



## Called: Part 1

It was 6:15 AM, and as I walked the streets near my home, passing purple-blue hydrangeas and lavender buzzing with bumblebees, I was thinking about calling.

Calling was on my mind for more than one reason. The Presence Point tag line, Live Into Your Calling, was one of course. A note I jotted into my journal a few weeks before was another. At the time, I was cataloguing some concepts I wanted to understand better. "What is a true, biblical understanding of calling?", I wrote. Then, on that not-quite-yet awake summer morning, I walked, avoiding the bees and listening to a podcast kicking off the Bible reading plan I was about to begin. The key verse?

### **I Corinthians 1:9**

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

I had not given much thought to that verse before, but it didn't escape my notice that God may have been trying to get my attention. So...I resolved to keep my heart open to what He wanted to say.

Some would say we throw around the word calling quite a bit in the Church. But have you ever stopped to really consider what it means? Have you ever wondered if God has called you to something, or what He has called you to? Have you been taught, or have you come to believe, that only special believers receive calls from God into some glorious, lifelong vocation? You know – pastors, missionaries, and that sort. Do you believe

God's call must come in some supernatural way? Was the blackberry bush just ahead about to burst into flames so God's call on my life would be unmistakable?

Or perhaps this resonates with you: Was there a point in your past when you believed God did call you to something, but then twenty or thirty years later that call hasn't played out as you imagined? What then? Were you mistaken? Did you not hear God correctly? Have you been disobedient in some way? Have you forfeited your calling?

Maybe, on the other hand, you're someone quite sure of God's call on your life, and you're living it out faithfully. Praise God for that! I do believe God speaks dramatically and supernaturally to some. For many, His Spirit can and does clearly communicate very specific purposes. BUT... Here is the first thing God is opening my eyes to: If that has not been your experience, dear brother or sister, please be encouraged that you – yes you – have received the highest of all callings.

God is faithful; you were called by him into fellowship with his Son...

Are you a tad disappointed? Was your flesh expecting a flashy, spectacular, burning bush kind of calling? If so, pause and read those words again.

We are called into fellowship with Jesus, the Son of the Living God.

A quick Google search reminded me of the meaning of the word fellowship. Sharing. Communion. We are called into "a real and practical sharing in eternal life with the Father and the Son". In other words, our calling is life... together... with God.

Full exhale. I felt less like I was forgotten, lost, or falling behind. Less like I was expected to perform.

A few steps further down the road that day, I listened as the podcast and reading plan founder recounted this conversation. "I was asked once," she said, "how I knew God had called me to begin this ministry. My answer? I didn't know He was calling me to this ministry, or to do anything else for Him for that matter. I only knew He was calling me to Himself."

Deep inhale. Aware again of the lavender. That answer was what I needed to hear. He didn't want something from her. He wanted her. He didn't call her to do something. He called her into His Presence. And the same is true for me and for you.

A full circle thought then occurred to me. What if the Christian concept of calling is not quite so mysterious after all. We're all about shepherding here at Presence Point, are we not? Shepherds call their sheep, do they not?... The Good Shepherd calls His sheep too. He calls us. He calls His own. Every one of us. To what? To Himself.

And don't miss this. His call is not just a one-time thing. He doesn't merely call us into relationship with Him once. No. Like any good shepherd, it's a continual practice, so the sheep can remain close and enjoy his presence, and he theirs.

Dear sheep-who-also-shepherds and shepherd-who-is-also-a-sheep, may I suggest the primary calling we need to keep our attention on is the call of our Good Shepherd to Himself?

Will you today and throughout the week reflect with me on what it truly means to be called into fellowship with Jesus, and listen for the Shepherd's call? Remember that He calls you regularly and frequently... because He, the Son of the Living God, desires fellowship with you.

### Digging Deeper Questions

1. Was there a point in your past when you believed God called you to something, but now that call hasn't played out as you imagined?
2. Will you reflect with Jackie on what it truly means to be called into fellowship with Jesus, and listen for the Shepherd's call?
3. In what ways can you live out your primary calling to keep your attention on the call of the Good Shepherd?