

“What’s Your Vocation?”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. (cf. Galatians 1:3)

“What’s your vocation?” When posed with this question many people may immediately think of their “career” or job. “Vocation” is a term usually used in our society to refer to a skill which one has learned and puts to use in order to “make a living”—the work in which a person is regularly employed.

The derivation of the word “vocation” comes from a Latin word meaning “to summon” or “to call.” Thus, the word came to mean the work to which a person feels “called” to do in some manner. Today, the buzz language is to do that for which you feel a strong passion.

So maybe the question should be re-phrased: “To what have you been called?” This should flood our minds with all kinds of ideas since we fill so many different positions in our lives, each of which require responsibility on our part. Think of the many “hats” you wear on a daily basis: son, daughter, father, mother, co-worker, brother, sister, church member, employer, supervisor, team member, classmate, aunt, uncle, citizen, and so forth. Everyday you bring **your identity** into these many vocations of your life!

How do you view your identity? Identity for most people is based upon how they view themselves. This view is strongly distorted by your sins, failures and insecurities as well as your self-righteousness and pride in an effort to “make up” for these shortcomings. Thus, our tendency is to value and define our vocations in life improperly, even questioning their true purpose in the end.

But that’s not how the LORD views your identity. The Scriptures speak about your “calling” from **God’s** perspective. 2 Timothy 1:9 says that God has *saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace, **which He gave us in Christ Jesus.*** We have been saved from the condemnation which our sins deserve through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection! It has completely changed and re-directed our identity because now all the vocations which we fulfill in our lives take on a different and new purpose—God’s *purpose and grace, **which He gave us in Christ Jesus.***

As a result of this new identity we are referred to as “the church” in the Scriptures—the ones who are called out of the world with a new purpose, desire and direction. Jesus stated this purpose in Mark 16:15-16 → *Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.* Our purpose as the Christian Church is to proclaim God’s Law

and Gospel and administer His sacraments so that people will confess their sin, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved! It is this identity and purpose which governs our functioning in all the vocations of life that we fill.

Does anybody know what October 31<sup>st</sup> is? That's right! Reformation Day—the day Martin Luther posted his 95 theses for discussion in the Christian Church about teachings and practices which went against Scripture. During the Reformation the concept of fulfilling the vocations of our lives according to our identity as those belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ was “re-discovered.” Many believed that a “Christian” vocation was to leave the world and become a monk or a nun or a priest. These were considered “more Christian” than other tasks in life. Unfortunately, many failed to see their whole life as pleasing to God **because of who He had made them by His grace through faith in Christ Jesus!** They failed to see that they were His children, fulfilling His purpose in the world of their daily activities.

Colossians 3:23-24 says: *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men . . . **You are serving the Lord Christ.*** Because you are made righteous before God in the Person & Work of Jesus Christ you can fulfill the vocations of your life with confidence! Ever thought of changing that diaper as a task pleasing in God's sight and not just relieving to your smell? Ever thought of teaching your child how to talk respectfully to others as God

glorifying and not just helping them become a good neighbor or citizen? Ever thought of simply doing a conscientious and good job as working for the Lord Jesus Christ and not just taking pride in your work or hoping for a raise? Ever thought of praying with someone as being Christ to that person rather than simply trying to help them feel better? We will bring Christ to bear in all the vocations of our lives **because that is who we are at all times**—Christians! It is impossible to separate the Christian from his or her vocations!

This is also why Luther included a section in his “Small Catechism” entitled “Table of Duties (Certain passages of Scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities).” It lists the Scripture passages which speak about the vocation of pastors, parishioners as they hear the preaching of God’s Word, of citizens, to family members, workers, employers, and so forth. (cf. Section 3 of Luther’s Small Catechism with explanation, pages 35-39 / p. 328 in LSB)

A brief reading of these responsibilities given for the various vocations of your life will immediately work like any Law of God works upon your life and heart—it acts like a mirror to show you how you’ve sinned in these vocations. However, as we fulfill our identity as Christ Church, we meet together to dispense the forgiveness of sins in this place to one another through the preaching of the Gospel, the Absolution and the Lord’s Supper. Empowered

by this forgiveness anew we go into those daily vocations and be the Church in the world though we are not of the world. Thus, the Church strives to impact the world by being who it is suppose to be: those who bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others through Word and sacrament, through which the Holy Spirit creates faith and new hearts in the lives of sinners! Perspectives while fulfilling our vocations in life change drastically!

For instance, as you strive to fulfill your vocation as citizen in our country you cannot separate your identity in Christ from your vocation as citizen. Thus, when you go to the polls to vote, Jesus Christ and His Word will immediately govern decisions which directly impact His Will as revealed in His Word. However, your vocation as a Christian citizen also affects your perspective of other civil decisions which need to be made. No matter what the decision, the desire of our Lord Jesus according to 1 Timothy 2:1-4 continues in our vocation as citizens **daily**. It tells us to offer *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings . . . for all people, **for kings and all who are in high positions*** of authority. Why pray for our governing officials and our government at all levels?

The Christian believes that God has placed these officials in their positions of authority for a specific task—to make sure civil obedience and order is kept. (cf. Romans 13:1-7) 1 Timothy 2 says we pray so *that we may lead a peaceful and*

*quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.* However, its not just so we can enjoy safety and “the good life.” Jesus Himself promised that we would suffer for Him in the world, even by governing officials. Notice as they keep law and order we can continue to lead a godly life in Christ. *This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, Who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.* We pray for these officials to do what God wants them to do so that the Church can do what God wants it to do: **have a peaceful environment in which it can freely share the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that people can be saved!!** Even the governing officials’ proper functioning ultimately serves God’s *own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus*—the Gospel. The Church strives to impact the world by proclaiming the Law and Gospel and administering the sacraments, not by movements, policies or programs.

“What is your vocation?” No matter what the vocations you fill in your daily life, they are a service to Christ as you serve others **because you belong to Him!** They are vocations within which you cannot function perfectly but within which you function righteously **because of Christ’s righteousness.** They are vocations which have an impact as the Church in the world **because the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel you share to call, gather, enlighten, and sanctify people.** When they too know their identity as Christ’s people it will

affect their vocations of life as well! Amen.

*God is faithful,*

*by Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son,*

*Jesus Christ our Lord.* (1 Corinthians 1:9)

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