



Called: Part 2

We recently paused to reflect on this verse...

I Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful; you were called by him into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There is no question that our primary and most essential calling as Christians is into a full, no barriers relationship with our God.

Yet there seems to be more....

When I noticed a podcast entitled Living Called Instead of Driven pop into my feed, I was excited to learn more. After listening in, however, I was a little disappointed. Although there was great, thought-provoking content, it took on themes and directions that at first glance were not what I expected and did not seem helpful to my pursuit of a better understanding of calling.

You see, the theologians' discussion on that podcast spoke of topics such as knowing God with our hearts and emotions versus simply knowing Him with our minds. They emphasized the importance of an experiential versus cognitive understanding of God and others. They talked of living at a slower pace so we don't miss Him, what He wants to show us, and how He may be speaking to us. But they had barely mentioned the word 'calling'.

A little time, prayer, and that 'still small voice' of the Spirit, however, began to show me there was more to learn there than I realized. One idea stood out to me and shined light in the compartment of my soul that housed

my understanding of calling... It was the truth that Jesus continues to pursue those who are His own. He does so because He desires every part of us. He does so that we may know Him more intimately. He does so that we may be fully healed, reconciled, and sanctified.

Of course! Our Shepherd is both our Caller and Pursuer. The interplay of these two complementary word pictures struck me in a fresh and beautiful way.

Jesus certainly does a lot of calling in the Gospels. (Read the Gospels with an eye for this, and you'll see what I mean.) And calling seems to be a favorite concept of Paul in his epistles as well. He often refers to believers as those called by God, and he appeals to the churches to remember to live lives worthy of their calling. (See Romans 1:6, 8:28, I Corinthians 1:24, and Ephesians 4:1 for just a start.)

Although perhaps not as evident through a simple word search of the Scripture, the pursuing nature of God is also undeniable. Jesus' own words affirm it...

Matthew 18:12

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?

Our pursuer God described Himself as this man, this shepherd. And of course, the entire narrative of the Bible, with Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as its center point, is a testament to the pursuing nature the Father.

The One who calls invites us – His sheep – to respond to Him. It is an invitation to choose His safety, His security, His presence. It is an invitation to love and choose Him of our own free will.

Yet conversely, He pursues us too. Pursuit involves energy, urgency, and movement in the direction of the one pursued. Pursuing His sheep – pursuing me – is something He chooses of His own free will. He does not sit motionless on His throne merely beckoning me to come.

At Presence Point, we emphasize the living into and living out of our calling in the form of leading and influencing others as shepherds in their lives. We are on a journey together to learn and encourage one another to live in a way that invites others into relationship with, and to be disciples of, the Good Shepherd. We are linking arms as we learn to pursue others just as the Good Shepherd pursues His sheep who are lost or straying or simply in need of deeper intimacy with Him.

In order to do this well, we must first remember that we are sheep, continually invited to respond to the Shepherd's call into deeper relationship. We must also continually pursue our Pursuer, that we may be equipped to live into and live out the calling into fellowship with Christ to which we have been called. It is out of that rich fellowship then that we are enabled to follow His example and pursue the sheep He has entrusted to our care.

My pursuing Shepherd has broadened my understanding of calling, and I am grateful. Dear under-shepherds, I pray you are as well.

Digging Deeper Questions

1. In what ways do you pursue the Good Shepherd?
2. How does your pursuit of Jesus equip you to live into your calling as under-shepherd?
3. What are specific ways you can pursue the sheep He has entrusted to your care?