

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: ALL ARE CALLED

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants, Section 4

Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men, therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day; therefore, if ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work, for, behold, the field is white already to harvest, and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perish not, but bringeth salvation to his soul; and faith, hope, charity, and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualifies him for the work. Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence. Ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Amen.

All are called according to the gifts of God unto them.

The work of God is big enough to give opportunity to all. God has invited every one of his human creation to share in that work. ALL are called, according to the gifts of God unto them. The work of God includes much more than the work of the ministry and teaching. It is also the work of the farmer and the grocer and the merchant, the craftsman and the professional man. It is the work of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick, teaching the ignorant. All of the necessary work of the world, if done in Christ's name and with his motivation, is God's work. ALL are called to help in this work. None are excluded from it save those who exclude themselves.

Not even in the work of saving souls is God exclusive. He has told us several times in modern revelation, "Whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God." And as we have already read in the scripture lesson, "If ye have desires to serve God, ye are called to the work." Anyone who sees and senses the world's great need of redemption, healing, repentance, and forgiveness, is called to the work of inviting men to come to Christ.

A mistake which is often made, however, is to mistake the call for a command to go immediately to work on the thing you want to do, or have desires to do. Not all who are called are immediately ready to go to work, or worthy to accept such a call. Sometimes the call is to begin preparation, or to make one-

self worthy. Sometimes this preparation is a moral and spiritual process; sometimes it is a process of training or education. We are told in Section 11 of the book of Doctrine and Covenants: "No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care." Perhaps the call is to cultivate more of these Christian virtues before we enter into active service. Perhaps the call is to acquire more wisdom, or to prepare by study, by education, by practice, by experience, so that we shall be ready for the larger work when God calls us to that. Jesus said that many are called, but few are chosen. Perhaps the reason is that so many who are called to prepare themselves for a later choosing never hear the call.

Many who are called (and remember that ALL are called) have to wait for a choosing before they are permitted to perform the work they desire to do and are called to do. Eagerness would sometimes entice us to jump into a job for which we are by no means prepared or suited. To one such in the early days of this church, the Lord said: "Ye need not suppose that ye are called to preach until ye are called." Sometimes, although the calling is definite enough, it is for some future time, after due preparation. Faithfulness and diligence in the present calling of preparation will lead to a later choosing to work of greater responsibility and significance.

Most of the calls to God's work come directly to the one who is called to do the work. In certain specific cases, however, as for example in calls to priesthood or ministry in the church, the scripture says "No man taketh this honor unto himself save he be called of God as was Aaron." Aaron was called through the prophetic ministry of Moses. Calls to priesthood should come through the prophetic ministry already set in and functioning in the church, as well as to the man called. When such calls are accepted by the one called, approved by the voice of the people, and followed by ordination under the hands of authority, then they are chosen to participate in the work of God in a particular and specific field -- the ministry. Even though called, and perhaps being made personally aware of that call, men do not function as ministers and priests for God unless they are chosen and ordained, as well as called. In the ceremony of ordination they solemnly pledge and covenant themselves to serve God in this specific way, and God, through the power of the Holy Spirit in the one ordaining, recognizes this dedication, and authorizes the one ordained to act in his name.

Men do not always accept the call of God. If all men did, there would not be such a desperate need of men to do his work. All are called, but God does not force anyone to accept or to heed his call. Sometimes we do not accept the call because we are mistaken in the thing to which we think we are called. We often overlook the call to obvious and necessary but somewhat wearisome and humdrum labor, in order to aspire to the spectacular, the romantic, the unusual, the distant, or the more wonderful service. Sometimes the call is to go into all the world and preach the gospel; more often it is "tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry" before you are chosen and ordained as one to be sent to the ends of the earth.

All men are not called, or even ordained, to the same labor. "All are called according to the gifts of God unto them. Men are to be ordained, says another verse, "according to the callings and gifts of God unto men." Some men who are ordained may have special gifts or talents for administering and directing the affairs of a large congregation. Some may have gifts that make them good pastors, good shepherds of the flock, good

and wise counsellors. Some may have gifts which make them particularly qualified to administer finances, or economic and business affairs. Whatever their gifts or talents, they are called and ordained to use those gifts and talents in the ministry of Christ's church, under his authority and power.

One does not need to be ordained, however, to speak a good word of testimony for Christ, to befriend the friendless, to help a sick neighbor, to give comfort in the house of death, to be a good wife and mother, or a good secretary, or a good mechanic, or a good farmer. There is need for countless varieties of labor and talent in the work of God's kingdom. "All are called according to the gifts of God unto them; and to the intent that all may labor together, let him that laboreth in the ministry and him that toileth in the affairs of the men of business and of work, labor together with God for the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all." "Let every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, go to with his might, with the labor of his hands, to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded."

The reason for the wide variety of callings to the work of God is "for the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all." We are all mutually interdependent. None of us could exist, or carry on our work, without the collaboration and help of many others. As the work of God and the work of the everyday world become more and more specialized and complex, this becomes increasingly true. We must work together, with each other, and for each other, for the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all.

Not only must we work together, but we must work together with God in the work of our calling, recognizing that every good and perfect gift, every talent, every strength, every ability comes from him, and that unless we use our gifts in the calling whereunto he has called us and commissioned us, we shall to some degree fail in the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all.

Therefore let every man go to with his might, with the labor of his hands, both to prepare and to accomplish the things which God has commanded, for "All are called according to the gifts of God unto them."