

LEAD THE MISSION



Series: Lead the Mission

Message: Following after God



Become a leader in The Salvation Army

In the hands of God, a stick can split a sea, a stone can slay a giant, a loaf of bread can feed a crowd. Imagine what could happen when you place your life in the hands of God.

Explore becoming an Officer or Auxiliary Lieutenant today.

Visit www.salvos.org.au/ComeAlive for more information



Topic:	Following God in to Ministry
Main Point:	God has plans for our lives
Intended Response:	Follow where God is leading you
Key Text	Ephesians 2:10

Introduction

What makes you come alive? What charges you with energy that makes you want to make the world a better place or fuels you with passion and encouragement that you need to share with others? This message is written to stir the hearts and minds of leaders to follow God into ministry within The Salvation Army.

A. Calling

- Understanding calling
- The starting point of calling is different for all of us
- Embracing God's call fills you with purpose and passion

Point One: Calling begins by following after God placed desires.

B. Discerning the call

- It normally begins with desire
- The church recognises the call and helps draw it out
- An opportunity normally arises for you to step out in faith

Point Two: Calling grows clearer overtime.

C. Feeling called to serve God through The Salvation Army

- Dreams and visions need the right environment to flourish
- The Salvation Army opens up so many different ways to serve God
- We are living in one of the greatest times of opportunity

Point Three: The Salvation Army is a great ministry environment to serve God in.

Teaching Illustrations and props:

This sermon uses songs from the movie *The Greatest Showman*. You can play the clips from YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tr2fqe7t6PM>. Often these links change so it's encouraged you rent or buy a copy of the DVD. You can also learn more about the latest trends and tips for Officership and Leadership recruitment on the podcast *More about Officership*: <http://www.salvostudios.com/podcasts>



Introduction

Welcome everyone,

Who here has seen the movie The Greatest Showman? Who has seen it more than twice? Three times? Anyone with kids under 10 would have most likely seen it *500 times* by now 😊

It's a musical about how P. T. Barnum started his famous circus in 1870. It has a great cast and is full of fantastic songs. One of the most powerful songs from the movie is called *Come Alive*. I'd like you to listen to the lyrics and see what stands out to you:

Play song "Come Alive" from The Greatest Showman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tr2fqe7t6PM>

4:59 min



...great song, isn't it? I love the chorus of that song "Come Alive". It has so much hope, energy and optimism. I also love the line in verse four,

"I see it in your eyes, you believe that lie that you need to hide your face. Afraid to step outside so you lock the door, but don't you stay that way"

"But don't you stay that way" – I love that, it's a song calling people to more, to let their light burn bright, to step towards their dreams. Jesus said in Matthew 5:14,

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill that cannot be hidden"


That's a challenging verse. We know Jesus is the light of the world, shining the way for all of humankind to come back to God (Jn 8:12), but

	<p>here in this verse, the Scripture makes it clear that God intends for us to be the light of Jesus for others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be a light in our workplaces, • to be a light in our communities, • to be a light in our street and to our neighbours. <p>We've all been called by God to share the love of Jesus with everyone – we're not meant to hide that love away.</p> <p>Jesus goes on to say,</p> <p><i>“No one lights a lamp and hides it under a bed” (Matt 5:15)</i></p> <p>Jesus expects us to shine bright, to be full of life and joy – it's a way we can testify of God's kindness towards us.</p> <p>Can I ask, what makes you come alive? What charges you with energy that makes you want to make the world a better place or fuels you with passion and encouragement that you need to share with others?</p>
Transition	<p>Today, I'd like to share a few thoughts on following God into the ministry and plans He has for us. One of the words we use to capture all of this is the word calling. So before we jump in, let me first clarify what I mean by calling.</p>
A. Calling	<p>Calling can be understood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a growing desire in your heart to do something you feel God wants you to do (Ps 37:4, Matt 9:9). <p>Many people say it is a sense that God is leading you somewhere (Acts 15:28),</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ perhaps to a new community, ○ or to go into a full-time ministry, ○ it could be God is calling you to study, to develop and steward the gift over your life, <p>and no matter how hard you try you can't stop that sense that there's something more, something drawing you, that's calling.</p> <p>One of the things about calling is that it is very diverse. When we look at people in the Bible, you will notice they all have different starting points:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moses was in the outback wilderness of Midian (Exo 3:1-2), • Joshua began his journey in a tent (Exo 33:11), • David was in the fields minding his father's sheep (1 Sam 16:11), • Elisha was working his dad's farm with oxen (1 Kings 19:19), • Isaiah had an opened eye vision of heaven (Isa 6:1), • Daniel was a prisoner of war (Dan 1:3-6), • Peter was fishing (Mk 1:16) • Paul was out and about causing trouble for people (Acts 9:1-3). <p>All different beginnings but what you will notice when you follow their stories, they have a few things in common due to God's calling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were called during the ordinary daily routines of life, • They were called to follow God without knowing the end outcome or how it was exactly going to play out in their lives. <p>They were all called to more. And God has a calling for each one of us,</p> <p><i>"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do".</i></p> <p>When you embrace the call God has for you, you will feel alive with purpose and passion for God's work.</p> <p>Now that doesn't mean to say that it will be easy. Following after God can be challenging at the best of times, but our lives can reflect the joy of God as a source of life for others to enjoy.</p> <p>The Scriptures say in Ephesians 2:4-5,</p> <p><i>"God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ".</i></p> <p>And part of <i>"being alive in Christ"</i> is living out of a sense of calling and purpose. And that's not for the select few: God has a plan and purpose for each one of us.</p> <p>Can I ask, "are you following God's call"? Are you following the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life?</p>
Point 1.	Calling begins by following after God placed desires.
Transition	<p>Question is, "what path does God want you to follow? What plan does God have for you in this season? And how do you know what that is? How do you discern that God's leading you into a new season?</p>

<p>B. Discerning the call</p>	<p>The call to ministry is fluid and hard to understand at times. For some, it comes as a reoccurring thought, a pulling of one's heart in a specific direction.</p> <p>For others, it comes in a vivid experience with God, or through the encouragement of another person. I've often heard people describe the beginning of their calling like:</p> <p><i>"I feel there is more."</i> <i>"I know God is calling me to something different."</i> <i>"I want to serve God."</i></p> <p>I like the verse in Acts 15:28 how it says,</p> <p><i>"It seemed right to us and to the Holy Spirit"</i></p> <p>Calling doesn't need to be complicated, it can be as simple as <i>it just seems right</i>.</p> <p>And calling clarifies over time. No one starts out following after God knowing exactly what comes next. So you don't need to know one hundred per cent. Calling begins by following after a God placed desire.</p> <p>I also like Philippians 3:15,</p> <p><i>"And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you"</i></p> <p>It's comforting to know that God will direct us but it's also important to remember just as it's easier to steer a moving car, God generally waits for us to take a step of faith before we clearly understand where He is leading us.</p> <p>Another pattern I've discerned over the years when it comes to following God's call is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It usually begins with desire and is supported by • A conversation with someone who sees God's hand over a situation (Acts 13:2), then • An opportunity arises for us to step out in faith and give it a shot (Mk 1:16-18). <p><i>Insert story: share your story of how you sensed God's leading. For consistency, try and put it in the framework of 1) desire, 2) having an encouraging conversation, and 3) taking a step of faith / taking the opportunity God presented.</i></p>
<p>Point 2.</p>	<p>Calling grows clearer overtime.</p>

Transition	Now, I can't talk about discovering and following calling without talking about being called to ministry in The Salvation Army...
C. Feeling called to serve God through The Salvation Army	<p>What I love about The Army is that it places you in an environment where you get to serve God in so many different ways.</p> <p>In the Army you get to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead churches, • Help people on the street, • Bring hope and opportunity to so many, • Grow as a leader, • Have amazing and exciting opportunities across the world, • Bring true, measurable and lasting change to our societies, • Be part of a global mission force, • Represent one of Australia's most trusted names, • Enjoy an endless variety of ministry expression, • Express God's kingdom. <p>(and yes, it is challenging but it's so worth it to serve God!)</p> <p>I don't know if you've ever had that feeling of knowing there's more inside of you, something of significance, a leading of God. Dreams and visions from God need the right environment to come to life.</p> <p>One of the things about The Salvation Army, and we're by no means perfect – no church is, but being a leader in The Salvation Army opens up so many different ways to serve God.</p> <p>If you've ever considered becoming an Officer, Leader, or Auxiliary Lieutenant – do something about it. We are living in one of the greatest times of opportunity for The Salvation Army, and we need more leaders, men and women who can help lead and shape our movement to greater levels of effectiveness for God's work.</p>
POINT 3	The Salvation Army is a great ministry environment to serve God in.
Conclusion	<p>As we close I'm reminded of another line in that song...</p> <p><i>Come one! Come all! Come in! Come on!</i> <i>To anyone who's bursting with a dream</i> <i>Come one! Come all! <u>You hear, The call</u></i></p> <p>Do you hear the call? If you do, you've got to do something about it.</p>

	<p>Just imagine being released to follow what God's placed in your heart, you'll come alive with purpose.</p> <p>If that's you, and I believe there are people here today that this message is for, if that's you, if God has been nudging your heart come forward and speak to us.</p> <p>Respond today.</p> <p>I'd love to have a conversation with you, hear your story, hear what's in your heart. We'd love to see you released into what God has for you next.</p> <p>You might be sitting there thinking, this is not for me today – that's okay, but you have a name bouncing around in your head of someone that you think God's hand is on for ministry and leadership.</p> <p>Can I encourage you to give them one of these cards:</p> <div data-bbox="596 916 1190 1090">  </div> <p>Put your name on it, tick one of the boxes (or all three), and hand it to them prayerfully. God often uses the encouraging actions of others to open up new possibilities for us consider.</p> <p>Let's take a moment to pray and ask God how He wants us to respond.</p>
<p>Prayer</p>	<p>Father, we know you smile when people without food are fed, when those who are cold are clothed, when those sleeping on the streets or in cars are given shelter. We know you smile when we love those people consider unlovable, when we make friends with those without friends, when we commit our lives to following after your ways, your plans, your purpose.</p> <p>Lord, as we still our hearts before you, speak to us. Let us know where you are calling us. Let us know who you are calling so we can encourage them as well. Lead us in the plans and purposes you have for us; we ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.</p>



Matt 5:14

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

Matt 5:15

No one lights a lamp and hides it under a bed.

Psa 37:4

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Matt 9:9

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

Acts 15:28

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements.

Exo 3:1-2

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

Exo 33:11

The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

1 Sam 16:11

So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

1 Kings 19:19

So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him.

Isa 6:1

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

Dan 1:3-6

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles, youths in whom was no defect, who were good-looking, showing intelligence in every *branch of wisdom*, endowed with understanding and discerning knowledge, and who had ability for serving in the king's court; and *he ordered him* to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king appointed for them a daily ration from the king's choice food and from the wine which he drank, and *appointed* that they should be educated three years, at the end of which they were to enter the king's personal service. Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Mk 1:16

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

Acts 9:1-3

Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him;

Eph 2:4-5

God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ.

Acts 15:28

It seemed right to us and to the Holy Spirit.

Phil 3:15

And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

Acts 13:2

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Mk 1:16-18

As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.