

## Elder Clarke Lee's Call To The Ministry

It is not the responsibility of the church to choose who will be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The calling must come from God, and from experience I can tell you, if you are called to the ministry of God, God will make it plain to you that this is your duty. I can say this from my own experience.

My own experience, of being called to be a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, was long in coming to fruition, but it came surely, in God's own time. My first inclination that this was to be my lot in life was soon after I joined the church fellowship at 17 years of age. The day I was baptized, when I came up out of the water, I saw in a vision a white dove come down from heaven, lighting upon my shoulder, and putting his beak in my ear and speaking to me.

The second was I found myself lost in sin: I promised God that if He would forgive me, and deliver me out of sin, that I would do whatever He wanted me to do, with the very thought of serving in the ministry coming into my mind as I made this vow to God.

The third was one night I dreamed that I was in the heavens looking down upon the earth, and I was standing beside a great rock. That rock had a stream of water running out of it and falling to the earth far below. As I looked over the precipice, I could see the stream of water breaking into smaller streams and finally into droplets of water and they were falling upon a pool of water upon the earth. I remember the great power I felt as the water poured forth from the rock as it made the very hairs of my body stand up.

The next was just a few years before I began to exercise, I dreamed one night that my body was transformed into a pitcher pump. The clapper was down in my heart and the rod to the handle came up through and out the top of my head, with the handle attached to it and hanging down my back. Then I saw a great white hand come down from heaven and take hold of the handle and begin to pump. Each time the hand pumped there was great pressure in my chest as though it would burst asunder, but rather a little stream of water came running out of my mouth.

The next dream came and it was me, in an out of body experience, at church where God laid his hand upon me and the words came out of my mouth so fast that I could barely keep up with what was being said. I made this confession to the brethren at Oak Grove who gave me time to exercise, but the time was not right, I was in the wrong place, and the Lord had not yet revealed to me what true preaching was like.

Because of Sacred Harp singing and us visiting with other groups who sang Sacred Harp music, since they had prayer at these sings my home church said I was participating in other religions and expelled me from the fellowship. I traveled to many different denominations and places for about five years, but I was continually drawn back to Mars Hill Primitive Baptist Church where I finally rejoined the New Testament church fellowship. During those years when we were out of the church fellowship, we were invited to Mt Pisgah Primitive Baptist Church in Alabama. The day we visited the minister who preached, Elder Ben Keeble, opened the bible and began to preach from the word of God, which was something I had never seen before. Every time he wanted a supporting scripture the bible just automatically turned to the right place. This happened so many times until he finally stopped and stated that he had never had that experience before. I knew that day that that was what the preaching of the gospel was about and that it must come from the bible.

A few months later we were at the same church for a Sacred Harp Sing. Brother John Ehteridge led the hymn 422 in the Sacred Harp book, The Grieved Soul, the lyrics are: Come my soul and let us try for a little season, every burden to lay by, come and let us reason. What is this that cast thee down? Who are they that grieve thee? Speak and let the worst be known, ***Speaking may relieve thee***. When we got to that last line. I was melted to tears knowing that I must give in and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brother John saw it also and he melted into tears too.

Not long after I joined Mars Hill Church, I confessed my need to speak and ease the pain in my heart. They gave me place to speak, and God moved to make me speak from the scripture in a way that everyone knew It was not Clarke speaking, for I am very slow of speech. In a short time, they licensed me to speak, and a short time later they ordained me to the ministry to the office of Elder, and I was immediately called to pastor Big Creek Church. Later I was called to serve at Empire Church, and lastly to pastor of Mars Hill Church. So, I know in my heart, God does the choosing of those He would have to fill the offices of the New Testament Church. All Praise and glory to his name! Amen!