

Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA
May 2, 2010 – “The Pastoral Ministry & The Divine Call”
Sermon # 1 – Rev. Craig A. Patterson

“The Pastor: Called & Placed By God.”

(Text: Jeremiah 1:5-10; Acts 14:23; 20:28)

Contexts: In the opening verses of the prophet Jeremiah’s prophecy, he describes how God called him, personally, to be a prophet. This is a *subjective call* into this office. There is, also, an *objective call* that God often gives, through a group of believers (i.e., a congregation or gathering of God’s people). In Paul’s address to the elders (pastors) from Ephesus at Miletus, he offers an emotional farewell to his beloved co-workers in the Gospel ministry. Headed for Jerusalem, Paul knew that, most likely, he would not leave there alive. Thus, in his farewell message to these pastors, he exhorts them to “be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers...”

- I. **People Are Inclined To Want To Control The Calling And Placement of Pastors.**
 - A. Congregations are tempted to connive (finagle) to get a certain pastor.
 - 1. Pushing aside a humble, patient faith in God’s goodness to provide, we are tempted to grab at the closest “semi-good” and available pastor.
 - a. It is not wrong to admire a pastor’s qualities and abilities and to ask permission to place that pastor’s name on a potential call list, but this should always be accompanied by a faith in God that depends on Him to select and move His “under-shepherds” to live and serve where and when He wants them to serve.
 - B. Pastors are tempted to connive (finagle) to serve in a particular place and ministry.
 - 1. Pastors, too, are tempted to not trust God and “cozy up” to churches that are looking for a pastor.
 - 2. Pastors, too, are tempted to view another parish as something to covet and to pursue.
 - a. It is not wrong to ask God for something specific and to pray to God for that specific place, but one must always pray “if it be Thy will.”
 - b. Often, there are circumstances or issues that are not seen that a pastor cannot foreknow.

- II. **God Calls & Places Individuals Into The Public (Pastoral) Ministry Of Word & Sacrament (...To Be A Blessing, His Kind Of Blessing In A Particular Place & Time.)**
 - A. Via a subjective call to serve in church work.
 - 1. As in the case of Jeremiah, God prepares and equips His servants of the Word, even from before they are born, to be ready to serve at a place and time of His choosing.
 - B. Via an objective call through a group of believers into a specific time and place.
 - 1. Paul and Barnabas, in their traveling to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, appointed elders (pastors) by vote “for them in every church.” *See Acts 14:23.
 - a. The word used here (Acts 14:23) is ‘cheirotoneo’ and means “to vote by stretching out the hand.” (Lenski p. 585)
 - b. Lenski translates Acts 14:23 this way, “Moreover, after by vote appointing for them elders from church to church, by praying after fastings, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” (Lenski p. 585)