

Being Called, Transformed, and Sent

24 January 2025, Friday Evensong, Conversion of St. Paul

The Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul reminds us of the transformative power of God's call, as seen in two profound biblical moments: Jeremiah's commissioning as a prophet (Jeremiah 1:4-10) and Saul's dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-22). These stories highlight God's ability to call, equip, and send individuals for His divine mission, regardless of their past or perceived inadequacies.

Jeremiah's initial reaction to God's call mirrors our own hesitations. "I am only a boy," he protests, expressing doubt in his abilities. Yet, God reassures him, "Do not be afraid...for I am with you to deliver you." Similarly, Saul's life of zealous persecution of Christians makes him an unlikely candidate for God's work. But God's grace is not bound by human limitations. Saul is chosen to proclaim Christ's name to the Gentiles, kings, and Israel—a mission that reshapes the course of history. These stories remind us that God's call is not based on human qualifications but on His divine purposes.

The transformation that follows God's call is deeply personal and life-altering. For Jeremiah, it comes with a touch to his mouth, equipping him to speak God's words. For Saul, it begins with blindness and is completed with restored sight, both physical and spiritual, through Ananias' faithful obedience. In both cases, God provides the strength, vision, and tools necessary for the task ahead.

Fear is a natural response to such a call. Jeremiah fears his youth and inexperience, while Ananias hesitates to approach Saul, a known persecutor. Yet, God's assurance, "I am with you," dispels fear and enables obedience. When we answer God's call, we are empowered to overcome doubts and face challenges, knowing we are not alone.

The mission God entrusts is always greater than ourselves. Jeremiah is appointed "over nations and kingdoms," while Paul's ministry extends to the Gentiles and the known world. Both were sent to proclaim a message of hope and transformation to all peoples. Their lives remind us that God's purpose is global, inclusive, and liberating.

On this feast, we are invited to reflect on how God is calling us. Whether we feel unworthy or inadequate, God's transformative power can equip and send us for His mission. Like Paul and Jeremiah, may we respond with faith, allowing God to use us to build, plant, and proclaim His kingdom. Amen.