

Introduction

People of God, when a minister is ordained, the first questions asked of him focus on both his **private** sense of calling and the **public** confirmation of that call. When Pastor Moody was ordained, I asked him:

1. “Have you been led, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love for God...?”

This question concerns his internal sense of calling—his private confirmation from the Lord.

2. “Will you assume this office, believing that the Church's call is God's call to the ministry of Word and Sacrament?”

This follows with public confirmation—the recognition of God's call through the Church.

This pattern of private calling and public confirmation is ancient and biblical. It is reflected in **1 Samuel 10**, where Saul is first privately confirmed as Israel's anointed king through three signs—the **donkeys, the bread, and the Spirit**; and then publicly confirmed by lot before the whole nation.

Today, we are just going to focus on the private aspect of Saul's calling, giving due attention to how the three signs of donkeys, bread, and the Spirit relate to three offices of

King, Priest, and Prophet. We will see how they are fulfilled perfectly in Christ, are also reflected in our own lives as Christians—those who share in His anointing.

Saul's Private Confirmation (1 Samuel 10:1-16)

1 Samuel 10 begins with Samuel anointing Saul by pouring oil on his head and kissing him, He declares that the Lord has chosen him to reign over His people and save them from their enemies.

Christ's Fulfillment

Now Saul was anointed with oil, but **Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit** at His baptism by John. Samuel's kiss symbolized Saul's adoption into his family, but at Jesus' baptism, **the Father declared from Heaven**, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus is **eternally the Son of God**.

Saul's anointing is then confirmed by three signs, which not only validate Saul's calling but also reveal the weight of his office and the truth of the person and office of The Christ.

The First Sign – Rachel’s Tomb and Donkeys

The first sign occurs where two men tell Saul that the lost donkeys have been found. Saul’s search for the donkey’s parallels Israel’s search for a king. Once Saul is identified as Israel’s king, the search for the donkeys also comes to an end.

This conversation about the donkeys took place by Rachel’s tomb. In Genesis 35, God promised Jacob that kings would come from his body. Immediately after this promise, Rachel died giving birth to a son of his body, Benjamin. Her tomb stood as witness to that promise of king. Now, generations later, that promise is being fulfilled as Saul, a Benjamite, is raised up as Israel’s first king.

There is another connection between donkeys and kingship. In Genesis 49 Jacob prophesies:

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet...”

But what follows is often overlooked:

“Binding his foal to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine...”

In the ancient world, tying a donkey to a vine—especially a **choice vine**—was a sign of peace and prosperity. It meant the land was so abundant and secure that even valuable vines could be used to tether animals without concern.

The presence of donkeys listed with the scepter and the grape vines in Gen 49 signify a kingdom of peace. But Saul is from Benjamin not Judah. His reign was only a **placeholder** until David, the true king from Judah, was established.

Thus the first sign that Saul is God's anointed is a combination of the finding of the donkeys and Rachel's tomb.

Christ as King – The Donkeys and His Triumphal Entry

This is fulfilled in **Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday**, when He rode on a donkey to establish His reign.

Zechariah 9:9 says

*“Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey.”*

The crowds then cried out:

“Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38)

But Christ's reign brings more than peace—it brings **justice and protection**. A true King doesn't just make peace; He defends His people and crushes their enemies.

The **Heidelberg Catechism** affirms this truth:

*“Christ is our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and who **defends and preserves** us in the redemption He obtained for us.”*

As the Good Shepherd, Christ wields His rod and staff to defend His flock while preparing a table for them in the presence of their enemies (Psalm 23:5). Christ’s reign secures both peace and justice. He shall reign until all His enemies are made His footstool. And then there will be everlasting peace.

The Second Sign: Bread and Priest-Kingly Duties

The second sign given to Saul is **the bread** offered by three men going up to Bethel. They give him **two loaves—the priest’s portion**—just as Samuel had given him the priestly thigh the day before.

Though Saul is **not a priest**, this sign points forward to **Christ**, the true Priest-King. Yet Saul’s role as king still carries **priestly responsibilities**. He is to **sustain the people** by providing bread, unite them in peace, and protect them so they can enjoy that peace.

Psalm 23 paints this picture: **“He makes me lie down in green pastures... You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.”** Like a shepherd, Saul is to nourish and defend God’s people.

Christ as Priest – The Bread and the Lord’s Supper

The second sign, the bread given to Saul by the three men on their way to Bethel, points to **Christ as our eternal High Priest**. This bread, the priest’s portion, foreshadowed the **sacrificial offering of Christ Himself**.

In the upper room, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said:

“This is My body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (Luke 22:19)

This moment did more than institute the Lord’s Supper. It connected the salvation Jesus accomplished on the cross in His body to the sacramental bread He gives His Church.

As Jesus declared:

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” (John 6:51)

As **our Priest**, Christ offers Himself as the bread of life—sustaining His people and securing peace and fellowship with God.

The Heidelberg Catechism affirms:

“Christ is our only High Priest, who by the one sacrifice of His body has redeemed us, and who continually intercedes for us before the Father.”

Through His atoning sacrifice and ongoing intercession, we now enjoy lasting peace and communion with God, which is confirmed to us in the sacramental bread of His Body at the Lord's Table.

The Third Sign – the Spirit

The third and final sign is the most transformative. Saul encounters a group of prophets, and the **Spirit of the Lord comes upon him, turning him into another man** (1 Samuel 10:6), enabling him to prophesy. This is not the regenerating work of the New Birth, but a temporary anointing—an equipping for the office to which he was called.

Christ as Prophet – The Spirit and the Proclamation of the Gospel

In the same way, the Spirit anointed Christ to be our chief Prophet and Teacher, to fully reveal to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption.

Isaiah 61 describes this prophetic ministry of the Word as liberating those who are in bondage.

*“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;*

*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound...
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

Christ not only proclaims freedom—He accomplishes it with His prophetic Word. His word is able to liberate because it is not only powerful, but because it is the perfect revelation of God Himself.

As John says:

“No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son...He has declared Him.” (John 1:18)

Jesus also unveils the mystery of our salvation, which has been hidden through the ages but now fully revealed. Paul declares:

“The mystery which was hidden from ages and generations has now been revealed to His saints...Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:26-27)

The fullest expression of Christ’s prophetic office is this great revelation—that through union with Him, we are liberated from our sins, given the final and true revelation of God, and made partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Adoption – Saul as a Son of Samuel

As these signs unfold, a profound transformation takes place. Saul not only becomes another man, but he also belongs to a new family. When the people witness Saul prophesying, they say:

“What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1 Samuel 10:11)

But then another man asked:

“And who is their father?” (v. 12)

Saul is the son of Kish. But he is with the prophets. And who is their father? Samuel is the father of the prophets. Since Saul is now among the prophets, he is no longer the son of Kish, he is the son of Samuel.

This explains why the text says that it was Saul’s uncle who greets him and not his father when he got home. It was most likely Saul’s father Kish who greeted him, but Saul’s reception of the Spirit signifies that he has been adopted into the house and family of God, and Samuel is now his father.

Despite these remarkable signs and the undeniable work of the Spirit, Saul keeps silent about his anointing. He does not boast or rush to claim his throne. Instead, he waits for public confirmation—for the moment when all of Israel will see and know that God has called him to be their king.

Much like the Lord Jesus, who tried to keep his messianic identity a secret until the time when it would be absolutely made clear. It was in his resurrection from the dead and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that all Israel therefore knew that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ.

Christ as the Perfect King, Priest, and Prophet

These three signs given to Saul—the donkeys, the bread, and the Spirit—each typologically reveal Jesus as the Christ who perfectly fulfills the threefold office of King, Priest, and Prophet.

- **As King** – He governs and defends His people while executing justice against His enemies.
- **As Priest** – He offers Himself as the perfect sacrifice, securing our redemption and establishing fellowship with God.
- **As Prophet** – He proclaims liberty to those who are bound by sin and injustice, and He reveals the mysteries of God to us.

Christ Fulfilled in Us

One of the greatest realities of Pentecost is that when the Holy Spirit was poured out, **Christ's offices of Prophet, Priest, and King were united to us, the Church.** We don't

just follow Christ—we are joined to Him by faith and share in His anointing.

The Heidelberg Catechism captures this beautifully:

Q: Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed?

A: Because He has been ordained by God the Father and anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief Prophet, our only High Priest, and our eternal King.

The Catechism then asks:

Q: Why are you called a Christian?

A: Because I am a member of Christ by faith, and thus share in His anointing, so that I may—

- **As a prophet:** Confess His Name,
- **As a priest:** Offer myself as a living sacrifice of thankfulness, and
- **As a king:** Fight against sin and the devil, with the promise of reigning with Him eternally.

Just as Saul was brought into Samuel's house after receiving the Spirit, we are **united to Christ and adopted in the Father's house, and sealed by the Spirit**, making us partakers of His threefold office.

We are all prophets, priests, and kings in Christ, Being a Christian is a daily calling—a divine mandate that shapes how we live, worship, and engage the world.

The Kingly Office: Fighting Sin and Advancing Christ's Kingdom

As kings, we are not passive observers. We are **called to fight**—to wage war against sin, the flesh, and the devil with unwavering courage and resolve. Paul exhorts us to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12), reminding us that spiritual warfare is the ongoing work of every Christian.

Saul's kingship was confirmed when he crushed Nahash the Ammonite, whose name means “serpent.” This is no coincidence. Saul's first act as king was to crush the serpent and restore peace to Israel. In the same way, Christ's kingship was confirmed through His victory over Satan in His death and resurrection. Christ crushed the serpent's head, securing our redemption and establishing His reign of peace.

But this victory is not merely a past event—it is a present reality we are called to live out. You are a baptized king under Christ. You are commissioned to fight against sin in your own life and to advance Christ's kingdom in the world. This means:

- Guarding your heart against the temptations of pride, lust, and idolatry.

- Fighting for purity in your home, protecting your family from the corrupting influence of the world.
- Confronting evil in society, standing boldly against injustice and falsehood.

And here's the promise of victory: "*The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*" (Rom. 16:20) Christ's victory is your victory. But He calls you to wield the sword of His Word and engage in this holy battle. Are you fighting with the resolve of a king?

The Priestly Office: Living Sacrifices of Gratitude

As priests, we are called to offer ourselves as living sacrifices of thankfulness. The second sign confirming Saul's anointing was the bread he received from the men going to worship at Bethel. This bread, reserved for the priest, pointed to the work of sustaining and nourishing God's people.

In the same way, our priestly calling is to present ourselves as sacrifices—daily offerings of love, devotion, and obedience. Paul urges us:

"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1)

What does this look like in practice?

- **Sacrifice of Worship:** Pouring out our hearts in reverent praise and thanksgiving.

- Sacrifice of Service: Using our time, gifts, and resources to bless the Church and care for the saints.
- Sacrifice of Thanksgiving: Offering gratitude to God in all circumstances, even in suffering.

Our priestly sacrifice is sustained through the sacramental life of the Church. As we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are nourished by the bread of life—strengthened to continue offering ourselves in joyful service.

Are you living as a priest, daily offering yourself on the altar of gratitude? Or are you consuming yourself through your own self-centered interests and imaginations?

The Prophetic Office: Declaring Christ to the World

As prophets, we are not to remain silent. We are to proclaim His Name before the nations. The final sign that confirmed Saul's anointing was the coming of the Spirit, which empowered him to prophesy. This same Spirit was poured out at Pentecost, empowering the Church to be a prophetic witness to the nations.

Saul's prophetic task was to restrain Israel from falling into idolatry. Likewise, our prophetic calling is to call the world out of darkness and proclaim the truth that "Jesus Christ is Lord." This is not a passive role. It requires boldness, conviction, and a willingness to confront the lies of the

world with the truth of God's Word, and taking a beating for it.

As Jesus said, *"Blessed are you when others revile you, persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you false on y account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

The Great Commission is our prophetic mandate: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them... and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20)

Are you fulfilling your prophetic calling by speaking the truth of Christ to the world?

- Are you confessing Christ boldly in your home and workplace?
- Are you teaching your children the truths of Scripture?
- Are you standing as a light in a culture that denies the lordship of Christ? This and more is what you are called to.

A Call to Faithful Action

These three offices are not mere titles we wear—they are identities we live. **You are a king**, called to fight sin and advance Christ's kingdom. **You are a priest**, called to offer your life as a sacrifice of thankfulness. **You are a prophet**, called to proclaim His Name to a world in darkness.

This is your high calling, sealed in your baptism and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Will you walk boldly in the power of Christ's anointing and fulfill your anointing as a Christian? Or will you forfeit out of fear and disobedience, like Saul did?

As you go forth from here remember that being a Christian is not just what you believe, it is who you are and what you do.

As the Heidelberg Catechism says: *"We are members of Christ by faith, and thus share in His anointing—so that we may as prophet confess His Name, as priest present ourselves as living sacrifices of thankfulness to Him, and as king fight with a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures."*

Go forth in the power of His anointing, and serve Him well. Amen.