with you to deliver you” when you see frightening faces. Besides, Yahweh added, you are not going to speak your own words, but mine, “I have put my words in your mouth!”

7 But Yahweh said to me, Say not, I am a child: for you shall go to all that I shall send you, and whatever I command you you shall speak.

8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with you to deliver you, says Yahweh.

9 Then Yahweh put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And Yahweh said to me, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. -Jeremiah 1

Moses also objected to his own calling. He said the people won’t even listen to me:

1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor listen to my voice: for they will say, Yahweh has not appeared to you.
-Exodus 4

Besides, Moses added, my speech isn’t very good:

10 And Moses said unto Yahweh, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before, nor since you have spoken to your servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. -Exodus 4

Yahweh told Moses, in effect, “You can’t use that excuse. I know all about mouths, because I made them. Not only that, I know all about speech, hearing, and seeing. I made all these things.”

11 And Yahweh said to him, Who has made man’s mouth? or who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I Yahweh? -Exodus 4

Don’t worry about your mouth, Moses, Yahweh told him, “I will be with your mouth,” teaching you what to say:

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall say. -Exodus 4

Moses continued to argue about his calling. Finally, Yahweh said, I will use your brother, Aaron, as the interpreter. He will communicate my words between you and the people:

15 And you shall speak to him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do.

16 And he shall be your spokesman to the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to you instead of a mouth, and you shall be to him instead of God. -Exodus 4

Even Isaiah complained to Yahweh about his ability to fulfill his calling. Having seen the glory of Yahweh, Isaiah saw his own uncleanness. He lamented to Yahweh that he, as well as the people around him, all had “unclean lips.”

5 Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts. -Isaiah 6

Yahweh cleansed his lips and purged his sin:

6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged. -Isaiah 6

Yahweh then sent Isaiah forth as a mighty prophet to proclaim His word.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8

Come to Understanding

As we look at those whom God has called to do His work, it is tempting to look at their calling through the filter of our own eyes. How can He possibly use imperfect people to do His perfect will?

How could He use Abraham who told his wife, Sarah, to lie and claim that she was his sister?

13 Say, I pray you, you are my sister: that it may be well with me for your sake; and my soul shall live because of you. -Genesis 12

One mistake by Abraham may be understandable. But, how could God use him when he lied again about his wife, Sarah?

2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. -Genesis 20

How could He use Isaac when he lied about his wife, Rebekah, claiming her to be his sister?

7 And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. -Genesis 26

How could He use a harlot named Rahab?

17 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to Yahweh: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. -Joshua 6

How could He use David, who, even after he had repented of his sins with Bathsheba and Uriah, listened to the voice of Satan to again sin against Yahweh?

1 And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

8 And David said to God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech you, take away the iniquity of your servant; for I have done very foolishly. -1 Chronicles 21

How could He use Saul (Paul) who was an accomplice in the killing of Stephen?

58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. -Acts 7

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How could he use Peter who denied Yahshua (Jesus), not once, not twice, but three times?

72 And the second time the cock crowed. And Peter called to mind the words that Yahshua said to him, Before the cock crows twice, you shall deny me three times. And when he thought thereon, he wept. -Mark 14

As we look at our own human frailty and inadequacies, it is easy for us to forget that the calling that God puts upon our lives is not about us. It is all about Him. Whether we can understand it or not, His ways and thoughts are higher than ours:

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. -Isaiah 55

We expect His calling to be according to our understanding. We think He should call the wise, the mighty, and the noble to do His work. He does the opposite!

26 For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: -1 Corinthians 1

Instead of choosing the wise, the mighty, and the noble, God chooses the weak, those with human frailties, to accomplish His purpose:

27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are: -1 Corinthians 1

Otherwise, when we look on our own wisdom, might, and nobility, we might be tempted to receive the glory that only belongs to Him:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. -1 Corinthians 1

When David thought he was strong, he began to glory in his own power and might. That is when Yahweh allowed Satan to provoke him to number Israel (see 1 Chronicles 21:1, 8 above). David was again humbled unto repentance.

Paul recognized the importance of his own weakness, knowing that God's grace was sufficient for him. It was in his weakness, Paul said, that he knew the power of the Messiah rested upon him:

9 And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of the Messiah may rest upon me. -2 Corinthians 12

When we are called by God, it is not to show our power and glory, but His. Therefore, when He calls us we can be sure that He is faithful to equip us for His calling. He thereby, in our weakness, shows His power and glory:

24 Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it. -1 Thessalonians 5