

What's your commission?

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Where have you been appointed to?

There is a beautiful song I love whose lyrics start as follows:

"Before I spoke a word, you were singing over me, you have been so so kind to me"

This song reflects a common theme which runs throughout the bible - you are not a mistake, a freak of nature or some chance creation from evolution. It reflects the bible theme that you are created purposefully and with a mission to fulfil - during your time, for your generation.

The Apostle Paul while visiting in Athens Greece in a very beautiful sermon to Greek philosophers explains it clearly in Acts 17: 22 – 28 as follows:

"....People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"

As you can see, every one of us in the world at this time has an appointment with history - in their given country, race, tribe, job, region, caste. This appointment is divine and it is to ultimately find your purpose (starting where you are) and this purpose starts in Him – to seek Him out.

Some examples from the bible

God has called people to fulfil their commission in interesting ways throughout history and we can learn some 6 things from these callings.

1. God chooses us from the beginning....

When God was calling Jeremiah, he told him the following:

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."



2. God often catches our attention in interesting ways...

God called Moses through a burning bush! See how the story unfolds:

“Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”ⁱⁱⁱ

3. He calls BUT it is up to us to accept the commission... willingly.

Mary a virgin was given astounding news by an angel (Gabriel). She was going to be the mother of the Lord, Jesus. What overwhelming news! How did she respond?

This same angel Gabriel had previously appeared with similar news to her cousin's husband (a priest called Zechariah). The Angel had told Gabriel he was going to be the father of a great man (John the Baptist) who would prepare the way for God (Jesus). Zechariah did not believe. For his disbelief, Gabriel told him he would become dumb until the prophesy came to pass.^{iv}

When then Gabriel later appeared to Mary, she was shocked mainly because she was a virgin (How could she give birth as a virgin?) but she responded positively when it was explained to her. The gospel of Luke records her response as follows:

“I am the Lord's servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled. Then the angel left her.”^v

4) We can be young... or old.

When Samuel begun his work for the Lord, he was very young. 1 Samuel 2: 18 records his early work as follows:

“But Samuel was ministering before the Lord—a boy wearing a linen ephod”

The language of the above verse clearly seems to indicate that it was unusual for a boy to wear a linen ephod (a garment for priests and similar persons performing religious duties). What devotion!

By comparison, God called Moses when he was 80 years old.

Acts 7 (a speech by Stephen before a council of religious leaders), verses 23 and 30 give us this as follows:

“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites....After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai....”

So you see the passage described of the burning bush happened when Moses was 80 years old!

5) God promises to be with us always

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet as seen in part 1 above, Jeremiah was naturally afraid and he protested! (Or rather raised a concern) But God gave him comfort as follows. I therefore include the full narrative so you can see this in context.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”*

“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”

But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.^{vi}

Moses in his calling likewise raised a concern and God gave him similar assurance (and proof) as follows:

But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”^{vii}

6. The mission often has its roots in the bible (scripture).

When God called John the Baptist (as narrated in Mary’s story in 3 above), John’s own calling had been foretold much earlier in scripture.

As describe in Luke 3- 6, John was sent as a prophet to prepare the way (for Jesus) but his ministry (or commission) had been prophesied about 700 years earlier by the prophet Isaiah who said the following (of John):

*“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.
And all people will see God’s salvation.”^{viii}*

Likewise when Jesus started his own public ministry, he announced it by referencing earlier scripture (prophesy about him). The beginning of his public ministry (after his temptation by the devil in the Galilee wilderness) is described as follows:

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus quoted from Isaiah 60: 1 – 2 when he was announcing his calling/mission.

What this means is that you will often have a calling, but it should be rooted in scripture/the bible if it is to be effective and align with God's will and come with the Holy Spirit's power, just like Jesus – who is blessed forever and who we imitate so we can be just like him.

Your turn...

Look around you and where you are now. What is God calling you to? Example to think about include:

1. What do you like naturally doing? This is probably an indicator of what your calling/commission is. Rick Warren uses an analogy of SHAPE to help explain your purpose. He says it is the following:
 - **Spiritual Gifts**
 - **Heart** (what you love doing)
 - **Abilities**
 - **Personality**
 - **Experiences**
2. What is it that is preventing you from fulfilling your purpose? What does it take for you to begin now for after all, TODAY is the day of salvation when you hear His voice.

Write here

NOTES

ⁱ "Reckless love" by Cory Asbury.

ⁱⁱ Jeremiah 1: 4- 6 (NIV)

ⁱⁱⁱ Exodus 3: 1 – 5 (NIV)

^{iv} Luke 1: 19 – 20 (NIV)

^v Luke 1: 38 (NIV)

^{vi} Jeremiah 1: 4 – 7 (NIV)

^{vii} Exodus 3: 11 (NIV)

^{viii} Isaiah 40: 3 – 5