

The Vocations of Jesus

Table of Duties, the Holy Gospels, The Old Testament

Lent 5, 2016

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

The vocations of Jesus are prophet, priest, and king.

Let us talk about prophet first. God the Father called His Son to be a prophet. On one occasion early in His ministry our Lord told His apostles, "Let us go out to the other village so that I may preach there also for that is why I was sent out." When our Lord says these words He is instructing us on the vocation that He Himself received from His Father in heaven. God the Father called Him to preach. That is the vocation of the prophet.

When Jesus executed His vocation many people picked up on the fact that God had called Jesus to be a prophet. They would tell others, "He is a prophet."

When Jesus executes the vocation of prophet He announces the message of God to us. He tells us what God is like. He tells us what God's will is. He educates us on the things of God. Mainly, He preaches to us repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus declares some unforgiven and lost according to God's Word. He declares others forgiven and beloved according to God's Word. Jesus has the authority to make such declarations. God called Him to be a prophet. This is why the Gospels record that He began His ministry by saying, "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news."

When Jesus executes His vocation of prophet there are some people who do not like the message that He brings. They do not acknowledge that what Jesus is saying is from God. In fact they hate what Jesus is saying. These people want to hang on to their own sins. They do not want to repent of them. These people want to prove to God that they are righteous on their own and that they do not need the righteousness of Jesus. These people do not want to admit that they are sinners. They hate Jesus when He tells them to repent. In fact they hate Jesus so much that they plot His death. The more Jesus preaches. The more they hate Him. The more Jesus preaches the more they plot His death. Jesus seals His own fate when He executes His office of prophet.

Finally, the enemies of Jesus get so fed up with what He is preaching and doing, that they arrange for His betrayal. They arrest Him. They put Him on trial before the high priest Caiaphas. Caiaphas along with the Jewish ruling council find Jesus guilty of blasphemy even though He isn't. On the face of it this looks like a defeat for Jesus. But Jesus had orchestrated the whole thing. He wanted this to happen. If He had not wanted to be put on trial before Caiaphas then all He had to have done would have been to have quit preaching. If Jesus had quit preaching, they would not have hated Him. If they would not have hated Him, they would not have arrested Him and put Him on trial for His life. Jesus kept on preaching in spite of their plots and threats. Therefore Jesus must have wanted them to arrest Him. Jesus must have wanted them to have found Him guilty of blasphemy.

The enemies of Jesus turned Jesus over to Pontius Pilate. They accuse Jesus of sedition. They say that Jesus claims to be a king in defiance of Caesar. Such a charge is worthy of the death penalty under Roman Law. They want Jesus dead so they accuse Him of something they think they can prove that will require Pontius Pilate to put Jesus to death.

Pilate examines Jesus and finds no guilt in Him, but because Caesar has told Pilate to keep the peace and the enemies of Jesus have stirred up the crowd such that whenever Pilate said that he was willing to let Jesus go they would riot, Pilate reluctantly sentenced Jesus to crucifixion and had Jesus put to death.

Now before I go on and describe how the death of Jesus is our Lord's way of fulfilling the requirements of His other two vocations, that is priest and king, let us take a look at the vocations of Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate.

Caiaphas is the chief priest that year. According to God's command the chief priest is required to make the sacrifice of atonement. God commanded a sacrifice of atonement be made once year to take away the sins of Israel for that year. The sacrifice was a combination of several animals, but culminated in a perfect male goat. God had also called Caiaphas together with his fellow priests to make all of the other animal sacrifices that God had commanded in order to atone for the people's sins.

When Caiaphas turns Jesus over to Pilate seeking a death sentence against Jesus Caiaphas is unwittingly performing his own vocation of chief priest.

Jesus is after all the sacrifice of atonement to end all sacrifices of atonement. All of the animal sacrifices that God had commanded Caiaphas and his fellow priests to make were just foreshadowings of the great sacrifice of Jesus. God commanded the animal sacrifices to show the people and us what was required of a sacrifice of atonement so that when Jesus made His sacrifice of atonement everyone would understand what He is doing.

That means that Caiaphas himself is simply a foreshadowing of the great chief priest Jesus. Jesus is the One who has really orchestrated His own death. What Caiaphas does is simply fulfill his own modest vocation so that when the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is standing before him Caiaphas makes sure that he puts Him to death. Thus even though Caiaphas did it out of malice and in opposition to God, he fulfilled God's will according to his vocation as chief priest that year.

Secondly, God has called Pontius Pilate to be the governor of Judea. Since there is no governing authority except that authority which God has established God has made Pontius Pilate governor of Judea. God has called Pontius Pilate to administer justice in Judea according to His Natural Law which He has written on the heart of Pontius Pilate and indeed on the hearts of all of the Gentiles. Pontius Pilate fulfills his vocation when Jesus stands before him.

First of all, Pilate finds Jesus not guilty. He finds Jesus not guilty repeatedly. But because Caesar has commanded him to keep the peace and because the people are threatening to riot if he lets Jesus go, he sentences Jesus to death anyway. Pilate sins when he does this. He is outside of his vocation. God called him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. Here he is punishing One who has done right. Yet in spite of Pilate's sin against his own vocation our Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of heaven and earth, fulfills His own vocation as a subject of the Roman Empire and submits Himself to the governing authority in spite of the injustice of the governing authority. When our Lord submits Himself to the governing authority as Romans 13 and 1Peter 2 command, the result is His crucifixion and your everlasting salvation. If our Lord submitted to the government in spite of its injustice to Him and the result was your everlasting salvation, who do you think you are to resist and refuse to obey the governing authority when it is unjust to you?

By fulfilling His office as prophet, Jesus generated the circumstances that led to His death. That means that Jesus had Himself put to death. He did it using the hand and sins of His enemies, but He did it nonetheless. When He does this He fulfills His other two vocations, that of priest and that of king.

Let us talk about priest first.

When Jesus has Himself put to death, in spite of the fact that Caiaphas is publicly chief priest that year, Jesus shows Himself to be the real chief priest in charge. Caiaphas would not have opposed or hated Jesus had it not been for the preaching of Jesus. Jesus preached and Caiaphas and the others hated Him. Therefore Jesus generated the necessary conditions to have Himself put to death. Therefore even though

it looks like Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas and the enemies of Jesus are putting Him to death in reality He is having Himself put to death.

When Jesus dies He is offering the great atoning sacrifice that is better than any of the atoning sacrifices of the Old Testament. Since the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were preparatory they served among other things as education tools of what God expected of sacrifices of atonement. Sacrifices had to be perfect specimens of their kind and they had to shed their blood and die. When this was accomplished atonement for another sinner was made. Jesus was the perfect specimen of His kind. He had no sin. He was God in the flesh. He shed His blood. He died. By being the culminating sacrifice He not only accomplished the atonement of a single worshipper, but accomplished the atonement of the whole world. Because Jesus orchestrated His own death He is the One who put Himself to death. Because He put Himself to death, He is the One who offered the sacrifice. So in addition to being the victim of the sacrifice, He is also the priest who performs the sacrifice. Jesus fulfilled His office of priest.

When Jesus fulfilled His office of priest, He atoned for the whole world's sins. Now we know that such forgiveness is imputed only for those who believe in Jesus. Nevertheless Jesus is the source of forgiveness for those who believe in Him. Since Jesus is the source of such forgiveness He takes away their sins and by doing so takes away the cause of their death. There is therefore no option for believers in Jesus except to live until He returns and be transformed into everlasting beings or die and rise again when He returns and be transformed into everlasting beings. Either way, you are becoming everlasting beings and He is the reason you are becoming everlasting beings.

That means that there is a group of people who are everlasting. Jesus has made them everlasting by His death. They form a group or dare I say it a Kingdom. They are a kingdom where Jesus reigns in their hearts by faith. They are an everlasting kingdom because they are everlasting. It is just like the angel Gabriel prophesied to Mary. Since Jesus is the One who took away their sin and made them everlasting He is the founder of the everlasting Kingdom. Since He is the founder of the everlasting Kingdom, He is its king!

And there are signs in the crucifixion that Jesus is King. He wears a scarlet robe at least for a little bit. He holds a scepter in His hand at least for a while. People bow down to Him and say, "Hail, King of the Jews." They may be doing it in mockery, but they are doing it nonetheless. Just as Pilate and Caiaphas did not intend to be players in the divine plan, they wound up doing so anyway.

The chief sign that Jesus is king during His passion is that everyone is doing His will. Even when they think that they are doing their own will, they are really doing His will. He wants to fulfill the will of the Father. The will of the Father is that He should die to atone for the world's sins. Jesus is fulfilling that vocation. He performs the Father's will. And so the Father's will is His will. But then Jesus gets all of these other people to do His will. Everyone from Judas to the Roman soldiers who drove the nails are doing His will for Him. What is that if not the markings of a true king, a true king who convinces even His enemies to do His will and fools them into believing that while they are doing His will they are doing their own.

And then throughout the crucifixion, Jesus wears the badge of His office. He wears a crown. He fulfills the vocation of King.

And that is what vocation has to do with your salvation. Jesus fulfills the vocations that the Father has given to Him and the result is His death and your everlasting salvation. Jesus fulfills His vocations even though they require Him to give His life. Even the Lord's vocations required Him to do things that were unpleasant and that He did not particularly want to do, but He did them nonetheless in grace and mercy toward you to save you.

With that in mind then go about your vocations that God has extended to you. Even when you suffer in doing them, you are suffering in the sufferings of your Lord Christ. He hallows those sufferings and brings them unto the resurrection of the dead. And if you should die in the course of your vocations, then you are no different than your Lord and show yourself to be a true disciple of Him who raises the dead.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.