



December 2019: CALLED AND CLAIMED FOR LIFE

Written by the Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo
Based on Matthew 3:1-12

As we begin this new monthly devotional series, designed to be a year-round reminder of the calling we have in Jesus and how we are to use our lives and our gifts for Him, it is appropriate that we are beginning in the season of Advent. Advent is a time when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is a time when we remember that our Lord will return and, until He does, our calling is to follow Him.

It is also appropriate that we hear, each year, a message from the one who was called to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. There was nothing superficial about John the Baptist or about the things he shared. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." Eight words is all it took. As simple and straightforward as it was, it was a message that changed lives. And it is a message that will change your life, if you listen to and apply what he said.

John's message of repentance, of changing our paths and our patterns and turning our lives toward Jesus, was more than a call for a simple course adjustment in life to make things better. It was a call for a complete life change that would make things new, and one that was and is only possible in Christ.

In the same way, stewardship is **all** about using our lives for a purpose far greater than our lives. It is about returning our lives to the One who first gave them to us. In that sense, it is not a consideration in life we are being asked to make, but a **calling** for life we have been given. It is not a cause in life we are being asked to support, but a claim on our lives that has been laid upon us.

Too many people make the mistake, when it comes to stewardship, of thinking about it as a series of tasks we are called to do, rather than the people we are called to be. Give your money. Offer your time. Use your talents for service to God and others. They jump straight to the tasks of being good stewards, without fully considering the claim Jesus has made on their lives and the calling they have in Him.

As we move into this season of Advent, preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus, and as we look forward to that day when He will return, be careful not to mistake the stewardship tasks with the Christian calling and claim. God is not interested in receiving simply your time and talent and treasure. He sent His Son into the world for something far greater. He was born for you. He came into this world for you. On the cross and in the resurrection, He laid an eternal calling and claim on your life. And one day, He will return to take you to Himself. Until then, you are called and claimed to live for Him. Amen.



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