

The background of the entire image is a vibrant, multi-colored cosmic scene. It features a dense field of stars in shades of blue, purple, and orange, with a prominent spiral galaxy structure visible on the left side. The overall effect is that of a deep space or nebula. In the lower half of the image, there is a black silhouette of a person standing on a dark, wavy horizon line. The person's arms are outstretched horizontally to the sides, palms facing forward, in a gesture of awe or praise. The text is overlaid on this background.

# OUR CALL to Serve

*"God has shown you what is good. And what does the LORD require of you,  
but to do Justice and Loving Kindness, and to Walk Humbly with your God."*

*Micah 6:8*

Paul David  
ROBINSON

# **Our Call to Serve**

By

Paul David Robinson

(9,699 words)

*Cover Design by Katrina Joyner*

Copyright 2011, 2016 Paul David Robinson

The front cover is entitled:

*“Embrace the Universe and find your Purpose in Life.”*

ISBN-13: 9781370393350

## **Smashwords Edition, License Notes**

This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This eBook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to [Smashwords.com](http://Smashwords.com) or your favorite retailer and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author

**From the Back Cover**

OUR CALL TO SERVE

WE ARE LIVING WORDS OF GOD

WE ARE CALLED TO BE THE CHRIST

“The Word which proceeds from the mouth of God shall not return Empty.” From Isaiah 55:10-11.

It is my personal belief that God calls each of us while we are in the womb to serve God. In calling our names in the womb, we become living words of God intended to do God’s work in our world.

And what is the work of God?

“God has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you, but to do Justice and to do Loving Kindness, and to Walk Humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

It is up to us. We have the power to do good or evil. What will you choose to do? The world is in our hands.

*Paul David Robinson*  
*October 5, 2016*

[Please note: Footnotes are in brackets and numbered. They are at the end of the book. In addition, I capitalize the first letter in Words I want to Emphasize when I write SERMONS. And I use all capitals for very important words I want to emphasize.]

## FOREWORD

This book shares with you a series of three sermons that I preached at the First United Methodist Church of Flat Rock Michigan in 2011:

January 2, 2011:  
OUR CALL TO SERVE

February 20, 2011:  
WE ARE LIVING WORDS OF GOD

June 19, 2011  
WE ARE CALLED TO BE THE CHRIST

*Paul David Robinson*  
*September 28, 2016*

If you like this book let me know. Visit my website and take the time to like me on Facebook. If you wish, you can listen to these three sermons and some other things at my website. This book is also available in paperback.

<https://www.pauldavidrobinson.com/>

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **Our Call to Serve**

**From the Back Cover**

**Foreword**

**Call to Celebration**

**Sermon: Our Call to Serve**

**The Way of the Christ (painting)**

**Sermon: We are Living Words of God**

**Isaiah 55: 10-11 (painting)**

**Sermon: We are Called to be the Christ**

**Gethsemane: Thy Will Be Done (painting)**

**Postscript**

**The Sadist (painting)**

**Footnotes**

**Dear Reader**

\* **Call to Celebration:** From: Micah 6:6-8 and Mark 12:28-34

Leader: With what shall we come before the LORD,  
and worship God on high?

**PEOPLE: HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE  
LORD IS ONE! WE COME TO LOVE THE LORD  
WITH ALL OUR HEART AND SOUL!**

Leader: Shall we come before him with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?

**PEOPLE: NO! WE COME TO LOVE THE LORD  
WITH ALL OUR MIND AND STRENGTH!**

Leader: Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

**PEOPLE: NO! WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD  
BY LOVING ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE  
AS MUCH AS WE LOVE OURSELVES!**

Leader: Shall we give our first-born for our transgression,  
the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul?

**PEOPLE: NO! NO! TEN THOUSDAND TIMES NO!  
GOD HAS SHOWED US WHAT IS GOOD:  
WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF US  
BUT TO DO JUSTICE,  
AND TO DO LOVING KINDNESS,  
AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD!**

## Sermon: January 2, 2011

### OUR CALL TO SERVE

Today, we celebrate Epiphany, the day the Wisemen came to see Jesus in the manger. But epiphany also means “to have an insight”, to have an “Ah Hah!” experience.

The hymn we just sang has these words in it:

“Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me.  
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.”[1]

This hymn is about having an “Ah Hah!” experience every day. Every time we Breathe, think of it as inhaling the Breath of God that gives us life. That can make every day the first day of your life.

In Genesis chapter 2, verse 7 it says: “Then the LORD GOD [2] formed human beings out of dust from the ground, and Breathed into their nostrils the Breath of Life and human beings became living souls.”[3]

Ru-ach [4] is the Hebrew word for the Breath of God. The Ru-ach, the Breath of God, is the Holy Spirit. So in the beginning, God gave us life with his Breath. That is different from Air. We don’t become living souls just out of the air we breathe. We become living souls because we are filled with the Breath of God.[5]

Just as God Breathed Life into us, making us Living souls, the Holy Spirit gives Life to the Church, the Body of Christ. And as Christians, Christ-ones, we are, together, the Body of Christ. And each and every one of us is a part of the Body of Christ. As the Apostle Paul wrote in First Corinthians Chapter 12:76

“For the body itself is not made of only one part, but of many parts. If the foot were to say, ‘Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it stop being a part of the body. And if the ear would say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I don’t belong to the body,’ that would not make stop being a part of the body. If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wished. There would not be a body if it were all only one part! As it is, there are many parts, and one body. All of you, then, are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it. (First Corinthians 12:14-20, 27.[6])

When we take communion, we eat the Bread, which represents the Body of Christ and each of us as a part of the Body of Christ. When we drink the cup, it represents the Holy Spirit, the lifeblood of the church, the Body of Christ; and the Holy Spirit is the Breath of God in all of us.

Just as we cannot live without food and water, the Church cannot live without our bodies filled with the Holy Spirit, doing the Work of God, the Work of Christ!

And we are called to do the Work of Christ Every Day! Every person Born into this world is called to do the Work of God from the very beginning of our existence!

And what is the Work of Christ? The Prophet Micah answers that question very well in chapter 6 verse 8: . . . “He has showed you, O man, what is Good. And what does the LORD require of us, but to do Justice and to do Loving Kindness, and to Walk Humbly with our God.”<sup>[7]</sup>

Think of it! Every Day! Wherever we go! And whatever we do! We are Called to do the Work of Christ! Every person born into this world is called to do the work of Christ, the work of God!

If we are a student or a teacher, we are called to do the work of Christ while we are being a student or a teacher.

If we are an executive, or a clerk, or a day laborer, we are called to do the work of Christ while we are doing the work of an executive, or clerk, or day laborer.

If we are a parent or grandparent, son or daughter, brother or sister, husband or wife, we are called to do the Work of Christ while being ourselves and fulfilling our responsibilities.

God intends that doing the Work of Christ be as natural to us as Breathing. And what is the Work of Christ? It is the Work of God: to do justice, and to do loving kindness, and to walk humbly with God; Every Day, Every hour, Every Moment, every second, every instant of our daily life.

Some people have the wrong idea of what it means to be Called to Serve. “Oh,” they say, “That’s only for Pastors and Priests, Deaconesses, nuns, and Missionaries. That’s not for me. I’m not called to be anything but a good person, in my own way.”

Now we come to the Epiphany, the Insight, the “Ah Hah” experience I hope to provide this morning.

Everyone Alive is Called to Serve. Everyone Alive is called to do the Work of God, the Work of Christ. And what is the Work of Christ?

To Do Justice! To Do Loving Kindness! To Walk Humbly with God!

In 1961, while I was a sophomore in high school, I had encephalitis. I had such a high temperature that I was hospitalized for about a month. After another month of recovering at home, and doing homework every day, I was expected to go back to church before going back to school the next day.

My parents had been Missionaries for the Evangelical United Brethren Church in the Philippines from 1950 to 1954. After returning to the United States, my parents spent one year going around the country and telling people about their missionary work. In 1955, my father began to serve E. U. B. Churches again. So my first Sunday back to church after my illness in 1961, my father was preaching. The text for his sermon was Isaiah chapter 49: verses 1-6.



My father was preaching about the Mission of the Church as a whole to be the Light of the World and not just be a candle in the corner of a room, a church that only does good deeds close to home.

While he preached, I read the text many times. And I came away from my reading with an insight that I would like to share with you this morning.

Reading Isaiah 49:1-6. (Read as it is written):

“Listen to me, O coastlands, and hearken, you peoples from afar.  
The LORD called me from the womb,  
from the body of my mother he named my name.  
He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
He made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.  
And he said to me, ‘You are my servant, Israel,  
in whom I will be glorified.’  
But I said, ‘I have labored in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
Yet surely my right is with the LORD,  
and my recompense with my God.’  
And now the LORD says, who formed me from the womb  
to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,  
and my God has become my strength –  
He says: ‘It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’<sup>[8]</sup>

Read this way, it’s pretty much the standard Call to Serve that a prophet gets from God.

Now let me read it the way my insight led me to understand it.

Isaiah 49, verse 1b:

“The LORD called ME from the womb,  
from the body of my mother God named MY name.”

The LORD calls to each of us from the womb, from the body of our mother, God calls us. God knows us before we are born. God knows us before we are named by our parents. And God calls us to be Servants of God.

Isaiah 49, verse 3:

“And God said to me: ‘You are my Servant, Israel,  
in whom I will be Glorified.’

Let’s change one word:

“And God said to me:  
‘You are my Servant, (Paul),  
or You are my servant, (John),  
or You are my servant, (Bryon),  
or You are my servant, (Barbara), . . . .  
in whom I will be Glorified.’

As I read it again, Everyone, put your own name in there. This passage is for you. God is calling you!

Isaiah 49, verse 3:

“And God said to me: ‘You are my Servant, (        ),  
in whom I will be glorified.’

That’s it! That’s the Insight! God calls Everyone! God doesn’t just call preachers and prophets and missionaries. God calls Everyone. Because Everyone can serve God in their own daily walk. Everyone!

Isaiah 49, verse 6:

“God says, ‘It is too light a thing  
that you should be my servant  
[just] to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the preserved of Israel;’

To paraphrase,

“God says, ‘It is too light a thing  
that you should be my servant just to love those who love you.  
Just to love those you meet at church, or choir practice, or school,  
or places where you feel comfortable.’  
Instead, God says, in the second part of the verse,  
“I will give you as a Light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

Loving those who hate us.  
Loving those who have hurt our feelings  
Loving those who make us angry.  
Loving those who are unlovable.

God calls us to serve. From the beginning, from the womb, God calls our names!

God knows us! Before we know Anything or Anybody. God knows us, because God breathed into us the breath of life. We are living souls because God breathed into us the Breath of God. We belong to God, long before we are born and lose our way.

It is a new year.[9] Time for New Year's Resolutions. Make one. Respond to God's Call to Serve. There is a world in need of our example, as Christ is our example.

And what does the LORD require of us:  
TO DO JUSTICE,  
TO DO LOVING KINDNESS,  
TO WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD.

Wherever we go! Whatever we do! We are to be Servants of God. If we choose to be missionaries, or preachers, or teachers, or bricklayers, or tent makers, or anything else at all, we are Called to Be God's Servants as we do it.

We are to do justice! Seek justice! Advocate for justice! Vote for justice! Lobby for justice! March in the streets for justice!

We are to do Loving kindness, not because we are loved back; not because someone Gave something to us first, and we owe them; We are to do it because Walking with God means to do loving kindness as we live and breathe!

It means to do justice no matter what the cost! It means being willing to serve God even to the Death, Death on a Cross. And that is exactly what Jesus did for us![10]

We are Called to serve God, with every move we make, with every breath we take. We are called to Serve God with our whole being. To follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reading again from Isaiah 49:

“. . . God called you from the womb,  
From body of your mother God called your name.  
And God said, 'You are my servant, in whom I will be glorified.'

“And now, the LORD says,  
who formed you from the womb to be God's servant,  
God says, 'It is too small a thing for you'  
to just love those who love you,  
to just light up your own little corner of the world,  
“I will give you as a light to the nations  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”[11]  
That God's Kingdom may come on Earth as it is in heaven.[12]  
Just as it says in the Lord's Prayer.  
Amen.



The Way of the Cross

## Sermon: February 20, 2011

### WE ARE LIVING WORDS OF GOD

Reading Genesis, chapter 1, verses 1-3:

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.  
The earth was without form and void,  
and the darkness was upon the face of the deep;  
and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.  
And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” [13]

The Hebrew word for Spirit is also the word for Wind or Breath:

“The Wind of God was moving over the face of the deep.”  
“The Breath of God was moving over the face of the deep.”

“Ru-ach” [14] is a powerful word. It means so much in Hebrew. There is no way to translate it with just one English word.

“The Ru-ach of God was moving over the face of the deep. And God spoke.”

The writer of Genesis could imagine that the Breath of God was used to form the words that God spoke: “Let there be light.”

And the Words formed with the Breath of God were so powerful that light was created out of nothing.

So, John, when he wrote his Gospel, is imagining the same thing.  
In the beginning, when God spoke,  
God created the world using the Ru-ach of God, the Breath of God.  
The Word of God can only be formed with the Breath of God.  
And the Breath of God was God.

So John writes, in Chapter 1, verses 1-4:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God;  
all things were made through the Word,  
and without the Word was not anything made that was made.”

The Breath of God, the Word of God, was moving over the face of the deep. And God spoke, “Let there be light,” and there was light. The Word of God created light. The Power of the Breath of God is in the Word of God. So God, the Breath of God, and the Word of God, are all one and the same, like the Trinity.

Now we move to Genesis chapter 2, verse 7:

“Then the LORD God formed human beings  
of dust from the ground,

and breathed into their nostrils the Breath of Life;  
and human beings became living souls.” [15]

Here again, the Ru-ach of God is used. But a Word is not spoken here. God formed us of dust from the ground, and then God Breathed into our nostrils the Breath of Life, the Ru-ach of God. And we became living souls with the power to do good or evil.

We are alive because the Ru-ach of God is in us. But God does not control us like puppets. We can choose to do evil or good.

God is always with us. We are never alone. God is always calling to us in our souls, with every breath we take; God reminds us that without the Ru-ach of God, the Breath of God, we are dead.

God loves us and calls us constantly, to do God’s Work. But we can tune God out. We can be so caught up in the cultures and civilizations we have created that we stop listening to God.

Just like many of us, Isaiah did not hear God call to him until he was an adult. But when Isaiah finally stopped his busy life long enough to listen, Isaiah heard God calling to him.

Reading from Isaiah chapter 6, verse 8:

“And I heard the voice of the LORD saying  
‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’”

And without hesitation, Isaiah answered, “Here I am! Send me.” And thus began Isaiah’s long service to the LORD.

Long after Isaiah answered God’s call to him, Isaiah came to understand that God had been calling him from the beginning of his life. Isaiah just didn’t understand it until he was an adult.

Isaiah writes in chapter 49:

“The LORD called me from the womb,  
from the body of my mother, God named my name. . . .  
And God said to me,  
‘You are my servant in whom I will be glorified.’”

When God breathes into your nostrils the Breath of Life and you become a living soul, you are filled with the Breath of God.

Not only is God a part of your life from the beginning, but then, God calls you from the womb, from the body of your mother, God names your name. Your name is a WORD. When God Calls you from the womb, and names your name, you become a Living Word of God.

Every one of us is a Living Word of God, because God calls each one of us by name. God knows us personally. The problem is that not all of us have developed our personal relationship with God.

God is calling each of us right now, and God has been doing so from the very beginning of time.

Let’s pause here for a little activity.

When you woke up this morning and took your first conscious breath: How did it feel. Wonderful? Did it hurt a little? Were you stopped up, feeling stuffy? Maybe you have a cold coming on, perhaps a touch of flu? Or did it just feel good to breathe and be alive?

If you took a shower, the air in the shower is usually heavy with water vapor. It feels good for a while but it is also harder to breathe because it is heavier.

Then you step out of the shower and take that first breath of lighter air. That usually feels pretty good.

What about getting into your coat and stepping outside and that cold air hits your face and you inhale.

On a spring morning that can feel Wonderful. But in the winter, the chill can hit you deep in the chest and make you cough.

Do any of you remember watching Sesame Street when they used to have that short skit?  
“Breathe in, Breathe out! Breathe in, Breathe out!  
Breathe in, Breathe out! Breathe in, Breathe out!  
You’re ALIVE!”  
That’s how we are supposed to feel. Alive!

Now let’s all stop for a moment and Breathe in slowly the way the Doctor tells you to breathe, when he’s listening to you breathe.

Ever have a yogi class and you are supposed to breathe together as a group. Let’s see if we can Breathe in and out together.

Inhale.  
Exhale.  
Inhale.  
Exhale. [16]

This is like Communion: Being aware of our Aliveness, in Christ, at the same time. And Celebrating it.

In ancient Israel, people would say, when some one died,  
“The Breath is not in him.”

In Luke, chapter 23, verse 46, it says:  
“Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said,  
‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!’  
And having said this, he breathed his last.”

The breath was not in him.

Now, remember: the Hebrew language has the same word for Breath and for Spirit; the same word for Wind and Spirit: Ru-ach! That Hebrew word sounds like wind, doesn’t it. Ru-ach!  
As with our Native Americans, God was the Great Spirit, to ancient Hebrews; God was the Great Breath, the source of all LIFE, the source of all BREATH.

About thirty years ago, Sting wrote a song the Police sang together. He wrote it during a bitter divorce. And he never understood why people liked it so much, because it was a song about obsession, possession, and control. He wrote it when he was angry and jealous.

“Every move you make! Every Breath you take!  
I’ll be watching you.” [17]

But that is just the kind of relationship God had with Israel in most of the Old Testament. God was a jealous God. God was a possessive God.

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” [18]  
Remember that?

Ancient Hebrews believed that God, the giver of Breath, could take that Breath away in an instant. So God was a God to be feared and obeyed.

This is not the God of Isaiah. This is not the God of Micah. This is not the God of Jesus. This is not the God of Christians.

The God of Isaiah lovingly breathes into our nostrils the Breath of God. The God of Isaiah lovingly calls us from the womb, from the bodies of our mothers God calls our names.

And God says, “You are my servant, in whom I will be glorified.”

And we haven’t done anything yet. We haven’t even been born.

Why does God do this?

Because God is with us from the very beginning, calling to us.

Because God believes in us and has plans for us to do God’s work.

God gives us life, and then God calls us and hopes for the best.

And as God waits for our answer, God watches every move we make, every breath we take, from inside us.

You see, God cannot force us to serve God. We have been given the freedom to choose between good and evil all of our days.

All God can do is pour himself into our human forms and call out to us, asking us, “Whom Shall I send? Who will go for us?” And we have the choice. We can say, “Hear I am, send me.”

Or, we can turn away, turn a deaf ear,  
pretend we don’t understand, and do, only what pleases us;  
or, do what pleases someone else, who isn’t God.  
Like our friends, or our family, or the IN CROWD,  
Or, do what is popular, but not what is right in the eyes of God.

Everything I have been talking about this morning is natural. It’s the way God’s creation works.

God breathes into everyone the Breath of Life. Everyone is a living soul because God gave us life. And God is a part of everyone, because the Breath of God is in us.

But that doesn’t mean that the Will of God shall be done by every soul who has life. Many of us choose evil over good.

Many of us choose, not to seek justice; or, not to do loving kindness. And most of us do not choose to walk humbly with God.

There are too many people out there who tell you that they have all the answers. You are not ready for democracy, they say. You can’t be trusted to rule yourselves.



Some people say, Listen to me I have all the Bible answers you need. Follow me. Do what I say. Send money.

And in our country, where we have freedom of speech, people and companies and organizations with lots of money can advertise falsehood as truth. And the American public will believe it and vote for it. Because sound bites are more powerful than that “still small voice” of God in our souls. [19]

God is within you. You do not need me to tell you what to do. Listen to that still small voice, but remember, you can be so selfish and cruel, and not realize it. So that still small voice might not be God. For God will never ask you to kill. God will never ask for your first born for the sin of your soul.

As Micah said, “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and to do loving kindness and to walk humbly with your God.”

This is what Jesus did. It got him into a lot of trouble. It got him killed. But Jesus understood the risks.

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed, “Father, if it be possible, take this cup away from me. But not my will, but thine be done.” [20]

Jesus said: I will do what you ask of me. I am your servant in whom you will be glorified. Jesus followed Isaiah’s path. “Here I am. Send me.” Jesus said.

Getting back to each of us being a Living Word of God:

We are part of a natural process. And that is just the way God planned it.

In Isaiah chapter 55, verses 10-11: Says the LORD,

“For, as the Rain and the Snow Come down from heaven,  
And return not thither but water the earth,  
Making it bring forth and sprout,  
Giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
So shall my Word be  
That goes forth from my mouth;  
It shall not return to me empty,  
But it shall accomplish that, which I purpose,  
And prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” [21]

God breathed into us the Breath of Life and We became living souls. Then God called us from the womb, from the bodies of our mothers God called our names, and said, “You are my servant in whom I will be glorified.”

Each of us is a Living Word of God that has come from the mouth of God. And God hopes that we will not return to God, empty. But that we will accomplish what God has planned for us.

We have a purpose. We are called to be servants of God. And if we do what God asks of us we will glorify God in the process.

All our lives God has been calling us. Sometimes we ignore God. Sometimes we just pretend to go along with God when our hearts aren’t in it. Other times we said, “Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.” But we don’t do it anyway.

But on that occasion when we are fully present, doing God's will with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, it feels so good. We feel so good, because in that instant we are God's love in action. We are the Christ, alive and well, doing the will of God.

God does not call everyone to be preachers, or missionaries in the pure sense. But, God does call each of us to do God's will in our own life situation. Whatever your job, you can do it God's way. Whatever the situation, we can do God's will, or not. We choose.

It isn't easy. It is hard work to do God's will. It takes a commitment.

There are so many distractions. And there are ways to be Selfish and concerned only about ourselves and our family or group.

Sometimes people think, "Oh, I can do that." when God calls them. But what they do is the minimum effort. They do what satisfies themselves or some ritual they have developed.

For example, long ago the ancient Hebrews had a tradition. Once a year they would take a journey to their High Holy Place and make a blood sacrifice. At one time in their history, they sacrificed their first-born child. Later it was only their daughters that they sacrificed. Still later they substituted the "scapegoat" or other animal for the human sacrifice. Once this annual sacrifice was made, they believed that their duty to God was complete. Their sins were forgiven until the next year when they had to do it all over again.

A once a year, or once a month, or once a week kind of religion is easy. Maybe a once a day kind of religion is easy. Just do it, get it over with, and get on with your life. Do what you want after that.

But God doesn't want that easy occasional sacrifice. God wants us to do God's work every day, every hour; every moment of every hour; every instant of every second.

Every breath you take, every move you make,  
God wants you doing God's work.

What's wonderful about the church is that we are not alone. Together we can be God's servant. Together we can be the Body of Christ at work in the world. Where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, Christ will be there also. [22]

God is always with us. When we gather together we can pool our resources and our knowledge and our strength. We can support and encourage one another.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 12 and 13, John writes about the Word of God:  
"But to all who received him, who believed in his name,  
he gave power to become children of God;  
who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,  
nor of the will of man, but born of God."

John is looking back at our creation. God formed us from dust of the ground and breathed into our nostrils the Breath of Life and we became living souls.

Then God calls us from the womb. God calls our names and says, "You are my servant in whom I will be glorified."

Now, John says, Yea, not just servants, but children of God, brothers and sisters of the Christ. And this happens not because you were born of flesh and blood, but because you are born of the Spirit of God. And this comes to us by FAITH.

God breathed into you the Breath of God. Then God called you from the womb. God named your name. God sent you as a Living Word of God into the world to do God's work.

And now John says: Not just a Living Word of God, but a Child of God, a brother or sister of the Christ.

Individually we are servants of God, Words of God, Children of God. But together, we are the Church, the Body of Christ, at work in the world.

We need to remember who we are, where we come from and where we are going.

We are living souls filled with the Breath of God. We are called to be servants glorifying God. We are Living Words of God sent into the world to do what God planned for us to do. We are Children of God, brothers and sisters of the Christ. And together, we are the Church, the Body of Christ, at work in the world.

And at the end of our days, we shall all return to God, and, hopefully, we will have accomplished ALL that God sent us to do. For woe unto us if we return to God, Empty.

And what does the Lord require of us? (Say it with me.)

To love the LORD our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love our neighbors as ourselves. [23]

To do justice, to do loving kindness, and to walk humbly with our God. [24]



Isaiah 55:10-11

## Sermon: June 19, 2011

### WE ARE CALLED TO BE THE CHRIST

In the beginning, God, the Breath of God, the Spirit of God and the Word of God were all one and the same. [25]

When God created the heavens and the earth, God spoke and things happened. The Breath of God formed the Word of God and the heavens and the earth were created through God's spoken Word.

When God formed human beings from dust of the ground and breathed into them the Breath of Life [26], human beings became living souls with the power to do good or evil as they chose.

We are filled with the Breath of God but that does not mean that we are perfect or good, because we can choose to ignore the presence of God in the lives of others, as well as in our own lives.

When we kill someone, we are ignoring the presence of God in that other person. Only God has the right to give life or take it. We do not have that right. We have power to do it, but we do not have the right.

When Isaiah realized that God had been calling him from the womb, from the body of his mother, to glorify God as the servant of God, he told us about it.[27] Because Isaiah wanted us to know that God calls everyone by name to be a servant of God. God wants everyone who is filled with the Breath of God to do God's work in the world. And if you are alive, you are filled with the Breath of God, and called to do God's work.

But we are not just called to be Servants of God, when God calls each of us by name, (and God does,) we become a Word of God sent into the world to do God's work. God expects that every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God shall not return empty. When God calls your name, you are supposed to fulfill your potential and do what God asks, as the Word of God at work in the world. [28]

This is supposed to be as natural as rain. But we can ignore God's call. We can go through life doing as little for God as we can or even doing nothing for God all our lives. We have that choice.

God calls us constantly. God hopes for the best. But God loved us so much that God gave us the power to choose of our own free will.

This is why Jesus is so important. Jesus showed us the way. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. [29] Jesus is one person who chose to do God's will even if it killed him. And it did. John writes, chapter one, verses 10 through 13:

“He was in the world, and the world was made through him,  
yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home,  
and his own people received him not.  
But to all who received him, who believed in his name,  
he gave the power to become children of God; who were born,

not of blood or the will of man, but born of God.”

All we have to do is accept that God gave us life; Believe that God calls us; Do what God asks; and have faith that we are children of God and brothers and sisters of the Christ.

Remember the story of Thomas. Thomas did not believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Thomas said, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger on the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe.”**[30]**

Eight days later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples and had Thomas come forward and place his fingers on the nail holes and his hand in his side. Then Thomas said, “My Lord and my God.” And Jesus responded, “Do you believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen, but believe.”**[31]**

It’s the same way for us. That’s the Amazing Grace: That we can believe in the power and presence of God in our lives; that we can believe that Jesus is Alive in us; that we can hear God’s call and respond with our whole being, and do the will of God in our lives.

Jesus was called Emmanuel which means God is with us.**[32]** Jesus was the kind of Servant and child of God that Everyone is called to be.

God is with us. We are filled with the Breath of God. We are Children of God. We have life because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us.

God is with us, but we ignore God. We do what we want. We do not do the work of God, unless it is convenient, or on our way there, or when it doesn’t take up too much of our time. Or we give money so other people can do the work of God on our behalf.

Giving money is good. We want to support people who devote their lives to doing God’s work. But we are supposed to do God’s work in our own daily lives as well.

And, “What does the LORD require of us,’ [say it with me,]

‘To do Justice,

To do Loving-kindness,

To Walk Humbly with our God.’ ”**[33]**

This is not easy. Even Jesus was afraid. Reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 14, verses 32 through 36:

“And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I pray.”

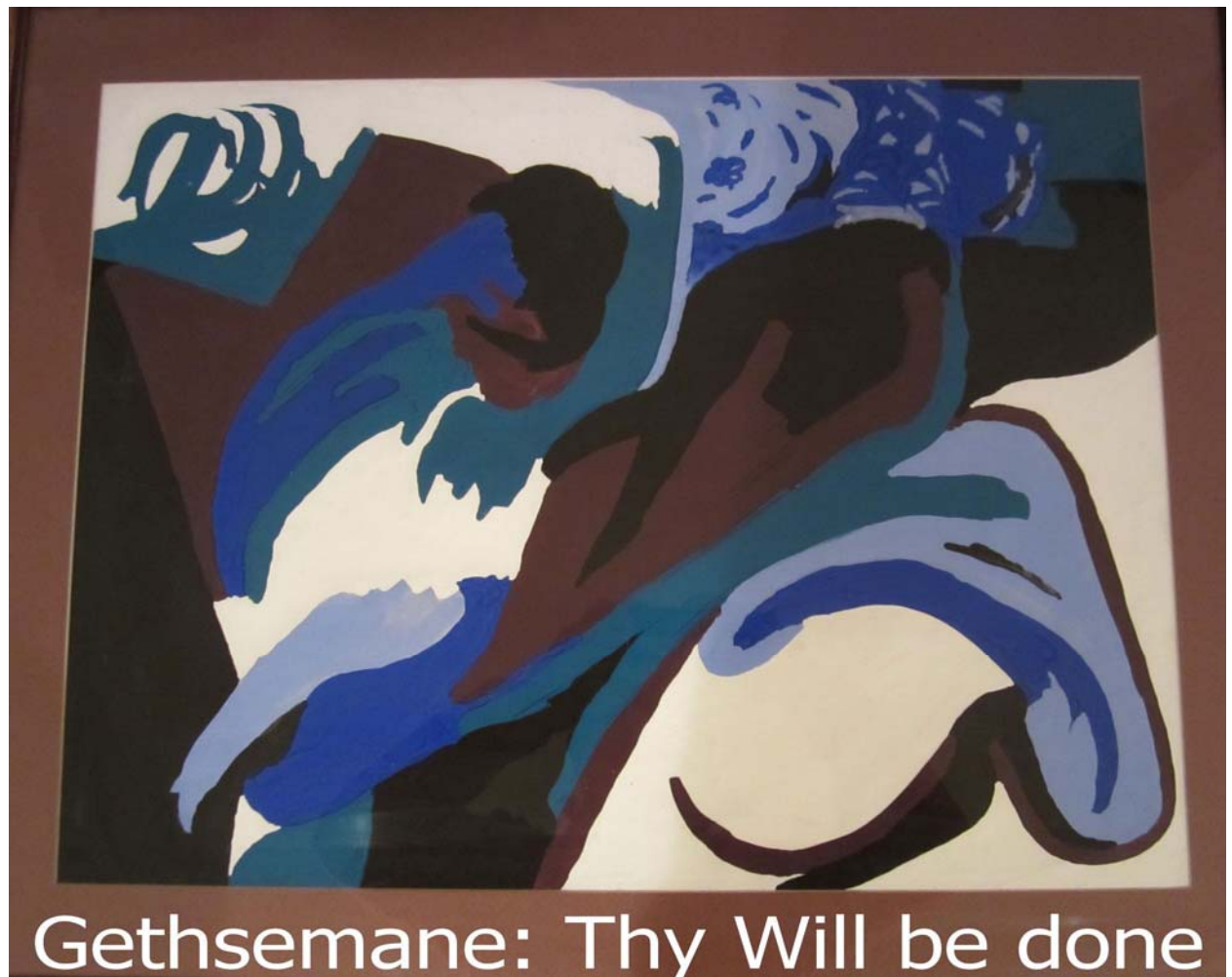
And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.

And Jesus said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death; remain here, and watch.”

And going a little farther, Jesus fell to the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

And he said, “Abba, Father,**[34]** [Daddy],

all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but thy will be done.”**[35]**



## Gethsemane: Thy Will be done

Jesus shows us the way to serve God. The Child of God is intended to be the Servant of all. Jesus was meant to be the first of many children of God all doing the will of God.

Paul, the Apostle, has his own way of saying this. Reading from Today's English Version, Romans, chapter 8, verses 14 through 17:

Paul writes:

“Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's Children [36].

For the Spirit God has given you does not make you a slave and cause you to be afraid; instead,

the Spirit makes you God's Children [37],

and by the Spirit's power we cry to God [as Jesus did],

“Abba! Father!” [Daddy!] God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children. Since we are God's children, we will possess the blessings God keeps for God's people, and we will possess with Christ what God has kept for Christ; for if we share Christ's suffering we will also share Christ's glory.”

Paul uses the same words that Jesus used when he was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. “Abba! Father!” Daddy!

Paul says that we have the right to talk to God that way. God is our Daddy. This is very personal. Little children who are not afraid of their fathers and need comfort, will call out to their fathers, “Daddy, I’m scared.” “Daddy, I need a drink of water.” And our Father who art in Heaven will give us Spiritual Water from a well that will never run dry. [38]

Reading from Today’s English Version, Romans, chapter 8, verses 18 through 23:  
Paul writes:

“I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.

All creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his Children.[39]

For creation was condemned to become worthless, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so.

Yet there was this hope:

that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay, and share the glorious freedom of the children of God.

For we know that up to the present time all creation groans with pain like the pain of childbirth.

But not just creation alone;

we who have the spirit as the first of God’s gifts, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for God to make us his sons [and daughters] and set our whole being free.”

We are waiting for our Spiritual childbirth as children of God.

It isn’t easy to be a child of God. It is a struggle to do justice and to do loving kindness, and to walk humbly with God all the days of our lives. And Paul equates this struggle with the pain of childbirth.

We have God’s presence in our lives from the beginning. So, shouldn’t it be easy to do what God asks us to do? We have the first gifts of the Spirit. We have the Breath of God in us. God spoke our name when God called us from the womb. But God also gave us free will.

How many of you have ever been a slave to substance abuse? Alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, over-eating? It is a struggle to overcome these addictions. And we have free will.

Sin is everywhere around us. Overcoming our addiction to Sin is just as difficult as overcoming many other addictions. So Paul, who struggled all his life with some GREAT PROBLEMS of his own, Paul says, that striving to respond to God’s call to BE a Child of God and DO God’s work in the world can be as painful as childbirth.



But with God's help and the help of a supportive community of the People of God, we shall overcome.

And when two or three of us get together in His Name, Jesus will be there also.[40]

And we are gathered together in His Name, Right Now!

We are the Church, the Body of Christ at work in the world. And Jesus is Alive in us!  
Right Now!

Reading from Today's English Version, Romans, chapter 8, verses 28 through 30:

Paul writes:

“For we know that in all things,  
God works for Good with those who love him,  
those whom God has called according to God's purpose.  
For those whom God had already chosen,  
God had also set apart to become like his Son,  
so that the Son should be the first  
among many brothers [and sisters].[41]  
And so God called those whom God had set apart;  
not only did God call them,  
but God also put them right with himself;  
not only did God put them right with himself,  
but God also shared his glory with them.”[42]

How did Isaiah put it, “God said, ‘You are my servant in whom I will be glorified.’ ”

And now we know: “Not just a servant. We are called to be a child of God in whom God will be glorified.”

When Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, he said, “Go, thou, and do likewise.”[43]

The Good Samaritan was the Christ, the Savior, for the man he helped.

That is part of what God calls us to do. We are called to be the Messiah for other people, to show them the way God wants all of us to live. [44]

The Church, the Body of Christ at work in the world, is intended to BE the Christ for other people, not just for one another, but for the whole world.

That is a tall request.

You noticed I didn't say it was a tall order.

It is a tall request.

Although God calls us constantly to do God's work, God cannot force us to do anything.

We have to do it of our own free will.

Of God's own free will, God poured himself into us, so that we may live, and BE the Word of God, for the world.

Say it with me, John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son,

that whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish but have everlasting life.”

You are that child of God. Believe in yourself!  
Believe in your power to reach out and save the world!  
Believe that you are called of God!  
Believe that God called your name!  
You are worthy of being God’s Child because God loves you.

Reading from Today’s English Version, Romans, chapter 12, verses 1 and 2.  
Paul writes:

“So then, my brothers, [and sisters]  
because of God’s many mercies to us, I make this appeal to you:  
Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God,  
dedicated to his service and pleasing to him.  
This is the true worship you should offer.  
Do not conform outwardly to the standards of this world,  
but let God transform you inwardly  
by a complete change of your mind.  
Then, you will be able to know the will of God –  
what is Good, and is pleasing to him, and is perfect.”[\[45\]](#)

Jesus offered himself as a dying sacrifice to the will of God. We are asked to offer  
ourselves as a Living sacrifice to the will God, to be Living Words of God at work in the world.

God knew you from the beginning. God called you from the body of your mother, God  
named your name and said you are my servant in whom I will be glorified.

God Breathed into you the Breath of Life and you became a living soul. You are called to  
be a Child of God so that Jesus would be the First of many brothers and sisters doing the Work of  
God in this world.

Doing God’s work in the world means that we are participating in the Work of the Christ,  
the work of the Church, the Body of Christ.

When we take communion, and eat the bread, it is a symbol of our unity in the body of  
Christ, each of us one little part of the whole Body of Christ.

When we drink the cup, it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the lifeblood of the Church, the  
source of forgiveness and renewal on a daily basis.

Without it, all would be lost.

But with the Breath of God that gives us life, and the power to do good or evil, we can  
choose to do good.

So every day, choose AGAIN to do the work of God in your life.  
God will never give up on you.

As Paul writes in Romans 8:38:

“For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels,  
nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God  
which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Each of us is special. God loves us. God has blessed us. God has forgiven us. God continues to call us to do God’s work

Every day,  
Every Hour,  
Every Moment of our Lives.

One of my favorite hymns was left out of the new United Methodist Hymnal. The words were written by John Greenleaf Whittier. I’d like to read them to you now:

“O brother man, fold to thy heart thy brother!  
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there;  
To worship rightly is to love each other,  
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.

For he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken:  
The holier worship which he deigns to bless  
Restores the lost, and binds the spirit broken,  
And feeds the widow and the fatherless.

Follow with reverent steps the great example  
Of him whose holy work was doing good;  
So shall the wide earth seem our Father’s temple,  
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy clangor  
Of wild war music o’er the earth shall cease;  
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,  
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace.”[46]

Amen.

*Paul David Robinson*

## Postscript

In 1964, I was thinking about the Vietnam War and what to do. I was opposed to us being in Vietnam. I thought that the people should have a vote to decide what to do for their future. I was also aware that certain governments throughout history have slaughtered opponents and the meek in order to consolidate power and control territory or gain riches.

Human beings have been doing this to each other for a long time. I wondered what kind of person orders the deaths of millions of people in death camps. What kind of person orders his soldiers to clear villages of farmers and their families and then burns those villages to the ground, leaving no trace of the people who once lived there.

I wondered if I would have volunteered to go to Europe during World War II to stop the genocide. I didn't know. I am opposed to wars. I am a pacifist. I may have served as a non-combatant to help the wounded. I kept thinking about human beings and the choices we make. We can kill. Was it our nature to kill? Or was that something we learned to do and it wasn't natural.

When Hitler ordered the genocide of millions of people, what kind of soul did he have? While he was alive, did he sleep well at night? Did he think about those millions of children who died? I thought he must have been a tortured soul to do those things to so many people.

I spent a week or more on a painting. I spent hours looking at that 24" by 18" sheet of paper. I would put in a brush stroke and stand back and look at it. Then I would put in another color in a different place and stand back and look at it.

I didn't finish it before the class ended. I was taking 22 credit hours that semester and just didn't have the time. I thought I had another day to finish it before it was graded by the art instructor. He came early. I didn't know that he came early. I finished the painting about three o'clock in the morning on the day I thought it was to be graded. I got a "D" for the class in Art Design.

My mother always called the painting: "The Clown". But every time I looked at it, I was back in the studio, thinking about what kind of person orders the murder of eight million people. What kind of person orders the killing of a tribe of people in Africa, because they speak a different language or have a different religion? What kind of person orders his troops to slaughter a different ethnic group in Asia so their land will be available to another ethnic group.

My painting is here for you to see.[47] I called it "The Sadist".[48] I always thought that any person who ordered the slaughter of others was a tortured soul. I hope you see that in my painting. I always do.

*Paul David Robinson*

*October 5, 2016*



## Footnotes

- [1] Words and music: Daniel Iverson, 1926. Copyright renewed 1963 by Birdwing Music
- [2] LORD GOD is in all caps to emphasize the use of Yahweh instead of Elohim for God.
- [3] I changed “man” (meaning “mankind”) to “human beings”.
- [4] Ru-ach is pronounced “roo - ahhh” with a guttural “ahhck” at the end.
- [5] I owe my understanding of Genesis and the Gospel of John to Doctor Wayne Barr, Professor of Old Testament at the United Theological Seminary of Dayton Ohio in 1969. He gave me a mini-lesson in Hebrew when I needed one.
- [6] From Today’s English Version
- [7] From the Revised Standard Version
- [8] From the Revised Standard Version
- [9] Remember that I preached this sermon on January 2, 2011 at the First United Methodist Church of FlatRock, MI.
- [10] In the spring of 1964, I depicted The Way of the Cross in a painting. You will find it at the end of this sermon.
- [11] My paraphrase of Isaiah 49:1, 5-6.
- [12] Matthew 6:10.
- [13] Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are from the Revised Standard Version.
- [14] Ru-ach is pronounced “roo - ahhh” with a guttural “ahhck” at the end
- [15] “Man” meaning “mankind” is changed to “human beings” because men and women are both filled with the Breath of God and are equal in the sight of God.
- [16] Wait a minute or so, breathing into the microphone.
- [17] “Every Breath You Take” by The Police appeared in the Album Synchronicity in 1983.
- [18] Exodus 23:3-5. From the King James Version.
- [19] 1 Kings 19:11-13.
- [20] Mark 14:36. From the King James Version.
- [21] At the end of this sermon is a depiction of Isaiah 55:10-11. I painted this picture while I was studying for the Master of Divinity degree at United Theological Seminary in Dayton Ohio in 1967. I graduated from UTS in June 1970. “The Word which proceeds from the mouth of God shall not return Empty.” From Isaiah 55:10-11.
- [22] Matthew 18:20.

[23] Mark 12:30-31.

[24] From Micah 6:8.

[25] Genesis 1:1-3; 2:7. All quotes are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

[26] Ru-ah, The Breath of Life and the Breath of God are one and the same. See Footnote #1.

[27] Isaiah 49:1, 3, 6.

[28] Isaiah 55:11.

[29] John 14:6.

[30] John 20:24-29.

[31] John 20:29.

[32] Isaiah 7-8; Matthew 1:22-23.

[33] Micah 6:8.

[34] Abba which can mean Father or Daddy. [Daddy] is inserted in the text to emphasize this meaning.

[35] This event is depicted in a painting that I did in the spring of 1964 entitled: Gethsemane: Thy Will Be Done. If you look closely, you may see the crown of thorns and some other options that Jesus considered in the garden.

[36] I substituted [Children] for sons. Galatians 3:28.

[37] Ditto. I believe that in Christ all are equal no matter what our gender, race, or creed. Galatians 3:28.

[38] John 4:7-15.

[39] I substituted [Children} for sons for the same reason. Galatians 3:28

[40] Matthew 18:20.

[41] [and sisters] is added to emphasize the point that in Christ there is ‘neither male nor female’ that we are all one in Christ Jesus our Lord. Galatians 3:28-29.

[42] From Today’s English Version.

[43] Luke 10:37. From the King James Version.

[44] Do not tell them that they will go to hell if they don’t know Jesus. Instead, show them the way to live by the way we live our lives as the servant of all, the Messiah to the world. Micah 6:6-8.

[45] From Today’s English Version. This is Paul’s way of saying Micah 6:6-8: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and loving kindness and to walk humbly with your God.”

[46] John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892). He wrote these words in 1848. This poem expresses Micah 6:8 and our purpose as Children of God.

[47] The painting is on the next page.

[48] I wrote a poem about these feelings in 1961. It is Poem 32, entitled “I Alone Am All”. It can be found on page 75-78, in my **First Eighty-five Poems**, 1959-1963. It was published in 2013. I include it in this book. It follows the painting. When I was young, I asked: What kind of person am I? Now I ask: What kind of person are you?



**Dear Reader,**

**Our Call to Serve** shares with you the last three sermons I ever wrote. I preached these sermons at the First United Methodist Church of Flat Rock Michigan in 2011. This is the first of many books of sermons I plan to publish.

I hope you enjoy this book and take it to heart. God loves you and God Calls you to be a Child of God. All you have to do is follow the advice that Micah gave us thousands of years ago. “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to do loving kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8.

I have written stories and poems for sixty years. I have a closet full of rejections. I began to e-publish in 2013.

I wrote **Summer** in 1998. It was my mother’s favorite. I published it first because it is dedicated to my wife, Carolyn, the love of my life. It is about love at first sight, pain and suffering, the difficult choices people face, and how love can overcome anything.

**When the Dew Fell on the Okra** is my first children’s book to be published. It was written in December 1966. When I graduated from Otterbein College in January 1967, I gave it to



people who had been a help to me. Thanks to Rebecca Swift, my illustrator, it is now available for you to give to someone you care about.

**Ruth's Adventure** is a book that everyone can read. It is about an eight-year-old girl moving to her new home in a covered wagon in 1904. It is based on **Clarence or Claire**, a longer novel for adults.

**Allie's Adventure on the Solar Wind** is a book that everyone can read. Allie was the first child born on the Solar Wind. It is based upon **Katya and the Solar Wind**, a longer novel for adults.

**Meld School Runaway** is a standalone Science Fiction novel for teenage readers on up. It is based upon **Triangulation** (Volume Two of my *Life After Earth Series*), which is for adults.

**Before My Shotgun Wedding** is about growing up on a mountain in Kentucky in 1952 and it is a story that everyone can enjoy.

The sequel: **After My Shotgun Wedding** is for adult readers.

I have eight more novels available for adult readers: **Foundling, Clarence or Claire, Katya and the Solar Wind**, two sequels to **Katya: Triangulation** and **Shoreen; Qarka Girls, Symbiosis, And Angels Feared to Tread** are the most recent science fiction novels that I published.

**First Eighty-five Poems** is my first volume of poetry. All of the poems were written between January 1, 1959 and August 1, 1963. They were written when I was in junior high and in high school.

**Second Hundred and Sixty-three Poems** is my second volume of poetry. All poems were written between August 1963 and March 1967 just before and during my college years.

**Third Hundred and Sixty-eight Poems** is my third volume of poetry. These poems were written between March 1967 and March 1981. They start while I was in seminary and end when I filed for divorce.

**Fourth Hundred and Nine Poems** is my fourth volume of poetry. They were written between April 7, 1981 and February 23, 2002. They were written while I searched for a soul mate and end with a poem about my twin boys who have autism.

**Fifth Volume of Poetry: Falling in Love** is my fifth volume of poetry. These poems written between July 1977 and October 1981 are to and about my fiancée and my mistress. (Two different women.)

**Sixth Volume of Poetry: Falling in Love Again** is my sixth volume of poetry. These poems written between October 15, 1980 and December 13, 1981 are about a love affair that crashed and burned.

**Seventh Volume of Poetry: Cultivating Love** is my seventh volume of poetry. These poems and letters were written between February 1982 and March 1985 while I attempted to build a life with three more women before I found my soul mate.

If you are a struggling Christian and have difficulties sorting out your priorities, I had the same kind of problems in my youth. I hope you find my poems meaningful to you. And I suggest that you write your own poetry. Rappers aren't the only people who can express themselves. Everyone can.

As a pastor and theologian, I do not separate the sacred and the profane. The difference is in the human mind and not in life itself, just as evil is in the human mind and comes out of the

choices people make and not from the devil who made me do it. The devil has nothing to do with it. We are the ones who choose to do evil or good. The whole world is in our hands.

Enjoy the books.

*Paul David Robinson*

Paul David Robinson, BA, MDiv, Pastor, Retired

<https://www.smashwords.com/profile/view/PAULDAVIDROBINSON>

<https://www.pauldavidrobinson.com/>

**OUR CALL TO SERVE**

**WE ARE LIVING WORDS OF GOD**

**WE ARE CALLED TO BE THE CHRIST**

**“The Word which proceeds from the mouth of God shall not return Empty.” From Isaiah 55:10-11.**

**It is my personal belief that God calls each of us while we are in the womb to serve God.**

**In calling our names in the womb, we become living words of God intended to do God’s work in our world.**

**And what is the work of God?**

**“God has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you, but to do Justice and to do Loving Kindness, and to Walk Humbly with your God.”  
Micah 6:8**

**It is up to us. We have the power to do good or evil. What will you choose to do? The world is in our hands.**