

Daily Devotional, November 12, 2020 When God is Calling—Go!

¹⁰ In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. ¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." ¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

The Bible is filled with stories of ordinary people who bless others through their faithful service to God. Because these special people were willing to say "yes" when God called, lives were changed, and the world was changed for the better.

One of my favorite faithful followers of Jesus is Ananias. He is a disciple of Christ who lived in Damascus, far from all the action that was happening in Jerusalem. One day God called to Ananias and commanded him to go to a house in Damascus and pray for a man named Saul of Tarsus.

I have no doubt that Ananias was shocked when God called him into service that day. Not only was he surprised to hear God's call, but also the call was for him to go and visit with Saul. Ananias had heard about the notorious Saul and how he was persecuting Christians all around Jerusalem. Now this dreaded persecutor had come to his hometown, Damascus. Ananias pleaded with God, begging not to be asked to perform this task, fearing for his own safety, and no doubt, for the safety of his household. But God would have none of it and replied, "Go, this man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel."

Ananias, realizing the importance of what had just happened, quickly went to find Saul. After he found sightless Saul who was waiting silently in that home of Judas on Straight Street, he prayed for him, placing his hands on Saul... what an amazing act of bravery! This simple act of obedience opened the eyes of Saul, also known as Paul. From this point forward, Paul was no longer persecuting the followers of Jesus. Instead, Paul joined them and helped to spread the message of Christ around the world. His letters of support to the early churches make up a large portion of our New Testament in the Bible.

Ananias helped to change Paul's life that day because he was obedient to God. His faith in God made him available and willing to be used by God. I am sure he never thought he would be called to face the man who had gained great prominence in carrying out the persecution of this fledgling church, but when God called, Ananias answered the call.

What is God calling you to do? Who could you be praying for today? Telling your faith story to? Teaching God's Word to? What act of service is God equipping you for? How can you bless others' lives? Are you being a good steward of your talents? Like Ananias, God is calling us to make a difference in our world. And as we can see from his story, God is calling us to love our neighbors, *no exceptions*.

Prayer: Generous God, you call me by name and ask me to follow you. Thank you, Lord, for all your great and wonderful gifts. Help me grow in the love and service of our church. Give me the energy and spirit to shape its future. Help me to live each day with joy and humility. Keep me totally dedicated to serving you. Teach me to recognize the many ways you make your Spirit known and then the grace to answer your call to form, strengthen and expand the Body of Christ. Amen