

The Call of God and Fear of Man

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and responding to God's call while overcoming the fear of man that can hinder our spiritual journey.

Scripture: Psalm 27:1, Luke 12:1, Philippians 3:13

Topics: "Following God", "Overcoming Fear"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about recognizing and following the call of God in our lives, using a story of divine intervention to illustrate how God prepares and guides us for service. He emphasizes the importance of heeding God's voice, which can grow clearer over time, leading us to impactful acts of compassion and service. However, fear, often rooted in the fear of man, can cause us to ignore God's call, resulting in a fading of His voice in our lives. Bieber urges listeners to reject the fear of man, embrace the call of God, and live boldly as children of the King, even in the face of tribulations and persecutions.

Transcript

You are walking down the street one day, when suddenly you hear your name called. You look around---nobody there. So you walk on a little further and you hear your name called again so you look up in the tree where someone seems to be speaking. Nobody there. A third time your name is called, and before the sound of the voice dies away, an elderly man crumples out of a doorway and collapses on the sidewalk in front of you.

You holler for somebody to call EMS; you roll up your coat and put it under his head and open his collar so he can breathe, and pretty soon the medics have him off to the hospital. In the weeks that follow you go to visit this elderly man from time to time, and finally you share with him the strange things that occurred that day.

"You know that day you collapsed on the sidewalk, just before it happened, I heard my name called three times."

The man explained, "Why that's simple. God was preparing you to take care of me. The call of God is on your life; it will become clearer as time goes on, if you follow it."

As the weeks pass, the inner voice begins to become clearer, and prepares you for many a service to people. Finally you begin to understand that this is indeed the call of Jesus Himself. It's not as if you hear

an audible voice or distinguish actual words; but there is a clear, growing awareness of the presence of God guiding you. It is like having your ear open to another world, to Heaven itself.

Then one day there is a bad scene at work, some unpopular, unattractive woman whose husband recently died and is half mad with grief, is the object of everybody's wrath. She is making too many mistakes and causing problems for everyone. Inwardly you know exactly what you have to do; this woman needs somebody to stand with her. Yet you can't bring yourself to do it. The voice within you becomes fainter.

After a few weeks you receive a long distance call from an old friend who wants to borrow some money. Inwardly, you know what you have to do: give him the money. "But what if there's a recession and I I need that money myself?" You write him a letter explaining that you are just not in a position to be of help. The voice becomes still fainter, until finally it just gets swallowed up in all the noises of your busy life.

One day you go to see your old friend and complain, "I can't understand it, but I am no longer hearing that call." The old man looks out the window at the setting sun, sighs and says,

"Once you have heard the call of God, there are only two possibilities: either that call dominates your life, or you revert back to a life of fear. If the voice of fear takes precedence over the call, then the call of God simply fades into nothing."

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, the I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me and on turning I saw seven golden lamp stands and in the midst of the lampstands one like the son of man clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle around his breast, his head and his hair were white as wool, white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze refined as in a furnace and his voice was like a sound of many waters. I heard a voice like a trumpet behind me, I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me and his voice was like a sound of many waters."

Revelation 1

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me."

John 10

Once we have heard the call of God on our lives there are only two possibilities. Either that call becomes clearer and stronger, like the sound of a trumpet, like the sound of mighty waters, until it fills our whole life, or it begins to fade, and grows dimmer and dimmer until we don't even hear it anymore.

Can you imagine Moses thirty years after the burning bush sitting on a rock in the wilderness complaining, "I just don't know why God doesn't speak to me like he used to."

Or can you picture the Apostle Paul 20 years after Damascus shaking his fist at Heaven, "Why don't you guide me like you used to?"

In their lives the voice of God grew and increased. It became clearer, dominated them until every other voice was swallowed up in its majesty. They lived for that call. They pursued that call right up to the day of their death and on through death into the life beyond.

Listen to Paul many, many years after Damascus saying;

"But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lays ahead. I press on to the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. 3:13-14.

So why is it that for many of us, the call that was once very clear in us has begun to diminish? The basic cause of this diminishing voice can be attributed to what our Lord calls "the leaven of the Pharisees".

In the meantime, so many of the thousands of the multitude had gathered together that they trod upon one another, Jesus began to say to the disciples first, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon housetops. I tell you my friend do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more they can do, but I will warn you who to fear: Fear him who after he has killed has the power to cast into hell. Yea, I tell you, fear him. Are not 5 sparrows sold for 2 pennies and not one of them is forgotten before God. Why even the hairs of your head are numbered, fear not, you are of more value than many sparrows. I tell you everyone who acknowledges me before men the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God." Luke 12:1-9

The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy and the root of hypocrisy is the fear of men, which forever causes us to keep putting our light under the bushel, holds us back from taking risks. If we allow the fear of men to keep driving us back, the time will come when the voice of God will be so faint that fear will dominate our lives

This root of fear often appears quite harmless. We don't call it fear, we call it shrewdness. We shrewdly depend on certain people to achieve personal goals. We want that promotion, we want to stay on the good side of Uncle Ted, because we want to borrow ten grand from him next spring to buy a house. We want people to like us, so we compromise the truth of God in our living and in our speaking.

God is calling us to go a certain way, but we are scared that if we go this way we are going to ruin our relationship with people who are our doorway to success.

Sometimes we look to people's esteem for us for our own sense of worth. We don't want to lose those friends.

"If I don't compromise they are going to walk away, where will I be without them?"

If I tell Mary the truth she won't be my friend anymore.

If I don't cooperate with John's little scheme he is going to forsake me.

If I befriend that scapegoat at work, I'm in trouble. If they catch me treating that person like a human being, I'll be the scapegoat."

So we allow the fear of man to displace the call of God in our lives.

We have to come to the place where we start to deal with what fear is doing to us. The fear of man is circumscribing our thinking and our acting. We're getting ourselves backed in a corner. We have to face that fear and reject it in the name of the Lord.

Do not fear those that kill the body, and after that have nothing more than they can do. Fear not you are of more value than many sparrows.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear.

The Lord is the strength in my life, of whom shall I be afraid.

God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed and mountains fall into the midst of the sea.

Thou shall not be afraid of the terror by night nor for the arrow that flyeth by day or for the pestilence that walketh in darkness nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

There is no need for us to be driven, the way we let ourselves be driven by fear.

"At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to Him, 'Get away from here for Herod wants to kill you' and He said to them, 'Go tell that fox, behold I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow and on the third day I finish my course.'"

He won't let Himself be intimidated by the threat of death because Jesus has already offered His life up in response to the call of His Father. And if you and I are answering the call of Jesus on our lives, we too have offered ourselves up to death.

We are on the way to a cross. This means we are going to lay down our lives every day. We are learning to pour ourselves out, to spend ourselves.

So what are we afraid of? We may have it all clear in our minds intellectually, yet we are scared silly, still afraid.

So what do we do? Do we sit around and wait for the fear to go away?

"Oh if only the fear would leave me so I would begin to act like a disciple!"

No, we defy the fear. We admit that it is there, we are shaking in our boots, our knees are knocking, but we are still going to do what we know we have to do.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation?" Who isn't scared of tribulation? Distress? Persecution? Famine? Nakedness? Peril? Sword?

As it is written, for thy sake we are being killed all the day long. We are reckoned like sheep for the slaughter.

Every one of those things scares us, and yet, we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us! They will never prevent us from arriving at the goal which is our real goal:

our cross.

If all our friends turn their backs and walk away from us, let them!

We will keep doing what our Master is calling us to do until we've finished our course in this world.

The worst the world out there can do to us is kill us. If they do, it will be our doorway to glory.

May God help us to toss out the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy,
defy all fear,
and start living as sons and daughters of the King.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/the-call-of-god-and-fear-of-man/>

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