

Romans 9:12 Your Vocation

by Ernest O'Neill

Your vocation is not your choice, but God's, and trusting in Him will lead you to fulfilling His purpose for you.

Scripture: Genesis 1:28, Job 31:15, Proverbs 21:1, Ecclesiastes 9:10, Matthew 5:3, Mark 16:15, Luke 22:24, John 19:10, Romans 1:9, Romans 9:12

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Vocational Calling"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delivers a sermon on the importance of understanding God's role in determining our vocation, emphasizing that our job is not our choice but God's, as seen in the example of Jacob and Esau. He encourages listeners to trust in God's plan for their lives, as He has uniquely created each individual with specific abilities and qualities for a particular job. O'Neill highlights the significance of serving God through our work, focusing on bringing order to His world and transmitting Jesus' love and peace to others, rather than seeking approval or status from society.

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

1. What are you going to be when you grow up? I don't know how the girls answered, but we guys used to reply - a train-driver or the driver of a fire engine; and perhaps now we would answer an astronaut or R2D2 - but at 7 or 8 years of age, the question sounded exciting and the future seemed limitless.

2. However, by the time we reached the ACT and the SAT tests, the question assumed a rather more annoying form: "What are you going to major in?"; It's then that we begin to first hate the question and start to thrash around for some kind of answer, and often end up picking a number out of a hat, and breathe a little easier for the next four years: then it's time to play for time again by deciding where we'll do our master's or our doctorate.

3. By that time, many of us have adopted at least two rationalisations for being in the particular job we're in:

(i) Its experience - as the years pass we wonder when the actual life begin for which we're gathering all the experience

(ii) It doesn't matter how you earn a living - the other part of life - family friends, leisure- are what life really is about.

4. There are some of us who don't have this kind of experience, but the great majority of us fit into this pattern to some degree: in other words, vocation is a problem and often an unsolved one throughout our lives: how do you find out what your vocation is? How can you know what to do with the practical part of your life? How can you tell which job to take? The key is in today's verse: Romans 9:12.

GOD'S CHOICE

1. The first truth we need to see is that our job or vocation is not our choice-it's not dependent on our making some arbitrary decision: I think that's what causes so much of our anxiety-we study the job descriptions they give us at school or the job opportunities column in the newspaper, and though it seems exciting to be able to choose any job we want and apply, yet in a sense it gives us a feeling not only of looking at these jobs in the same way, and that many of us could fill the vacancy just as well; in other words, we are going to spend 40 hours a week doing something that somebody else is just as fitted for. We get the feeling we're one of the millions somebody else is just as fitted for - we get the feeling we're one of the millions of interchangeable spare parts lying around the country.

2. That's the first lie this verse exposes - your job is not your choice-it's God's. You remember that Jacob and Esau were twins, but Esau came out of his mother's body a moment before Jacob, so he was the elder; but God planned that Jacob would be the third patriarch after Abraham and Isaac who would lead Israel rather than Esau. You remember we said some weeks ago that this choice has nothing to do with the salvation of Jacob and Esau but with their vocation: this is proved by the words used here in Romans 9:12-it concerns their service or work or vocation.

3. But we tend so readily to exclude ourselves from this kind of experience by saying God planned the details of Jacob's job because is concerned the leadership and preservation of the Israelite nation among whom His unique Son Jesus was to be born, but this truth applies to us also. Job 31:15. God saw you before your Mum did or the nurse; He knows when a sparrow falls to the ground. He has counted the hairs on your head - He created you are you are - to do a certain job that only you can do.

4. What should our attitude be then? Relax in faith - your Dear Father has given you certain abilities and qualities that no one else has in the same combination: don't thrash around anxiously and fretfully trying to find out what job you're suited for: ACT and SAT tests and vocational guidance counsellors can help to point out some of your particular abilities, but no one except God can tell you what job He put you here to do. So trust Him to be leading as you do what comes naturally according to a particular ability or a particular interest. Don't be distracted by others' opinions.

5. What if the job you're in now came through your own choice? What do you do? Wasn't God able to lead Jacob to his vocation though humanly speaking he was the youngest? God will lead you to His choice for you whatever the difficulty of the present human situation - so do your present job with all your heart, in complete faith that God is drawing you along the line of His plan: Ecclesiastes 9:10.

GOD'S SERVICE

1. The second truth we need to see about our job is that it is not men that we serve by it but God: the job may involve you or me serving someone food in a restaurant but the One who created us for the particular job is the One to whom we're responsible for doing it well: Romans 1:9.

2. God has given you that job to fulfil two purposes:

(i) Genesis 1:28: to bring His world into order under His will.

(ii) Mark 16:15: to transmit the life of Jesus' love and peace to others.

3. So a director may think you're there to keep his papers in order, a manager may think you're there to keep track of his inventory, a principal may think you're there to maintain discipline in the classroom, but God has you there to bring a piece more of His universe into the order and beauty of His will. He expects you to concern yourself with His standards and his will-- and only with your job associates from the point of view of expressing Jesus' life of love and peace

4. We do not do our jobs to serve or please men but to serve or please God. But don't authorities have power to dismiss us? John 19: 10-11; Proverbs 21:1: don't spend a moment a night wondering what men can do to you: your vocation is God's service.

GOD'S STATUS

1. The third truth that God wants us to see about our life's work is that its status depends on whether it fulfils his purpose for us NOT on whether the world thinks is worthy of our abilities and birth or whether society regards it as important or appropriate. It was inappropriate for the elder Esau to serve the younger Jacob, but God gave them both status because they fulfilled the purpose He had created them for.

2. Repeatedly God's ideas of nobility contradict man's: Matthew 5:3-6, 10-11, Luke 22:24-27: our jobs indicate nothing about our value - before God we are all equal, but no deception has created more havoc both socially and individually than this false idea of status:

(i) Economically it has created incredible inefficiency through Parkinson's Law, whereby everyone is promoted to his own level of inefficiency, e.g. cartoonist - administrator - sales director - stops there because he does it only with mediocrity.

(ii) Personally it has caused more of us to act against our natural abilities than any other misconception: so mathematicians have gone into medicine for the money and the status, nurses have gone into business for the same reasons -- so many of us who were created to be carpenters and painters, bakers and plumbers, teachers and administrators have perverted the gifts God has given us because of the status urged upon us by peers and parents, counsellors and teachers.

3. Money or position are not the criterion for finding your vocation but do well what you can do and have an interest in, and God will be faithful.

CONCLUSION

1. Your choice, man's service, society's status system-will lead you to a frustrating, futile professional life: God's choice, God's service, God's status system will free you to do what He created you for!

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