

“Divine Appointments”?

Greg Albrecht

Some people speak fondly of a specific date when God “called” them for the first time. Such memories must have been a long time ago of course because people today mostly receive texts, not calls on their phones. And often, the message is no more than a cute symbol (emoji) or shorthand acronym.

Others refer to times when God set them up with a “divine appointment.” True confession—when I hear *divine appointment*, my eyes rotate like the reels on a slot machine (please forgive the metaphor).

What is a *divine appointment*? Does God schedule your appointment next Tuesday afternoon with ____? Is this an edict? A “do this if you know what’s good for you” announcement?

It seems that *divine appointments* are too often interpreted as confirmation for whatever the recipient was planning to do anyway. And *voilà!*

Their will is validated as God’s will. How terribly convenient!

But when the gospel speaks of Jesus *calling* us to be his disciples, it is more of an invitation than a directive. A bidding, a proposal, an appeal and a request—not a line-in-the-sand command or demand. Jesus opens his arms and beckons us to follow him. It’s a calling, yes, but one to which we are *invited*.

The call to follow Jesus is an invitation to a relationship, wherein we grow and mature in the grace and mercy of Jesus. This growth in our calling is empowered by God’s grace. Our spiritual vision—our eyes—are opened and our blindness healed. We experience spiritual enlightenment.

The narrative we choose about who God is and how God relates to us is important, and the in-house vocabulary we adopt can limit our spiritual vision.

We may become addicted to explanations of God, what God does and how God does it. We may seek absolute, black-and-white explanations from religious authorities who believe they are ordained to unveil all the mysteries of God. *But the mysteries of God spoken of in the Bible are not beyond knowing—they are heavenly truths revealed to lead us out of our blindness and darkness into the Light.*

The mysteries of God and our calling are not revealed through bumper-sticker slogans like “God will never give you more than you can handle,” “God helps those who help themselves” or “everything happens for a reason.” These misleading pseudo-explanations can obstruct spiritual growth. What we need is to hear a gospel that opens our eyes and heals our hearts.

As with his first disciples, so it is today. Jesus calls us into a relationship with him. Let’s hear his invitation, take that call, and follow him! □

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Jesus said, “Follow me!”