

So What?! *Does Luther's Theology Still Matter?*
Vocation: *Why Should I Get Out of Bed?* Study Guide
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Fourth of Four Presentations ~ The Word with Your Pastors ~ Spring 2022

Ephesians 4:1

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called...

The word vocation comes from the Latin word, *vocare*, which means to call. Time and again the biblical witness points to this idea that as followers of Jesus, Christians have a particular kind of calling in the world. From the very beginning human beings are given a special call or job to care for and tend creation. Interestingly, throughout the church's history that call has been spiritualized. That is, people have believed that the most faithful way to live out God's call was to focus exclusively on spiritual or religious matters, the things of the right hand or the eternal kingdom.

This kind of thinking contributed to the growth of religious orders, monks, nuns and priests. It's this understanding of call that led Martin Luther into life in the monastery. But it was at the monastery, after Luther had his rediscovery of the radical justifying love of God, that Luther realized that God is actually calling us to love and serve our neighbor. Luther realized that the Christian is called to ordinary life, not a life apart from the world, but one deeply rooted in the world that Christ came to serve.

Key passages:

[Ephesians 4:1-6](#)

4I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

[Genesis 1:26-31](#)

26 Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,* and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'*

27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the

earth.' ²⁹God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

[John 21:15-21](#)

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' ¹⁶A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' ¹⁷He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' ¹⁹(He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, 'Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?' ²¹When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, 'Lord, what about him?'

Questions:

1. When have you had a clear sense of call in your life? Has it been work related or family or something else?
2. Is it helpful to think about the whole of your life, your relationships, your work, your neighborhood as being what God calls to you do? Why or why not?