

## The Call

**Scripture/Text: Jeremiah 1:4-9**

**Preached at the Virginia Annual Conference  
(Commissioning/Ordination and Licensing Service) on June 18,  
2022**

Beloved, by a show of hands – how many of you feel that you are “called” by God for a purpose? How many of you are willing to trust and obey and **go (itinerate ministry)** where God’s leads you? Finally, how many of you are fully committed to serve the Lord with all your heart, mind and soul?

On your program, I would like you to write these 3 words -- **called, commissioned, and committed** as we examine the text for this evening,

Class of 2022, Dr. Norman Habel, an Old Testament scholar believes that a “**call**” is a **summons by God to carry out a particular function**. Interestingly, Habel believes that there are 4 stages in a divine

“call” that is commonly displayed throughout the Biblical stories. He also suggests that the “call” upon our lives is a direct correlation to these stages.

Habel believes that:

- 1) There is a **divine confrontation by God**; (a small voice, a dream, an unction of the holy Spirit which leads you to do something for example start a ministry, teach a class, etc.,
- 2) Secondly, there is the **rejection of the call**; (where you wrestle with what God has revealed to you.) Oh too often at this stage – we will say – “God, you couldn’t mean me.” I’m not educated enough; I don’t know enough about the Bible; I can’t speak in front of a group; I’m not spiritual enough; I’m too old; I don’t have anything to offer.
- 3) Thirdly, the **assurance or reassurance** that God will be with you always.

- 4) Finally the acceptance of the call, which leads to various responses; (in the case for this evening commissioning/licensing or ordination)

Beloved, I believe that everyone is “**called**” by God.” I believe that God has a calling on **individuals, ministries, and churches**. For example, Henry Blackaby, author of the “Experiencing God Bible Study” series – **believes that God is constantly at work around us**. He believes that God accomplishes this work through the local churches by communicating God’s will and inviting each church to join in His activity in specific ways. Blackaby concludes that when we hear **God’s call and respond appropriately** – there will be NO limit to what God can and will do through God’s people.

In addition, the other text utilized for this evening points that the apostle Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)** ...“so Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Beloved, we are called as believers of the faith to go out and make disciples for the transformation of the world.

We are called as Christians to a task of loving our neighbors as we love ourselves.

We are called to help the downtrodden; by improving the quality of life for this community.

We are called to share our spiritual gifts and talents with the body of Christ.

We are called to stand up and fight the injustices that we face daily.

We are called to be ambassadors for Christ; not only to read and the Word; but to live and apply the Word.

When we examine the text, found in Jeremiah 1 -- we see that the God of Israel is “**calling,**” the prophet Jeremiah to speak to the people of Judah for their idolatry, their unfaithfulness to the covenant and their obstinate disobedience to God’s will. God reminds Jeremiah in verse **5**

**“before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born I sanctified you. I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”**

What is so powerful to me in verse 5 is that God is confirming God’s **calling** of Jeremiah to a prophetic ministry by indicating that: a) he formed and knew Jeremiah; b) he sanctified and ordained Jeremiah; and c) he called Jeremiah before he was born.

God is revealing to us in this text that God’s hand was on Jeremiah’s life before the foundation of the world. In the text, the Hebrew word for **“form”** is **“yasar,”** – which means **to take shape**. And the Hebrew word for **“knew”** is **“yada”** – **which means to recognize or to know intimately**.

Beloved, what we must come to understand is that before we existed on earth. God was **shaping you** for God’s purpose. God knows us **intimately and intricately**. “To know” someone intimately means that you have a **personal commitment and stake in the relationship**. God knows every detail and nuances about us (the color of your eyes,

your hair, your size, your race, your smile, and even your laughter.)

God took the time to form each of you precious in His sight **despite our faults**. Psalm 139:14 – states ... “our God formed our inward parts and He covered us in our mother’s womb.”

Interestingly, Jeremiah resisted the **call** upon his life at first. He wrestled with God about his age. We also like Jeremiah, make **excuses** when God is **stretching us out of our comfort zone**.

(On this journey, I know that some of you probably said to God’ “I’m too old; I don’t have time; I’m too busy; my job has me so busy and tied up; I’m always traveling; I think you need to ask someone else.”

**(Do you realize that when we refuse to learn new things or refused to be stretched in our Christian walk -- we hamper God’s ministry and we hinder our growth.)**

What I love about God ... is that God does not listen to our excuses. As we examine verses 6-8... God responds to Jeremiah ... **“I am sending you out.” Do not be afraid, for I am with you to deliver you.”**

However, rest assure as God calls; God will equip and empower. As God gives the vision; God will give the provision – age, education, lack of skills has nothing to do with the **call** on our lives. God uses ordinary people like us to do extraordinary things for the Kingdom of God.

Jeremiah is “**commissioned**” for his task and the essence of his ministry is reassured by God – that God will put God’s Word in the prophet’s mouth.

Beloved, Jeremiah is a wonderful example for us as **committed** to serve the Lord. He served as God’s prophet for over 40 years, yet the rulers and people of Judah did not listen to his many warnings. Jeremiah was put in prison, thrown into a well, and taken to Egypt against his will. He was not allowed to marry. He was rejected by family, friends, false priest and prophets and kings.

He stood alone in his call for the people to repent and turn to God. He warned them several times of their impending punishment. Even though much of what he prophesied came true during his ministry, the people and leaders continued to ignore him. Through all the hardship

and humiliation he was forced to endure, Jeremiah remained *obedient, faithful, and committed* to God's call.

Finally, let us examine this word **commitment**. **Commitment** has 3 interesting definitions: a) commitment is an agreement or pledge to do something in the **future**; b) commitment is the state of being **obligated** and c) commitment is the state of being **emotionally driven**.

Commitment is a word that every Church and pastors encounters. Unfortunately, most churches fall in the 80/20 rule. 80% of the people **attend and reap the benefits** from the Church; but only 20% of the people are **committed** to the **work** of the **Kingdom**.

Beloved, God is calling all of us to be “**fully committed to the work of ministry**.” How many of you know that with commitment comes a **cost and sacrifice**? You have probably never been told that ministry is costly and a sacrifice. The question remains Class of 2022 are you **fully committed**.



To become an active agent in witnessing to people about the God we serve

**Are you fully committed?**

To lead a life that is pleasing to God.

**Are you fully committed?**

That your sole purpose on Sunday morning is to **worship God**; we must put away our bickering and indifferences; and understand that “folks are coming to hear a word from the Lord to sustain their lives.

We must come to understand in the church – that ministry is not “**BURGER KING THEOLOGY**” – **Have it your own way. (Have it God’s Way –will only last)**

There is a popular song by Walter Hawkins – entitled “**Fully Committed**”

The lyrics:

All that I am

All that I hope to be

All of my desire

And all of my abilities

I'll make the sacrifice to do what you ask of me

My love's forever

Jesus ... You're all that I need

And I can Never repay what

You did just for me

But the least I can do

Chorus:

I give my life

Fully committed to you

I give my life. Fully committed to you.

**Class of 2020, 2021 and 2022 – are you fully committed?**