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Ephesians 1:1a
Title: Called by Name
1/14/24

Discussion Questions:

1. Why are names and name changes important?
 2. When you think of “God’s calling” what do you think of? Why?
 3. Paul was prepared before he knew he should be prepared. Could this encourage you to trust God’s purposes? How?
 4. Do you remember the two things God’s calling always includes? Why is that important to remember?
 5. What is something that really stood out to you about this study?
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Teaching Notes:

It was probably a circular letter for the churches in the region.

It teaches us who we are & how we are to live as the church.

Paul wrote it from prison around the same time as Colossians.
Around 62 AD chained to a Roman soldier w/visitors allowed.

The book divides perfectly into two sections...

...The first 3 chapters are our identity.

...The second 3 are our activity.

The key idea that appears in different forms 35 times is “in Christ”.

Big Idea: Everything hinges on...

...our spiritual position of being “in Christ.”

Message title: Called by Name

We begin immediately with several identity statements.

The first is the name Paul, and that’s where we will focus today.

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

Paul is the author of this and 12 or 13 others books...

...But Paul used to be referred to as Saul.

In the first 12 chapters of the book of Acts, he is Saul.

Acts 9:1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

1. God’s calling is purposeful not predictable.

**When you start a sentence with “God can’t...”
...you are nearly always going to be wrong...**

-He took Simon a fishermen and made him Peter a fisher of men.
-He took Abram a childless idol worshiper and made him Abraham, the father of faith and of many nations.

He can take you & make you what he wants you to be as well!

**The question is not whether God will call...
...the question is...Will you heed the call?**

9:3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Jesus tells him it is hard to kick against the goads.
Translation: It is hard to resist the calling of God.

2. God’s calling comes from His will not our way.

**The appropriate response to the Lord is always...
...Lord, what do you want me to do?**

This is the essence of a real and right relationship with God.

Finding your calling isn’t just about taking a personality test or choosing a career path...

...it is about obedience to what God has given you to do.

God’s call is eternally important because...
...it always involves 2 things...

3. God’s calling involves God and people.

Whatever the work, realize that God’s calling involves...
...somehow, someway that people connected with God.

But you may ask...How can I know I will be able to do it?

4. God’s calling is what you are made for.

Saul was a Jew, but he was also born a Roman citizen.

...God used both his Jewish heritage and his Roman citizenship.

As a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin...

He had a deep, rich understanding of Scripture & Jewish tradition

But as a Roman citizen...

He knew the culture and customs of the Gentiles.

He also had the protections and privileges of Rome.

The moment where Saul becomes referred to as Paul is Acts 13.

13:1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

5. God's calling develops from abiding.

We don't manufacture it, we discover it abiding in Christ.

If you want to hear from the Lord, stay close to Him...

...be open to His leading, and keep seeking His will.

So when did Saul's name change?

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant. 6 Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11 And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Saul's name changes as his calling to Gentile ministry begins.

It will grow dramatically over time, but here it begins.