

Ending Our Dualism “Learning About & Accepting Our Calling”

I. SCRIPTURE

Ezekiel 18:20 NKJV – “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”

II. BEING INSPIRED

I was inspired recently to take some courses in Pastoral Ministry. You probably already know, but I’ll remind you again this morning that within our midst, we have a very bright, hardworking young person. Not only does she maintain a full-time position in the accounting office next door, but she also leads our church youth. Not only does she lead out at our weekend youth program, but she sits with and helps our children each day in the church school, making sure that they are doing well in their school work and properly pacing themselves so that they are on-track in all their courses. She is also our main support to making everything youth-related work for us in the church. (Eg: Kid’s Night Out last weekend)

It wasn’t too long ago, that I noticed that this young lady was also actively, and simultaneously to everything else she does... pursuing a college business degree, with no less than an accounting focus. I’m pretty sure that her reason is that she wants to understand and do better at her work. But it’s not just that, she has also been studying some theology classes so that she can be better at directing our youth into a better, brighter future. It was as I was encouraging her to formally pursue her theology studies at our very own Artios College, that I was inspired to take some theology courses too. It’s probably no coincidence that she and I are taking the same course this session. So, I hope that she won’t mind that I will share her class post this morning, as part of her introducing herself to her classmates. Julie wrote, “I am taking this course because I am currently the youth group leader at my local church. I was raised religious but became more interested in it once actually starting to teach. I am taking this course in hope that I will be able to lead the children to follow God not just at church but outside as well!” I pretty much realized that her goal was the same as mine: to lead God’s children back to Him, not just while in this church, but in their outside lives, too.

III. WHAT IS YOUR CALLING?

As part of this course, we were asked to define our “calling” including giving a comparison and contrast between our “primary and secondary calling”. So first of all, I wanted to clarify what the college meant breaking our “calling” into two (2) parts: a primary part and a secondary part. Previously, probably no different than each one here today, I believed that we each had just one particular calling, and that our calling is to live out a special, particular life, one that is as unique to each of us as we are unique to each and every other person in this world. This I knew was a calling to which YAHUSHA [Jesus] Himself and the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit] attempts to lead us in... if we are willing and able will hear Him.

A. LISTENING TO YAHUAH [God] “A STILL SMALL VOICE”

Listening properly to how YAHUAH [God] wants to lead us into our own, unique RUACH [Spirit]-filled calling is probably the single biggest obstacle each of us faces and why we haven’t yet found our particular place in YAHUAH [God] world, His world now and here, and the one to come. But, we are too busy expressing ourselves... to busy letting others know how brilliant we are... telling everyone how our opinion is the only right one... we are vocal, we protest, we pretty much know everything and everyone else’s opinion and their way of life is pretty much all wrong. Yes, we are very busy... we’re busy *talking, telling* others, *acting out*, so much so that we have yet to really know what it means when YAHUAH [God] says to us to “**be still, and know that I am ELOHIM [God].**”¹

Or maybe we haven’t yet learned what our kid’s learned this week in their morning worship, that we are yet able to recognize that YAHUAH [the LORD] is speaking to us, because He speaks to us in a whisper. Do you remember when Elijah was being a “chicken”, cowering in the cave after he had just witnessed how YAHUAH [God] had just had His way with Ahab, Jezebel, and the satanic priests? Do you remember that YAHUAH [the LORD] came to him at the cave and asked him, “Elijah, what are you doing here [in the cave]?” Do you remember that Elijah *tells* YAHUAH [God] how righteous he had been, how he has been *jealous* for and had been *acting out* [doing all that miraculous stuff] for Him, “YAHUAH ELOHAI TSEVA’OTH” [the LORD God Almighty] on Mt. Carmel? “Woe is me!” says Elijah, Now “I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”² And how does YAHUAH [God] respond?

¹ Ps. 46:10 NKJV

² 1 Kings 19:10

It's quite amazing how YAHUAH [God] responds to Elijah. We can each learn a lot from His words. YAHUAH [God] speaks (and even now as we learn from the following verses, Elijah still didn't totally "get it"). These were YAHUAH [God]'s words when he spoke to Elijah: **"Then He said, '[Elijah,] go out, and stand on the mountain before YAHUAH [the LORD].'** And behold, YAHUAH [the LORD] passed by and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before YAHUAH [the LORD], but YAHUAH [the LORD] was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but YAHUAH [the LORD] was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but YAHUAH [the LORD] was not in the fire; and after the fire... [He was in] *a still small voice.*"³

I'm not going to blame Elijah, are you? After all, he was translated and sees ELOHIYM [God] face-to-face and I haven't. Have you? And as it also probably took me until just some years ago to learn my own calling, despite that YAHUAH [the LORD] had placed it right in front of me for many years before, I was too busy trying to act things out when I thought heard Him, but I really wasn't listening to Him, I realize now. As so, as I just started to evaluate my calling again and how YAHUAH [God] has led me, I learned that His calling for me has been for me 1) to meet and experience Him, and then 2) to guide His Body to meet and experience Him through a "way of life", a method of living each and every day, that is continually *connected* to Him, I eventually learned this by learning to listen to His still small voice, His softly speaking to me as He has was gently tugging on my reins that He had in His hands all the time, while I was content on being a stubborn ass, yanking myself away from Him, not knowing that I was speaking so loudly that I couldn't hear Him... and being so stubborn that I wasn't feeling His tugging.

And so now, as I have been looking back and reflecting on what my calling is and started to put it down in words, I noticed that I too had surprisingly broken it, my calling, into two (2) parts: my primary calling and my secondary calling. I broke it out in this way:

1. PRIMARY CALLING

My *primary* calling is my being called by YAHUSHA [Jesus], to accept Him through a total, 100% commitment to Him, for better or for worse.

³ 1 Kings 19:11-12

2. SECONDARY CALLING

My *secondary* calling is living out my life, my Christ-likeness through everything I do, including through my work, through my life each and every moment of each and every day... in each and everything that I do each moment, or each day.

At this time, this congregation, this building in which we meet, my work in the accounting office next door, my home, and all that I have, has been given over to Him. Now, He can do whatever He wants with it because it belongs to Him and not to me. I just simply ask Him to guide me each day through the tasks He sets in front of me.

And so, our primary calling is in first position and must *remain* there; and then (and only then) does our secondary calling really becomes a byproduct of our first calling.⁴ And I must note on this particular point, that this “byproduct” can only be performed well by us through the help of the RUACH HA’QODESH [Holy Spirit], Whom our MESSIAH [Christ] gives us as our Helper as part of our primary calling, if we will ask Him. So, putting the two (2) callings together it means that “the truth [is] that God calls us to Himself so decisively that [in] everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have, we are invested with a special devotion and dynamism [that is] lived out as a response to His summons and [our] service.”⁵

IV. OUR DUALISTIC LIFE

I added in my response to the course, “for me, my calling is as unique to me as I am different from each and every person in this class, or even from whomever has ever lived before me on earth. For many years, I believed in living a dualistic life: "a life that leads to multiple divisions in thinking; including the division between the clergy (spiritual) and the laity (secular), the church (spiritual) and the world (secular), and between so-called religious practices (bible study, prayer, worship) and supposed secular practices (work, art, eating).”⁶ However, over the years I started to realize that my separate secular life was often in direct conflict with my sacred calling to live for and be like my Savior MESSIAH [Christ]. To be a good leader, I learned that I

⁴ Riggs, Amber, "How You Can Clarify Your Calling," *Bible Advocate*, May 15, 2017, <https://baonline.org/clarify-calling/>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Brisco, Brad, "Rethinking Vocation," *Missional Church Network: helping to activate ALL the people of God*, June 28, 2020, <https://www.missionalchurchnetwork.com/blog/rethinking-vocation?rq=rethinking%20vocation>.

needed to be a good example: a light that is constantly turned on for others to see 24/7. (“Put it under a bushel, no!”) Regardless whether we are leaders at our jobs or at church, each one of us is definitely a leader through our Christian example to the world and through our commission to bring others to YAHUSHA [Jesus].”

A. RETHINKING OUR VOCATION

Brad Brisco in his article, Rethinking Vocation, “the idea of rethinking vocation must start with considering the sacred/secular divide, and what some people call a problem of dualism. Dualism, simply put, is wrongly dividing something that should not be divided. The Greco-Roman idea was that the world is divided into two competing dominions: the sacred (spiritual) and the secular (material).”⁷

B. WORK AS SACRED

Brisco continues, “another reason all work matters [are] because of the connection Scripture makes between work and worship. The language of work in Genesis 2:15, ‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it,’ is rooted in the Hebrew word *avodah*, which in English is translated “to cultivate.” In the Old Testament, the word *avodah* is translated in several different ways. In some cases, it is rendered as “work,” “service,” or “craftsmanship.” But other times it is translated as “worship.” *Avodah* is used to describe the hard work of God’s covenant people making bricks as slaves in Egypt (Ex. 1:14), the artists building the tabernacle (Ex. 35:24), and the fine craftsmanship of linen workers (1 Chron. 4:21). *Avodah* also appears in the context of Solomon dedicating the temple. Solomon uses this word as he instructs the priests and Levites regarding their service in leading corporate worship and praise of the one true God (2 Chron. 8:14).”⁸

B. LIVING SEPARATE LIVES OUTSIDE OF OUR SACRED TIME

Tom Nelson, in his book *Work Matters*, summarizes this important connection between work and worship when he writes: “whether it is making bricks, crafting fine linen, or leading others in corporate praise and worship, the Old Testament writers present a seamless understanding of work and worship. Though there are distinct nuances to [the Hebrew word] *avodah*, a common thread of meaning emerges where work, worship, and service are inextricably linked and intricately connected. The various usages of this Hebrew word found first in Genesis 2:15

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

tell us that God’s original design and desire is that our work and our worship would be a seamless way of living. Properly understood, our work is to be thoughtfully woven into the integral fabric of [our] Christian vocation, for God designed and intended our work, our vocational calling, to be an act of God-honoring worship.⁹

Often we believe that we somehow have lives that can exist outside of our worship time, our time in church on Saturday or Sunday, where we work, have our recreation, our entertainment, and have pretty much anytime and anyplace that is not specifically within our time with Godly in meditation and prayer. We believe that this time is both *secular* and can be lived separately from our sacred time in YAHUSHA [Jesus]. This is called duality. Duality is *not* what YAHUAH [God] intended for us, as we have just learned. It is through our belief in dualism that we are condoning our sinful lifestyle. After all, it is what *we* believe that *we* are entitled to during *our* time, on *our* six (6) days of labor outside of The Lord’s day, which we put aside for Him. As so it goes that it is usually during this separate, secular time that we feel we are entitled to, that we are committing our sinful lifestyle. By believing that duality is possible even one instance, then it is that particular instance in which we believe that we are entitled to have a thought, or an action that can be separate from YAHUAH [God]. It is in that particular instance when we become most susceptible to sin, where wickedness comes upon us. The belief in duality is a false belief, and the reason behind our sinning. And per today’s scripture, it is “the soul who sins [that] shall die”. For it is “the righteousness of the righteous [that] shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked [that] shall be upon himself.” I am pretty sure that it was within that one instance of duality that King David felt that he could be in a separate space where it would be alright for him to covet Bathsheba... or that Elijah could doubt YAHUAH [God] and be deaf to His call... or even that Judas could believe that it was his calling to betray his ADONAI YAHUSHA HA’MASHIACH [Lord Jesus Christ] Who actually came to be His Savior.

V. YAHUAH [God] WANTS TO BE “AT WORK” IN US 24/7

If we begin to believe, to realize that all work... that each and every moment of our lives are a sacred calling, and *none of it* secular, then that is when we start to feel YAHUAH [God]’s continual tugging at our reins... that is when we begin to speaking Him speaking to us in His still small voice... that is when we start to

⁹ Tom Nelson. *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (p. 26).

realize some things: we begin to realize that YAHUAH [God] wants to be active in our workplace; we begin to realize that YAHUAH [God] wants to be active when we have retired from our workplace. When we are at home spending time with our children and grandchildren, taking care of our beloved pets, going to the grocery store, socializing with family and friends, watching the news or our favorite show or sport on TV, and pretty much whatever we do 24/7... that YAHUAH [God] wants to be a continual, and active part of it.

While many of *us* are seeking YAHUAH [God] through *our* favorite church speaker or worship leader, seeking Him through *our* idea of what studying or praying to Him is all about... While *we* are reminding YAHUAH [God] how good *we* have been and that all the good *we* are doing as Elijah did... and as Elijah, while we are seeking YAHUAH [God]'s face in "the great and strong wind" that "tears into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces," and while we are seeking Him "in the wind" and in the "earthquake", we are meanwhile failing to realize that He has been... and continues to be right there in front of us... and that He is not in all the other things that we expect Him to be within. All the while He has been speaking to us through His trademark "still small voice", His whispering to us, while we are shouting over him.

Dear family and friends, my prayer today is that you and I will end the dualism that exists in our lives. There needs to be just one focus in our lives: our ADONAI YAHUSHA HA'MASHIACH, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray that you and I will believe NO MORE that there can be a time and place that can be separate and apart from THE YAHUAH ELOHAI TSEVA'OTH [LORD God Almighty]. Please heed His call now to 1) meet and experience Him again, and 2) commit to a "way of life" in Him, a method of living each and every day *connected* to Him, where you are hearing and heeding His still small voice as He is speaking to you now, as He is gently tugging at your reins today. Amen.

References & Credits:

1. Brisco, Brad, "Rethinking Vocation," *Missional Church Network: helping to activate ALL the people of God*, June 28, 2020, <https://www.missionalchurchnetwork.com/blog/rethinking-vocation?rq=rethinking%20vocation>.
2. Nelson, Tom. *Work Matters: Connecting Sunday Worship to Monday Work* (p. 26).
3. Riggs, Amber, "How You Can Clarify Your Calling," *Bible Advocate*, May 15, 2017, <https://baonline.org/clarify-calling/>.