

Calling or Leading

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead emphasizes the distinction between the call to follow Christ and the leading of God in our lives, urging believers to live fully committed to Him.

Duration: 41:43

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 2 Timothy 4:1, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:12

Topics: "Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of living for God and obeying Him. He highlights the biblical truth that all believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of their actions. The preacher urges the audience to consider how they would feel standing before God and having to give an account of their deeds. He shares a personal story about visiting Athens and being reminded of the Olympic Games, using it as an analogy to emphasize the seriousness of the judgment seat of Christ. The sermon also briefly touches on the topic of the call to ministry and the importance of following God's leading.

Transcript

Our Father, we thank and praise Thee for Thy presence with us. Thou hast promised to meet with us. We meet in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We meet with the single purpose of beholding Him, of learning of Him, of opening the ears of our heart to hear what He would say through Thy Word, our minds to be quickened by Thy Spirit, and in and through it all that glory and honor and praise should come to Him. So speak through the speaker, listen through the listeners, and in all reveal Thyself at the point of our need we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Will you turn please to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. I'd like to read beginning with verse 10, and I'm not quite sure how far I'll read, but you'll know when I stop. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad, knowing therefore the terror of the Lord. We persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God, and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God, but whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us,

because we thus judge that if one died for all, for better still, the word would be translated, that since one died for all, then were all dead.

That is, all for whom he died were dead with him. And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth we know him no more.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

To it that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's death be ye reconciled to God.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, he who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Have you ever heard anyone say, I've been called? I've been called to the mission field. Have you been called? I think a great deal of harm has come to the cause of Christ, and a great deal of misunderstanding has occurred in the lives of believers because of the misunderstanding of this terrible word, call.

Call. Oh, there is a call indeed. He said, come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I'll give you rest.

Now that's a call, isn't it? Come and rest. And then there's another call. Come, follow me, and I'll make you fishers of men.

That's a call. But how many other calls do you have after that? Well, Paul said he was called to be an apostle. But where do we get the idea that people are called to be preachers or called to be missionaries? I thought the scripture said we were called to follow Christ.

And who is it that's to follow him? Everyone that's been born of him? Isn't it dishonest to say, come unto me and rest. That's for me. But come follow me.

That's for you. That's intellectually dishonest, isn't it? To say, come unto me and rest means me, but as you go, therefore, preach the gospel means somebody else. That's picking and choosing.

It's intellectually dishonest. I believe that there is only one call in the Bible, and that's the call to the person of the Son of God. Well, what about this thing of the pastor? Now, there's a different principle in here.

That's leading. Leading. I remember when Marjorie and I went to the Sudan Territory Mission as missionary candidates.

The first morning, we had a time of testimony to get acquainted. And Fred got up from down in Texas, and he said, I had a dream. I saw two rivers come together, and I saw myself there as I was at the juncture of those two rivers preaching the gospel.

And God has called me. I went to the map and found that it was the Sudan. And I poked Marjorie, and I said, if that's what they're looking for, we can go home this afternoon.

I never had anything like that. What I had was a deep burden in my heart to get the gospel out to those that had never heard, and what seemed to be a clear leading that God was directing us there. Well, we stayed for a month.

We went before the committee, and Fred and his wife were turned down, weren't accepted as missionaries. And when they came out and said, well, we gave it a try. Now we can go home to our ministry back in Texas.

And they asked us if we could go to the Sudan. I didn't even know where the Sudan was until I got there. And we talked with Earl Lewis, who'd been there.

We weren't called the Sudan. We were called to follow Christ, and he led us to the Sudan. Do you see the difference? I tell people when they come to me and they say, well, you know, let's be a little bit sensitive here.

How about putting it this way? As near as I can see, based on the evidence that I now have, it appears as though possibly the Lord is leading me in the direction of. There's many a slip, twixt cup and lip. And like the young man that I heard about years ago, and you've probably heard about him, but it's appropriate.

He came before the committee. He was going to go to school and be a preacher. And he said he'd lived all his life on a farm, and he'd quit school in the 6th grade, but he wanted to go on to seminary and just ignore the past years.

And the bishop said to him, well, son, why are you here? He said, I had a call. He said, I was on the cultivator, and I was going down, and I looked up in the sky, and there I saw a G-P-C. And I knew what that meant.

That meant go preach Christ. And the wise old bishop said, son, I don't think for a minute that there's any question of what you saw, G-P-C, in the sky, but I think you misread it. What that meant was go plow corn.

And we urge you to keep doing it. Now, if it is true, if there's any truth in what I've said, that every one of us are called to the person of the Son of God, then it's equally important that every one of us make absolutely certain that we're in the place he wants us to be. It's just as important to us as it is to him.

It's important that you are working for the company the Lord wants you to work for, as it is that the missionary is on the field that God wants him to be on. Or that if you're a doctor, you're practicing with the community where God wants you to practice. Or when you buy a house, that you bought the house where he wants you to buy it, not just because you got a good bargain.

If everything in the Christian's life is important, then we should follow him in all the details of our life. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God. And the birthright of every believer is to be led by the Spirit of God.

I hear people say, well, I'm just a layman. Oh, I'd like to go wash their mouth out with soap. That's an obscenity for a child of God to say he's just a layman.

After all, it was the church at Nicolaitan that God condemned because they had established the concept of laity and clergy. And thus, they put the responsibility for witness on the part hands and on the part of the paid community. And God wanted everyone that's born into the family of God to be a witness for it.

If I'm saying anything to you to hear, it's this. That if you're a child of God, washed in the blood of God's dear Son, born of the Spirit of God, then your life is important to him. And it's your responsibility to be as totally and completely committed to the Son of God as the pastor of the church or any missionary on any mission field any place in the world.

We can once establish that, then we're going to be able to do it. And that's what our text does. And it starts with something.

You know, God won't make you do what you ought to do. Did you know that? He won't make you do what you ought to do. But I'll tell you this.

He will make you wish you had. He won't make you do it. But boy, you say about switch number 15, I wish I'd have done it.

Give me another chance. I'm sorry. This is it.

There's no other chance. This is it. You're either going to live for him and obey him now or you aren't going to.

This is it. And the text that I began with was this. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Ooh. Did you know that? Did you know even though you've been washed in the blood, all past sins forgiven, that from the day you were born of God, all the past sins before you knew him, there will be remembered against you no more forever. But once you come to know him, once you come to walk with him, the text tells us that you're going to appear before the bema and you're going to give an account of the things you've done in the body, whether they're good or bad.

And so Paul, in the 11th verse, tells you a little about that, and he says, Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men. We were coming back from Africa on the ship, the Exe Korda, of the U.S. line. We stopped in Greece.

The year was 19, late 48, just before Christmas 48. We stopped at Piraeus. A group of us got a guide and we went down to see Athens.

I've been there a couple of times since, but that was my first time in Athens. And we went into the stadium that the Nazis, just a little while before, had finished refurbishing, brought in marble and made it as it had been in the days of the glory of Greece. And our guide, who'd been a taxi driver in Chicago, was telling us about the Olympic Games and about what had taken place in that very stadium 2,000 or 3,000 years ago.

And I was standing there, part of about 15 of us. We had two or three cars that we'd gone together to get. And I had a vision.

Now, I don't know whether I was awake or whether I was asleep. I'm not sure. I don't know whether I saw it or whether it was in my mind, and it doesn't make a bit of difference, and if I could prove it to you, either way it wouldn't make any difference to you, so let me get on with it.

This is what I saw. Up above the top of the stadium, I saw what looked to be a pyramid city. It went from each side, and it was big.

Oh, I don't know how big, but as big as the one I read about in Revelation. The next thing I knew, I was standing in line before the doors of the temple at the very apex of that city. I was there.

I had white robes. I was about to go in. And the next thing that happened was a servant that I took to be an angel came and said, here is the residue of your life, and put a package in my hand.

And then the next thing I realized, I was next in line. The door opened, and there as I went in, first thing I saw was what looked to be a grill and a fire underneath it. I didn't know what fed it.

It wasn't of any material I knew. And there was another servant there, and he took the package from my hand, and he went over and he laid it on the grill, and the fire came up around it. And then he took a little shovel, like a spade with a cover on it, and he went over and had a metal brush, and he brushed what was there, and he brought it.

And he said, hold out your hands. And I went like this, thinking of a crown. He said, cup your hands.

And when he cupped, I cupped my hands. I couldn't still see what was in the shovel. He lifted the cover and poured into my hands all that remained of my life.

You know what it was? A handful of ashes. And I dropped my hands, and I saw I was standing nearly ankle deep in ashes. And then I looked, and there seated on the throne was the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when I saw him, I was so overwhelmed with grief and shame that I started to weep. And I knew that I would weep forever, that all that remained of my life was a handful of ashes, just ashes. Then I looked into his eyes, infinite love.

And something in his look wiped away my tears. And I came and stood before him, realizing that all the activity of my life, all the service I'd gone through, all that I'd done, the wrong motive, the wrong way, there were wood and hay and stubble and ashes. And then I went out.

And then I knew there would be tears in heaven. Because how could he wipe away tears from our eyes if there weren't tears? The tears are going to be over the wasted lives. The times we lifted our hands and our hearts and sang, Oh, how I love Jesus, and then finished singing and did just what we wanted to do.

Take my life and let it be, and stop right there, just let it be. The text that we had that's blown away, but I'll find it again, in 2 Corinthians 5, the text that we had tells us that the possibility, knowing the terror of the Lord, were to persuade man. And in verse 14 it says, The love of Christ constrains us.

The love of Christ forces, compels, constrains, should constrain us. But does it constrain you to put your life totally and completely in his hands and live totally and completely for him with only one concern? Lord, I will follow thee, lead me step by step and day by day, use my life anywhere in any way you choose, but only for your eternal glory and praise. Does the love of Christ so constrain you? And then he proceeds to say, because we thus judge, that since the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, we for whom he died were with him in his death.

And Paul put it in Romans 6, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ. It was since one died for all, then were all for whom he died dead with him. Do you understand that? Have you ever lived in Romans 6? Do you understand Galatians 2.20? I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed. That since he died for you, you were dead with him.

The day he died for you, he also died as you, and since he died as you, it is as though God sees that you died with him. Well, that means to what? To all your own plans and aspirations and ambitions. That the one, the person who has ever said, my Jesus to the Son of God, can never again say, my time, my talent, my treasure.

Never! Can he say, my, in a proprietary sense, again, once you said, my Jesus, my Lord. You can't do it. You're not your own.

You're bought with a price, and you're to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. And so we are told here, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. Out in Stockton, California, in the Alliance Church, two years after the San Francisco earthquake, they had a missionary conference.

During that missionary conference, an invitation was given. How many of you have never surrendered your life to the Lord to be used as where and when he wants, but particularly to go to the mission field? I want you to come, said the speaker, and kneel here at this altar. And the altar was filled.

The speaker and the pastor and others worked with the people at the altar to find out why they were there. When they were there, finally they got over here. There was a big, hulking fellow.

Weighed 220 pounds. Big man, tall man. And he was kneeling there.

And the preacher finally got nerve enough to go over. He said, Well, Bob, what you come for? He said, Well, I came for what the preacher said. I want to be a missionary.

That's why I came. And the preacher, who knew that Bob had quit school in the sixth grade and the only talent he had was that he was a good welder and designer. And he had, at that time, three children and a sixth grade education and not much else.

And he said, Bob, I've just prayed with all these people who want to go to the mission field. And, you know, there wasn't one person here that was called of God to help send them. Who's going to send them? Why don't you surrender your life, Bob, to go into partnership with God? And everything that you make over and above what your family absolutely needs will go to send missionaries.

He said, Well, I never heard about that before. But I'll do it. And he went into a covenant with God right there.

It wasn't long after that that a fellow by the name of Henry Kaiser came along and said, Bob, you know, I've got this big contact down here. And I've got to put all that dirt in there and level it out and pack it. And I can get a row of graders in there to grade it.

But they're dumping it away, and the graders won't go over it. And I've got to have something to smooth it out before the graders get to it. And I don't know what it is.

Nothing was made. Will you do something for me? He said, Well, you got a crawler tractor anywhere? I said, Yeah, I can get one. He said, Bring it over.

I'll fix it. So he came over. He called his wife.

He said, Evelyn, I've got to have some steel. So his wife comes out. He had an old Overland car.

And on the side he built a rack with a long arm so he could see behind. And he went down to the steel place and got a piece of steel and said, Well, Bob's inventing again, eh? Yeah, he's inventing. And he had a table out there that he worked on.

It was the dirt in front of the garage. And so he scratched out and measured out. And then he took the steel and he cut it.

And he finally put it on the front of that crawler tractor. And he invented the first bulldozer that ever been made. They put it out in Henry Kaiser's field to push the dirt.

Well, then they had the testers come in that had to have a certain compaction. He said, Bob, it didn't pass. I got to go over it again.

And I don't have any way to pack it. I've used the rollers and it wasn't enough. Well, he said, I'll fix it for you.

So he said, bring one of those rollers over, will you? And he ran it up on a block. And then he took his welding cutting torch and he cut little pieces of metal. And he welded them together.

And he stuck them on that roller. And he made the world's first sheepfoot packer. And they took it over and they scraped the dirt away.

And they packed it and pushed it over. And he went over it again. And when they tested it for compaction, it compacted.

And he went on to revolutionize the world's earth-moving industry. I'm talking about Bob Letourneau, Robert G. Letourneau, who knelt at an altar in Stockton, California, and said, my life is yours. And he gave 90% of his income to the Lord's work.

And when the foundation sold Letourneau Company to Maritime, they got enough money from the sale of it so that they could send it down to Lima, Peru, and inaugurate that great city ministry in Lima, Peru, which brought tens of thousands of Peruvians to Christ. Where did it begin? It began with a sixth-grade education guy who said, Lord, I'll be what you want me to be. God's looking for people he can trust.

I've been around for a long time now, you can tell. And I found that God has some rules. And I want to tell you, any of you that are in your own business, work for yourself, here's the rule.

At the first of the week, you take 10% of what you expect to receive in gross receipts that week and put it aside as your tithe. And then you take 10% of the gross receipts you expect to receive that week and put it into account for the government. Now what you've done with that is you've put the Lord in partnership with you.

He's already got his. Not after tax. Gross.

Because God said, give me the firstfruits. And if you'll give God the firstfruits, then he's going to take care of the rest of the fruits. And he's in your business with you.

Recently I had a couple of fellas that had been selling telephones. I told them God was looking for people he could trust and that the reason that more weren't being blessed because all they do is buy more expensive toys with it. But the love of Christ constrained these men to judge that if one died for all, then we're all dead, and they which live out not live unto themselves.

And they said, we will give God everything over and above the salary we've been making before we started this business. And they went three months and they didn't do anything worthwhile. And then they were challenged to put the firstfruits aside.

What do you expect to have happen this week? Put it aside. 10% for God. 10% for the government.

And in the next week, they sold more telephones than they had sold in the three months before. Because you see, now it was God's business. He already had his portion.

And it wasn't hard for... They'd been trying to see one man who later bought 35 telephones. They'd been trying to see him for those three months and couldn't get an interview. But they stopped into a little equivalent to a 7-Eleven store, one of these little gas station grocery stores.

And he was standing there and he says, you know, I heard about you fellas. And right there in the store, he placed an order for 35 telephones. You see, it was God's business.

It wasn't hard for God to get them together. What was hard to do was to get the fellas to put God in the place that he deserved. And that's what he's looking for.

People that realize that they're involved with him and that they ought not live unto themselves but ought to live unto him who loved them and gave himself for them. That's what the Lord is asking of you today, to go into that kind of a partnership with him. I told you the other day about Howell Street.

Well, Howell Street was down in Georgia, Iowa, in the First Baptist Church in a missionary conference. We go in for at least seven days and preferably eight days in the local church, preach the word, teach in the morning, and show mission meetings at night. In that church in Georgia, Iowa, was a family by name who, well, let me tell you about them first.

They were farmers. They were farmers. And they had problems.

And they were there every night. They were there at that missionary conference. And Sunday night when it was all over, everybody gone, Howell Street was putting away the stuff, folding up the screen and the projector, taking the curios and the literature, getting it packed up to go back early the next morning to Minneapolis.

And he came back, and the wife said, my husband wants to talk to you now. He had a problem. He stammered.

He stammered so badly it sometimes would take him five minutes to say his name. And he stammered, and he said, Mr. Street, when you go tomorrow, you stop into the station. Two months before, the fellow that ran a little filling station at the corners had died, and his widow turned it over to him to run.

Well, Howell did what he wanted to do. He wanted to give him some gas, go back to Minneapolis. So he filled his tank right up to the rim, and he couldn't have put half a tomato can full in when he stopped in there.

It was sloshing. But that wasn't what he wanted. He said, you know, my wife inherited \$1,000, and we want to take on the support of the missionary.

Well, Howell Street knew how hard out they were and what a time they were having. And so Howell said, well, I couldn't do that. You're having a tough time.

I know about it. People have told me. You need that money.

He said, no, Mr. Street, we need to obey God. We've got to obey him. Well, I couldn't do that anyway because, you see, it has to be by faith.

Without faith, it's impossible to please God. And you can support a missionary for a year with that. No.

If you took on the support of a missionary, I'd have to ask you to give the \$1,000 for their outfit and passage and then trust God from the first month for the rest. Well, we'll have to think about that, but we'll write to you. In about six weeks, you've got a letter.

We're going to do it, Mr. Street. Send the missionary. So there was a candidate that went down to Iowa, and they took him around from one place to another, had meetings and got friends praying for them, and they were going to support him, our missionary.

We're going to support him. Then the missionary left for Nigeria. And then at the end of the year he said, Oh, Mr. Street, this has been the greatest year of our life.

We put in another bay, and we're doing some work on cars, and send us another missionary. The next year he wrote back, Oh, Mr. Street, we put in another bay, and they've got a fellow working with me now, and send us another missionary. And the next year, anniversary time, he said, Well, we enlarged it, and we put in a little store, and send us another missionary.

Now he's supporting four. At the end of that year, he said, I've had a contract to build a school, because they've seen the job I've done on my station, and asked me to build a school for them, and send us another missionary. Now he's got five.

And then the first one came home, having finished a term, and they didn't do anything that year. They just helped her get her outfit and passage, and kept supporting the others. She was going back to Nigeria after her furlough.

She was from a church out in Brooklyn, Brooklyn, New York. The church was at Bay Ridge. They didn't think they could support her, so they farmed her off to George, Iowa.

But Hal was going to have a missionary conference in that Bay Ridge Baptist church. And so he said to Christie, I want you and Mrs. Voss to come with me, and be there for the dedication. Ought to be here in George, but she's leaving from her own church, and we'll send her from Bay Ridge.

So the Vosses went out to spend the week in Brooklyn, with Hal Street and that missionary conference. Sunday afternoon, Christie was helping Hal get everything ready for that service that night. And he said, and by the way, Christie, tonight I'm calling on you for a testimony.

And Christie said, so I know. That's what you may do for the 10 minutes I've marked off for you. But that's all right.

You're supporting five missionaries, and I want them to see who it is. So during the service, Hal told the story how Christie and his wife had decided to go into partnership with God. Their lives were going to count for Christ.

He said, Christie, please come up and tell the folks what this has meant to you. Here's the man who took five minutes to say his name. He comes up to the pulpit, and he breathes deep three times.

He opens his mouth and speaks for 10 minutes and doesn't stammer on a syllable. Let me ask you, if you stood before the judgment seat of Christ tomorrow morning, and he asked you to give an account of what you've done in the body, would you have just ashes? If I determined that day by God's grace, there wouldn't be ashes. And when I heard about Christie, I said, oh, God, I want to so live that when I stand to give an account of the deeds done in the body, I'm not going to stammer in your presence.

How about you, Miss Bonaparte? We hear thy word, our Father. Thy word tells us that the love of Christ is to constrain us to judge that since one died for all, then we're all for whom he died, dead within, and ought not henceforth to live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and who rose again. Father, there are more people here in this room, in this family camp, than there were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.

And with such a small company, you've changed the world for your dear son. Are we of such poor stuff, Father? Are we so lacking in character and strength and stamina? That even with the poured-out Holy Spirit and with Christ living in us, you can't use us. You used Pablo Eterno, and you used Christi Vos.

Can't you use us in greater measure and degree than we've ever been used before? Oh, save us, our Father, from living just somehow. Grant that the passion will come into our hearts to live triumphantly in the light of the soon-coming judgment seat of Christ. And we'll be called to give an account of the deeds we've done in the body.

Might it be at that hour, Father, we hear him say, well done, good and faithful servant. You've done what you could. Won't make any difference what we did then, Lord.

It'll only be what we could have done if we'd love Thee as much as we try to convince Thee we love Thee when we sing, oh, how I love Jesus. Help us to put that love to work. Help us to go into partnerships with the risen Lord and to make these blood-ransomed lives, however long or short they may be, to be so lived that eternal glory and praise will come to the Lamb that was slain.

Thank you for this time we've shared together. Lord, we're going to meet together at the judgment seat of Christ and give an account not to the speaker or to each other, but to Lord Jesus of what we've done with what we've heard. This time isn't over, it just begins.

And we ask that it may be concluded in a way that will bring praise to his worthy name. For it's in his name we ask it. Amen.

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