

I finally got a chance to meet Bob this week. Bob has been tuning our piano for several years now, but we never crossed paths before. Jill had met Bob before and was home during one of his tuning sessions. She told me how great the piano sounded when Bob played it. (For some reason the piano doesn't sound the same when I play it, I guess.) So, I was talking with Bob about how he got to be a piano tuner. I thought perhaps he was a frustrated concert pianist, or a piano teacher who couldn't take one more day of teaching scales. But, as it turns out, Bob worked in manufacturing all of his life. He enjoyed the work. He was good at it and made a good living doing so. But then one day Bob told his wife it was finally time to move on to his real love...tuning pianos. So, he did it. He quit his job. He started his little business and has built a career out of finding homes, schools and churches who need pianos tuned. I could tell from the smile on Bob's face as we talked that he was dead serious; Bob loves his work. He is living one of those rare opportunities when people can say, "I can't believe I get paid to do what I most love to do." Bob, you see, has found his vocation; his calling. He has found the intersection of his greatest joy and the world's greatest need.

I was thinking about Bob when I read an article in a sports magazine about Philadelphia Phillies baseball pitcher, Brad Lidge. Lidge did the unthinkable last year. He performed his job perfectly, never failing to get the other team out when the game was on the line in the final at bat, including the team's final game in Game 5 of the World Series. He was a local celebrity, making, I am guessing, millions of dollars. He probably felt a lot like Bob does. But this year, Brad Lidge is having a horrible season. By every baseball statistical category which measures his performance, he is barely performing his job. But he keeps on pitching, right through the booing and the injury and the failure. I am not sure why he would subject himself to the personal struggle and public humiliation, but I imagine it is partly because he likes the paycheck, and even more because he is doing what he believes he is called to do. Just because you aren't always perfect doesn't mean you aren't called to keep on working at your calling.

Finding our true calling is hard. Staying with it can, at times, be even harder. God tells us that He knows the plans He has for us, "plans for good and not for disaster, to give (us) a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11). But Jesus also tells us that if we want to follow Him it will require sacrifice, sometimes "selling all that we have." (Mark 10:31) For Jesus to complete his calling he had to endure being mocked, spit upon, whipped and then killed.

So, this week, may the Spirit stir in you a passion for your true calling. Perhaps you are already living it, and you are living the life of Bob. Maybe you are suffering through a bad time, living the life of Brad. But, know that if you are in your true vocation, whether that is serving at home, in the workplace or as a volunteer, God is in the Plan. Know that the Plan requires a price to be paid, for you must be willing to put aside your dream so that God can fill you with His dream. And there will be tough times. But, when you find the center of God's will for your life, you will know your "future hope."

Shalom,  
Bill