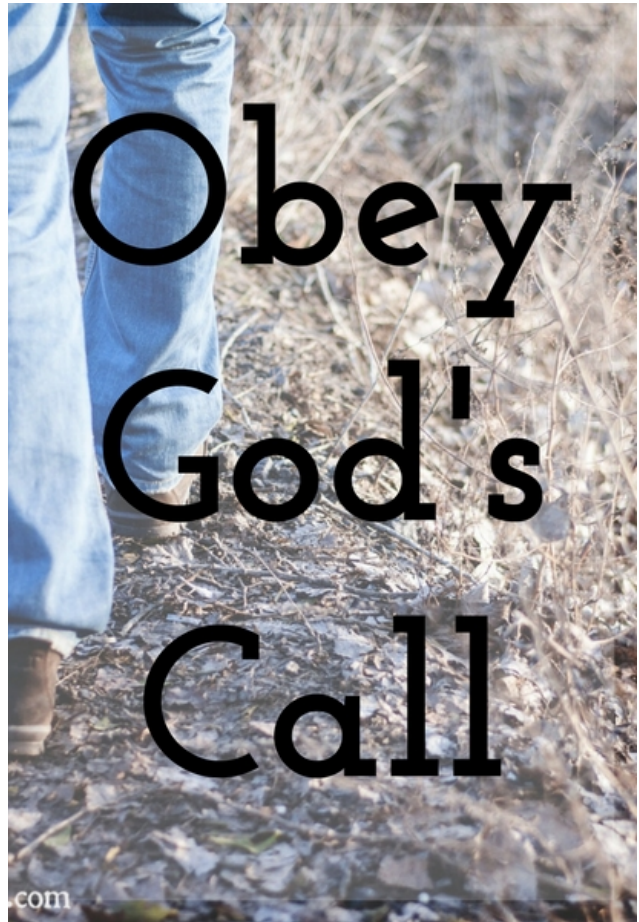




I thought with St Patrick's Day being last Sunday it would be good to see how his life can challenge us today. History provides us with the stories of women and men of faith who gave their lives to bring the Gospel to others. Patrick, the man who brought the Gospel to Ireland is one of those heroes. Born in Britain in AD 390, the historical person we know as Saint Patrick was raised in a Christian family. His grandfather had been a Catholic priest and his father served as a deacon. But Patrick had little interest in God or religion in his early years. At only 16 years old, Patrick was kidnapped by marauders in his homeland of Britain (it is believed he was from either modern Wales or Scotland) and forced into slave labor in faraway Ireland. Patrick's world was violently altered when he was carried across the sea to serve as a slave in the pagan wilderness of Ireland. For the next six grueling years, Patrick was held in bondage as a slave, tending sheep. Alone in a foreign land with no hope of escaping slavery, Patrick cried out to God for deliverance. In answer to his prayers, God revealed Himself to Patrick in a dream. It was there one night in his sleep that he heard a voice saying: "'You have fasted well. Very soon you will return to your native country.' Again, after a short while, I heard a someone saying to me: 'Look - your ship is

ready.” Patrick escaped and traveled 200 miles across Ireland to the West coast where he found a ship set to sail for England. Patrick was reunited with his parents in Britain. He remained with his family for more than a decade and during that time studied to be a priest. One night he received a message in a dream from the people who had once enslaved him. Despite the danger Patrick decided to obey the call of God to return to Ireland in AD 432, bearing the light of the Gospel. Bishop Patrick faced danger, not only from the druids and clannish warlords, but by the Irish nobility who saw him as a foreign threat. He endured public mockery and scorn. Patrick was beaten and persecuted but this heroic man of faith persevered. At that time, the people of Ireland worshipped the gods of sky, earth, and water. Patrick’s brave witness was recognized by the king who gave him permission to continue sharing the message of Jesus. The Church is Planted in Ireland



For each of us we can learn from Patrick that when God calls us, He will take care of us. We live at a time when the light of Gospel that Patrick brought to Ireland needs to be shared with everyone. As we strive to “train up our children in the way he should go,” Proverbs 22:6, we would do well to highlight Christian heroes like Saint Patrick. His brave witness and tireless efforts continue to bear fruit as a beacon of light to this day. Patrick obeyed the call of God to return to Ireland, bearing the light of the Gospel. The question for each of us is, “Are we obeying God’s called on our lives?” Patrick never took the easy road out. He knew the dangers he would face but he also knew that he served a faithful God who rescued him from slavery and would always be there for him. When I left Ireland to come here to Hutchinson the God who called Patrick called me and has been there for me. I can tell you that He will be always there for you as well. Listen for His call on your life, follow His plan for you. All you have to do is trust and obey just like Patrick did!