

Pentecost Sunday, 2008  
Good Hope Lutheran Church  
Acts 2

Let us begin our time together with a word of prayer:

Heavenly Father, in the beginning you created us and all living things, and in these last days you have saved us by the gift of your Son. Today we remember how you also poured your Holy Spirit out on the first disciples on Pentecost, and we pray—pour that same Spirit out upon us. Forgive us, renew us, sanctify and send us. Call us to yourself, and make us your own, this day forth and forevermore. In the name of Jesus Christ, AMEN.

My topic this morning is the following: Jobs, careers, and vocations. And how to tell the difference. Jobs, careers, vocations, and how to tell the difference, when I was in high school. Long ago and faraway. Well back in high school I worked at McDonald's, yippee. And I got to the point where I could make you a Big Mac sandwich with my eyes closed. And at 11:30 on a Friday night?—I often did. McDonald's, was a job. It could sometimes be amusing, it could often be tedious, it was always a little on the greasy side. But it was a job, and I was getting ready for college, and I needed the money. I quit, as soon as I had a chance for something better.

Now I have a career. A career is also a job—amusing and tedious by turns, something that pays the bills because frankly who doesn't need the money—a career is inevitably also a job; but more. Presumably, hopefully, a career is the sort of job you can actually enjoy somehow. More than money, a career should offer a sense of meaning, and purpose, and fulfillment to you personally, and I believe it must also offer something of value to the world as a whole. Build a Big Mac sandwich every Friday night—not very fulfilling to me personally, and of no real long term value to you, either. Speak of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to someone planning a wedding, or hoping for a healing, or grieving a death, or making a major life decision—well, that would be fulfilling to me, and by the grace of God it may also be something that matters to you as well?

So a job—you may do it, for a while, just for the money, no shame in that. A career, you still need the money, sure, but more than that you need to know that what you do matters somehow. You need to know that what you do means something, and I challenge our young people soon to

graduate, to think about this. You can do most any job for money, but can you find a job that is also a career, something that fulfills you and even more importantly really does matter to people in the world around you?

And then there's vocation. Job, career—vocation, and a vocation is your deepest and truest calling in life. A vocation may never earn you any money out there—in fact, I'm going to suggest in a few moments your truest vocation will never earn you a dime—but that doesn't matter, because this is who you are. And you can't be, anything else. Jobs, careers, even the best career—it's merely what you do. A vocation, is who you've been called to be. And you can't be, anything else.

A Little League coach. A PTA volunteer. A piano teacher. You have gifts, and they have to be used. You have gifts, and it's just part of who you are, like breathing! And putting these gifts to good use is part of why you are here. It doesn't pay. It doesn't have to. It's who you are, and what you have been called to be. Little League coach, PTA volunteer, piano teacher—mother. Happy Mother's Day, by the way, mother. Father too, grandparent. Husband, wife. Vocation.

And underlying these vocations. The calling that simply transcends all other callings. Is the fact that first and foremost you have been called, to be a child of God. That is your truest and deepest vocation in life—it is in fact why you are here. Not just here, but HERE—on earth, you have been called to be God's child, His ambassador to this world and His friend forever at home in heaven. Your truest deepest calling in life, is to now be a child of God, through Jesus Christ who died and rose again.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who for us and for our salvation came down to earth, to live among us as one of us. He worked as a carpenter as a young man—that was His job. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, welcomed the outcast—that's what He did as an adult, that was His career, you might say. He died on a cross, then on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day rose again to bring us back to God our Father, that was His vocation. That was His mission, His God-given calling in this world. And today on Pentecost Sunday, we remember how Jesus our ascended Lord poured from heaven

above His Holy Spirit upon those first disciples, making them Christians, adopting them as God's children. We remember our own Baptisms, when Jesus did the same thing for us—pouring out His Spirit like water, forgiving us changing us adopting us. Calling us, calling you, naming you: Child of God, now and forever. On Pentecost we celebrate the plan of salvation God has for this world and we take a moment to understand. That plan of salvation now involves you, in a very personal way. You are saved by Christ. And you are summoned by Christ, commissioned to take this message of salvation with you wherever you go; and to let it change the way you live.

So, when you go to work tomorrow, remember. You are a child of God—let that truth guide you, let your new identity shape your attitudes and change your behavior. When you are at home, with the family; when you're on the field, watching the game; when you're budgeting your time or your money please remember. You are a child of God. It's what you do *and* how you do it. It's where you're going *and* how you're going to get there. Everywhere you find yourself today, and every day. Words and deeds, thoughts and feelings, hopes and dreams and plans and worries, and your ultimate destiny too. It's all wrapped up in Pentecost, and Baptism, it's all a part of your calling to be a child of God, this day forward and forevermore.

On this day by the grace of God may you come to acknowledge your calling, to be His child; and may you then by His grace grow to fulfill it. In the name of Jesus Christ, AMEN.