

**February 14, 2010
Philippians 2:1-5
Creekside COB**

“A Divine Appointment”

A little boy arrived home from school later than usual. His anxious mother asked him why he was late. The boy replied, “On my way home I saw a little girl crying because a wheel had fallen off her tricycle. I stopped to try and help her.” “But my dear,” his mother said, “you couldn’t fix your own bike when your wheel came off. How could you help the little girl?” To which the boy replied, “Well, I couldn’t help her fix her trike, but I could help her cry.”

Sometimes all a deacon can do is help someone cry. That is all anyone may need at one time in their life.

CALL OF DEACONS

Today we ask if you may hear the call of becoming a deacon upon your life. Do you have a caring heart that enjoys visiting and nurturing other people? Do you have a heart for helping meet the needs of others? Are there people in the congregation who you believe have these gifts? All of us have spiritual gifts that God bestows upon us. The spiritual gifts of mercy, healing and helps are the gifts that come to mind when I think of a deacons calling.

THE CALL ON OUR LIVES

Today, God is calling some of us to be deacons. He has placed that calling in our hearts and a willingness to answer that call.

Now many of you who hear the call may not be comfortable with that call. Many of you aren’t quite sure what will be asked of you or are you the one God is really calling.

UNSURE OF OUR CALL

But God calls all of us to serve. God places a call on all of our lives, a call that utilizes our spiritual gifts. And when God calls, most of us are unsure how it will manifest. We are not sure we will know what

God wants us for. But we can be sure of a few things.

No matter what your call is God always gives us the tools to fulfill that call.

CONFIDENCE JOKE:

There is a story about a man who had the idea of walking on a tight rope over Niagara Falls. Other people had done it, but this man had a new twist. He was going to push a man in a wheelbarrow. He began at once to prepare for the event, even though he hadn't yet found anyone willing to ride in the wheelbarrow. He set up a tight-rope near the Falls and every day he could be seen pushing and balancing the wheel barrow filled with stones.

One day, a young man came up to him to wish him well. "Good luck," he said. "I've watched you practicing and I have confidence in you. I know you can do it." The tight-rope walker answered, "Do you believe I can do this?" And the young man replied, "Yes, of course!" Again, he said, "But do you really believe I can do this?" "Yes, of course," the young man repeated. "Then you're my man. Get in the wheelbarrow."

Confidence. Sometimes we need confidence to do the work God calls us to do, however God doesn't always choose the equipped but he always equips the chosen. Let me repeat that, God doesn't always choose the equipped but he always equips the chosen. Now I am not sure where this is from as I have heard it many times but it is true no matter who is the one who coined the phrase.

EQUIPMENT - ILLUSTRATION:

Tony Campolo tells a wonderful story about a pastor friend of his who had a deacon in his church. The pastor tried to get the deacon to allow the Lord to fulfill his call as a deacon. Finally the deacon decided that there was one thing he could do in service to God and to others. He could take the youth group to the old folk's home. Once a month the youth group of this church went to the old folk's home and put on a little church service for the people who were there.

Once this deacon went with the youth group and stood in the back of the room. The young people were performing and this old man in a

wheel chair rolled his chair over to where this deacon was standing, took hold of his hand and held it all during the service. That was repeated the next month and the next month and the next month and the next month and the next month. Then they went one Sunday afternoon and the man wasn't there. The deacon asked the nurse in charge, "What happened to that man?" "Oh," she said, "He's near death. He's just down the hall, the third room. Maybe you should go in and visit him. He's unconscious, though."

The deacon walked down and went into the room. There were tubes. You know how people are when they are just about gone, and lying there. The deacon, said a prayer. And when he said "Amen," the old fellow squeezed his hand. The deacon was so moved by that squeeze of the hand that he began to weep. He shook a little. He tried to get out of the room and, as he was leaving the room, he bumped into this woman who was coming into the room. She says, "He's been waiting for you. He said he did not want to die until Jesus came and held his hand, and I tried to tell him that after death he would have a chance to meet Jesus and talk to Jesus and hold Jesus' hand. But he said, 'No. Once a month Jesus comes and holds my hand and I don't want to leave until I have a chance to hold the hand of Jesus once more.'" ²

A divine appointment. When we answer the call on our lives to serve in whatever capacity, we fulfill divine appointments. God equipped this deacon for a divine appointment.

MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

A five-year-old girl developed a brain tumor that was diagnosed as being terminal. Little hope was given for her survival. One night she was rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery on her brain. The family sat with their minister during the long hours of surgery that night. As they sat together, a deacon from the church quietly slipped into the waiting room and sat with them. He did not say a word. He just sat with this grieving family in prayerful silence. After about ten minutes, the deacon quietly got up and left. No words had been exchanged, but this deacon had connected with the family in a meaningful way during his brief visit. The father of the girl would say later that no visit had been as meaningful to his family as the silent visit from the deacon.

A divine appointment. We fulfill a divine appointment when we answer the call to a ministry of presence. There isn't any need for words but to be present in the suffering. Like the young boy helping the little girl cry. Sometimes that is all we have to do. We just sit and let others be who they need to be at that time. God gives us a ministry of presence to fulfill a divine appointment.

LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

One morning a woman went to start her car, but it wouldn't start. She called the mechanic to pick it up. The day got worse. After missing her dentist appointment, she got a call from the bank telling her she had overdrawn her account, then the mechanic called to say it would cost \$900 to fix the car! He said she could pay later and pick up the car right away. Time was short because she had an appointment at 6:00 pm. She was running late when, out of the blue, she remembered a lady she met at a Christmas party months ago. She'd mentioned she lived in the woman's old neighborhood and that she had a swimming pool. The woman felt compelled to find her and drove to her old neighborhood five miles away. Once there she found hundreds of houses and many had pools.

She took a left, then another left, and drove into the driveway of a house with a pool. She knocked on the door and then started to reason with herself: Why do I think this is the lady's house? I don't even know her name! What will I say to explain why I'm here? About that time, a man opened the door. Quickly she said, "Hi! I've come to see your wife. I think I met her at a Christmas party. My name is Sharon," He scowled and said, "My wife doesn't want visitors!" before slamming the door.

Embarrassed, she ran to her car. As she started to leave, the man knocked on her window. "My wife wants to see you," he said, "She's downstairs." She made her way inside and noticed there were no noises and no lights. It was a bit scary. She rounded the bottom stair and saw his wife lying on a recliner wrapped like a mummy from head to toe. Only her eyes and mouth showed between the gauze. She

froze. "Why are you here?" she asked. "I don't know," she replied. She repeated herself and Sharon explained that she was on her way to an appointment when she remembered meeting her, and that she didn't recall her name and wasn't sure how she landed at her house. Tears started spewing from her gauze as she said, "I'm the woman you met."

Sharon walked closer as she continued, "Three hours ago I was in so much pain my husband wrapped me tightly to ease my discomfort. I have lupus and asked God to show me that He still loved me. I needed a miracle or I couldn't keep on living. I told Him, "If You don't show me by 6:00 p.m., then I am taking pills to end this misery forever. Turn around and look at the clock." It read 5:57. Then she said, "On my mantle I have a bottle of oil. I want you to anoint my head with oil." "Oh, I can't anoint your head. I'm not worthy -- I've bounced checks today!" "Sharon, get the oil!" she insisted. Sharon rubbed a drop on her head and we prayed. When we finished she said, "I feel better, not completely, but that's not what I asked God for today. I asked Him to show me He loved me and He answered. Thank you for following the Holy Spirit's nudging even though your day was busy."

A divine appointment. God gives us the Holy Spirit to lead us into the ministry he is calling us to. God gives all of us His Holy Spirit to lead us into divine appointments.

CLOSING

God doesn't ask you if you are worthy, or if you know what you are doing, He just asks you to be willing and available. When we answer the call from God to serve, whether it is as deacons or any calling in service. They are divine appointments from God keeping divine appointments for God.

Divine appointments that can come in no other way than for you to say yes.