**SERMON**

**Captain Ben Ellis (Territorial Candidates Officer)**

**Key Verse: ‘But no matter what, your will must be mine.’ (**Luke 22:42b *The Passion* translation)

**Supporting Scripture: Exodus Chapters 3 and 4**

I wonder what you wanted to be when you were younger? For some you may have wanted to become a teacher, a doctor, an actor. For some of you may have said an astronaut, some people may have even said Superman or Wonder Woman. When I was asked this when I was younger, my response, so I have been told, was “the General of The Salvation Army!” You must realise I was only very young when I said this; as I got older this was not my dream at all!In truth, as I grew up into my teens, I didn’t know what I wanted to be or do, I had no real plan. I remember sitting in my final assembly in Sixth Form not knowing what I was going to do. My friends had plans to go to university, some were starting apprenticeships, others were going to the world of business; but me, I sat in this service thinking ‘God, if you have a plan for me right now, you better start revealing it’.I wonder if you have spoken similar words in your life. Not knowing which direction to take in life, and not knowing or understanding the plan that God has for you?

It is, in my view, that this is when you need to really have your ears open to God’s voice, to be alert to all that he has to say and **be willing** to take the time and wait on him.We read in scripture of the countless accounts of men and women who heard the voice of God and were willing to follow where he led them.We read of Moses, in Exodus chapters 3 and 4, having a wonderful encounter of God. God calls Moses to lead his people out of slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Throughout these chapters we see Moses giving so many reasons why he should not be the man who God is calling. But God responds in love saying, “I will be with you.”

 **THE TENSION OF WILL**

You may have known a time, or you may be going through the struggle of letting go of the plans that you have made, in light of God’s plans. It could be the security of the home we have created, the job we have worked for, the money that we are earning, which is success in the world’s eyes. Are you willing to set all these aside to trust in God? Are you willing to say to the Father, as John Gowans beautifully writes:

*Nothing can I achieve, nothing attain;He that without Thee builds, labours in vain;****Shatter my own design,Shaping a plan divine,****Come to this heart of mine,*

*Saviour, again. (SASB 600)*

**THE TENSION OF SELF-WORTH**

And the thoughts creep in “I’m too young,” “I’m not smart enough,” “I’m not good enough,” “I can’t do that!” Thoughts that could possibly be in your mind today. It may be that in the past people have spoken similar words of lies over you so that you struggle to believe God would even consider wanting you.

There are so many truths found in scripture. We are God’s masterpiece, and he created us perfectly. But are you willing to trust the one who made you, the one who formed you? He promises to equip you and empower you in order to fulfil his will. It might also be that you have heard God’s call but have struggled to believe that he has spoken to you, so you are waiting for one more sign, one more nudge. You might have struggled with this for some time, for some years. Maybe today is the day for you to say, **“but no matter what, your will must be mine.” Y**ou need to again listen to the gentle voice of God and then follow.Agnes Parke Heathcote writes:

*I heard a voice so gently calling:Take up thy cross and follow me.A tempest on my heart was falling,A living cross this was to be;I struggled sore, I struggled vainly,No other light my eyes could see.****I'll follow Thee, of life the giver,I'll follow Thee, suffering redeemer,I'll follow Thee, deny Thee never,By Thy grace I'll follow Thee.*** *(SASB 589)*

I wonder today is God calling you to follow?

Are you willing to follow where he leads?You might be saying “I’m too old, I’ve had my chance, surely God CANNOT use me?!”

Well maybe God might be asking you to support those in prayer or be a voice of encouragement to someone who maybe struggling with their calling. It might be that you could be ‘that nudge’ and offer that verse from scripture which might have an impact on someone’s life today.

Are you willing?I wonder though, is God calling you to Officership or Territorial Envoyship?

Are you willing to follow God’s call?

Don’t miss this opportunity today to respond.

He who created you. Who loves you. Who called you will also equip you and you can trust him with your life.

Speak to your Corps Officer/Leader who will be more than willing to have a conversation with you. Or you can contact your Divisional Leaders or contact us in the Candidates Unit. May God Bless you today, and the days ahead as we look to trust in God, knowing he will be with us. Are you willing to follow?