

HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 6/28/2024

Callings

Dear Friends in CHRIST,

There are times in our lives when we see something that could be done or should be done. It might be a need unaddressed. It might be something new that might be a blessing to others. It might be a desire to add to or expand something that already exists. When we feel these things strongly, it is a calling.

The concept of a calling is relatively new. Certainly, it originated with JESUS' call to the ones who became disciples to, "Come and follow ME." However, the concept of calling in a broader sense came out of the Reformation in the 1500s. Martin Luther developed this idea, that each person has an important and valuable purpose. Luther further stressed that every calling has the same worth in the eyes of GOD. Martin Luther insisted that the farmer shoveling manure or the woman milking a cow pleased GOD as much as the pastor preaching or praying. He said, "The Christian shoemaker does his duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes because GOD is interested in good craftsmanship." He also used the term "vocation" to describe this holy work of doing our jobs to the best of our ability. Calling takes worldly activities and gives them religious significance as we come to understand them as divinely inspired in each person. The theologian Paul Tillich called them statements of ultimate concern where they become so important that they have to be carried out.

This sense of calling may come in the workplace, in church, or the community. GOD can speak to us anywhere about addressing needs, especially when doing so may bless others. For some, this calling may consume them so that they can think of little else until they act upon this overwhelming need, becoming enthusiastically involved in the work. Some have even found new careers or purpose in life because of this calling.

Unfortunately, there also are many who feel a sense of calling but who choose not to act upon it. They may see the need too great for them to make a difference. They feel themselves to be lacking in the necessary resources for the task. Or what is most tragic, is when they feel that they themselves are not capable of answering this calling.

What is heartbreaking about this last view is that it fails to recognize GOD's possibilities. GOD never calls us to something at which we cannot succeed. We may not have all the resources needed, but GOD will provide them. The task may be greater than what we think we can accomplish, especially alone, but GOD will fill the gap. Most of all, GOD never calls us to something without having factored in our limitations. You see, GOD knows our capabilities and gifts better than we do. GOD will direct our work to the goal that GOD desires, for the outcome that GOD needs. What we need to do the most is to trust and then give the servants response, "Here I am, GOD. Send me.

In CHRIST's love,
Pastor Jeffrey