

“What Did You Say God?”

Pastor Mark Eyler’s sermon, Sunday, July 4, 2021

Jeremiah 1:4-10

4 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” 6 “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” 7 But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. 9 Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Psalms 32:8

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Matthew 28:16-20

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Message: What Did You Say God?

Wow! What a surprise to be back home. Lori and I can attest to the fact that this has to be a miracle from God, and we couldn’t be happier. We will truly miss the people of our previous church (Brandenburg in Sykesville), but we know and trust God will take care of them. God is truly amazing! As most know, it’s not typical for a local pastor to be put in your home church let alone a full time charge. It does happen but is very rare. We were blown away. I also must say I felt like Moses when he was told to lead the people out of Egypt, because just like Moses I began to question. I also need to say that I am extremely humbled because I know God’s hands were all over this.

I also want to thank Pastor Bob for his ministry here at Weller, and I pray that he and his family will also have an easy transition.

Today since this is my first Sunday back at Weller, I thought it to be appropriate to give a message on my call for those who may not know me or may not have heard it before.

My Sermon title this morning is “What Did You Say God?” Throughout my life that has been me. I don’t know about you, but I like to see things in black and white or if I sense God is instructing me to do something for Him, I’ll say something like, “That’s not in my plan or I’m not equipped to do that. Could you send me a sign so I can be sure?” Even when I received the telephone call to come here, I probably would have believed it more, if God would have sent the message to me on a stone tablet, hit me over the head with it and said ok, here’s my plan Mark. When you stop and think about it, I end up looking a little ridiculous. In our gospel this morning from Matthew, Jesus tells the disciples He has been given all authority, not some, not a little, but ALL authority. Here I am, questioning the very one that created me, created the universe and everything in it. The one that has all the authority. I have a feeling I may not be alone here.

Psalms 29:1-4 speaks of God’s power and majesty: “Ascribe to the Lord, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness. The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic.

The word ascribe is used a lot in the text this morning. Ascribe when found in Webster’s dictionary says it is to assign or regard as belonging to or coming from someone. So, if we look at Psalm 29 again, we are giving God acknowledgement for His glory and strength. He deserves our worship of His holiness because He is all powerful.

How could we possibly question when God calls us? Our human nature steps in with doubt and we chime in with our own insecurities, that couldn’t really be God, could it? Maybe that’s why there is so much hesitation on our part.

There’s an old story about a young farmer, standing in his field. He looks to the sky and he sees a very odd cloud formation. The clouds actually formed the letters G, P, C. This must be a revelation that comes to him, and he thinks he has received a call from God: Go Preach Christ!

The farmer rushes to the deacons of the church, and he insists he has been called to preach. The deacons wanted him to have the opportunity to act on his calling, so they invited him to preach at the church.

That Sunday, the farmer begins his message. The sermon is very, very long, it's tedious and very hard to understand. When it finally ends, the leaders sit in stunned silence. One of the deacons asked again, "What were those letters you said were in the clouds?" The farmer replies, "G.P.C. You know, "Go preach Christ." Finally, one of the wise deacons turns to the farmer, "Seems to me the clouds were saying 'Go Plant Corn.'

There are so many ways God communicates with us. He may use scripture, a sermon, a song, another person, a dream and the list goes on.

As I look back over my life, I know God was preparing me to answer His call of becoming a local pastor. I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior at age 12. From that time since, I felt the nudge to do more and more within the life of the church. There were many times when temptation appeared and I would mess up, but God always forgave me and helped me to move forward and get back on track. God knew I needed to stay on track, so he provided a strong woman of faith, my beautiful wife Lori, to help me. A few years after marriage, God blessed us with four wonderful children, Mandy, Stephanie, and twins Matthew, and Amy. We couldn't be prouder of them. God is continuing to bless us with grandchildren. Since we left Weller, we now have three beautiful granddaughters. Kinsley is the oldest and she will be 3 years old in August, Hope is nine months and Kaia is four months. We are expecting our 1st grandson in August.

Lori and I have been given so many blessings and we thank God for each and every one of them. God uses blessings to encourage us on our journey. He uses friends, people in this church and this community to encourage, pray for you and lift you up.

I spoke earlier of God preparing me, and I want you to know, God also uses those dark times in our life. Even though God doesn't cause those things to happen, He will use the situation for good, so He can draw you closer to Him.

One of those dark times I experienced was an eye surgery. Many of you may remember this. The doctor informed me I had a 95% chance of waking up to total blindness in my right eye. My vision was already poor in that eye, but I certainly didn't want to lose the light I had. I felt like giving up. I had already had 7 surgeries on that eye. Through personal prayer and intercessory prayer from many of you, God gave me peace. God also gave me a miracle of keeping the light in that eye even to this day. I know in my heart that God wanted me to trust Him. God never gave up on me even though I was doubting. Little did I know God would use my eye issues to be able to identify with others who were dealing with similar issues.

God had a plan for me all along. He was holding the blueprints for my life the whole time. I never dreamed Weller's name was written on my blueprints. I know He's holding the blueprints for your life too. He wants us to trust Him.

Our scripture about Jeremiah tells us at the beginning of his career, he was called to perform the function of a prophet of the Lord. Verse 5 really jumps out at me. Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. How cool is that? God knew us before we were born.

I Thessalonians 1:4-5. For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that He has chosen you, because our gospel comes to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. How awesome is that! God not only chooses us, but He gives us power in the Holy Spirit.

Even before Jeremiah was born, he was selected to be a prophet for God. God chooses all of us. We don't choose God. Remember the scripture says brothers and sisters. God has a plan for each of us. Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go: I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Verse 10 - Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in Him.

If we trust God, the unfailing love He shows us will teach us, show us what we need to do, and He will give us direction in our call. Sometimes God calls us for something specific. God also calls for general purposes. One of God's calls for all of us is found in Matthew 28:19 and 20. Jesus tells his disciples to 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you'. We are disciples of Jesus Christ. We are to go and make disciples.

Today, I want us to think about our call. Does God have a specific call for your life? We have just read that all of us have the call to make disciples. Perhaps, we are still trying to figure out what else is God's plan is for us. Maybe we already have a clear picture of what God wants us to do right now, or maybe God is sending us in a new direction. I know for myself, I sensed God guiding me to pastoring but just like Jeremiah, I had my excuses. Jeremiah says: "Lord I do not know how to speak; I am too young." I changed it a little and I said, "Lord I don't know if I know enough to preach and I'm too old."

God told Jeremiah what to say. God wants me to preach from the heart. Sometimes, I will read a scripture verse and

it may speak to me in a certain way. Next time I read it, it may be an entirely different meaning. Whatever place you are in your life, God will use scripture to give you what you need. That's what's so awesome about the bible. We are constantly learning something new. God promises to teach us and not only by textbooks. Christian testimonies can also teach us life lessons to help develop and grow our relationship with God. That's why you will hear me tell a story from time to time. So often, we can learn from others and what they experienced in their life. Just take the time to listen.

By God's grace I completed courses to become a certified lay servant and a certified lay speaker and continue with courses at Wesley Seminary in Course of Study. When I became a lay speaker, it gave me the opportunity to overcome my fears by speaking in other churches. I want to share a personal testimony with you. On one particular evening, I received a call from a good friend and previous minister of Weller UMC, Pastor Rich Broome. He was always encouraging me to move forward in my call. He shared with me that he was in the hospital and not feeling very well. He asked if I would share a message that Sunday with his church in West Virginia because he knew he might not be out of the hospital yet. I immediately said yes. My focus became the message and I sensed God wanting me to share a message entitled 'In the Eye of the Storm'. It spoke about the very tough times we go through and how God helps us through them. Little did I know what was to follow. Immediately when the service was over, the leaders came to me and asked me to come back the next week for they knew Pastor Rich would not be up to it. I agreed. On the Saturday before I was to preach again, I received a call from Rich's wife Beth to inform me of the unbelievable news that Pastor Rich, had passed away. Needless to say, I was in shock!

I still had to go to his church and conduct a service, while I myself was grieving with the congregation. Thanks to this congregation praying for me I was able to do the service. Before Pastor Rich passed away, I had already selected a sermon entitled 'The Light at the End of the Tunnel'. This sermon tied in perfectly for Pastor Rich's life. God had been preparing me all along for all that was to transpire. Lori and I pulled into the church parking lot, and I was feeling nauseated and upset. I got out of the car and knew all I could do was pray. I paced and prayed. All of you were praying and I could sense those prayers. Then it was time to go inside. As soon as I stepped inside the church, I felt God's presence through the Holy Spirit, and I knew everything was going to be okay. As soon as I released my own inabilities and trusted God wholeheartedly, I realized that God wanted me to pastor. We had a beautiful memorial service that day and God taught me to trust him. I knew after that day, I needed to stop all the excuses and doubts. I needed to be obedient and accept God's call for my life. God took a very difficult situation and gave me the insight I needed to become a local pastor. I have been blessed since that time beyond what I could imagine.

There are many instances in scripture that tell us of people being called by God. We read about Isaiah being called to be a prophet, Paul was called to be an apostle and preach to the Gentiles, Abraham and Sarah were called to leave their land and relatives to a land God would show them, Moses was called to free the Israelites from Egypt. In Exodus 3:11, Moses even argued with God and said Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt? Then in Exodus 4:13, he tells God to please send someone else. The disciples were to drop what they were doing and follow Jesus to become fishers of men.

Being called by God isn't about getting famous. It's not about receiving glory or becoming rich. Being called by God is serving Him by loving people. Some of us here today may be feeling a call from God for something specific he wants you to do. Others might not have thought about it, and others may feel God has already started to guide them.

I do know all of us are called to be free and serve one another humbly in love. Gal 5:13.

God has a plan for each of us. A great way to find out what that is; begin with getting our hearts right with God. We can ask for forgiveness, spend time in prayer, participate in bible study, serve the people with whom you live, remain active in worship, and be God's witness in the world. Then ask God to reveal His will for your life. James 1:5,6 says If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt.

Friends, I am excited about what God is doing in this church. I ask you to join with me in praying for this congregation and community as we join together, united in love, participating together knowing God has great things in store.

Let's begin today. God, What did you say? Ok God, what can I do for you?