

Pastors Comments

God Calls

July 24, 2006

Our recent VBS found me teaching youth for the first time in a very long time. In a day when I find many churches pursuing excitement as a methodology for church growth, I promised the kids that their time with me would not be "fun." I suppose I should have been more prepared for some particular reactions. One young lady immediately asked her mother to intercede because I wanted to focus on scripture as opposed to focusing on learning some new VBS song. The wise mother explained to her daughter that since I was teaching I would have the final say about agenda. What a refreshing attitude for a Pastor placed in such a situation to encounter. This is not to say that they did not have built in time for lightness. Out of a total time of 180 minutes I had the first 30 and then later another 50. I thought snack time and outdoor recreation would somehow mitigate my lack of appreciation for "Christianity light."

The title of the SBC produced VBS program is the Artic Edge. As should be, it focused on Jesus. A secondary focus was courage. The challenge was that as they reviewed some that had encountered God, been called by Him and responded appropriately they would realize that in a relationship with God this was the expected norm. A 20-minute missions session conducted by another related contemporary settings where missionaries were using courage to face an unbelieving and sometimes hostile world. Their daily lives had been recorded and it was indeed interesting. A review of their thoughts when first God had placed upon their lives a call to missions and a call to a place in many cases so remote that the world in general does not know the people or the place exists.

As we moved daily thru the program for the week a pattern emerged:

1. God calls to salvation
2. God calls to particular ministry
3. God calls to a universal Christ-likeness that should be inherent in all believers

Nicodemus who went to Jesus by night as recorded in John 3 receives a message dealing with salvation. Sometime in the next three years he receives Jesus as his savior. He is called to exhibit courage when the dead body of Jesus hangs on the cross and the powers that be demand that it be taken down and disposed of. Not wanting the common fate of discarding in the ever burning dump to be its destination Nicodemus must come from being a secret believer and ask along with another for the body so that it can be properly buried.

More contemporary examples of calls to courage come from the memories of Columbine and Fort Worth, Texas where a crazed gunman enters a church sanctuary filled with youth on a Friday nite and proceeds to shoot as many as possible. While others fled to the best of their ability a young man having answered the call to salvation only weeks before rises and confronts with a pointed finger the gunman with his weapon. He asks the gunman if he were to die today where would he go after telling him that if the gunman killed him he knew where he was going. A call to service that demanded no time of preparation.

For teens we looked at a young virtuous girl who had an encounter with an out of this world being and was asked to accomplish something only God could empower. She has questions, but no reticence. The society she will confront is very conservative and this is a life changing if not ending decision. She is up to the task. Is it a matter of courage? Perhaps. Is it a matter of faith? Most definitely!

We cannot afford to believe that there comes a time, a place or an age to serve God. We need to be ever vigilant to the call that could come at any time.

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