

Sermon Outline - Sun, Sep 26, 2021- Our Gifts & Experiences

Overview: This month we have been leaning into a conversation about Calling working with the equation that Calling = God's Plan + Our Gifts & Experiences + Our Community of Concern. For two weeks we looked at the concept of God's Plan. What is it, how do we understand it and we used the acronym PLAN to stand for **P**uts God First, **L**ong View, **A**ctivates others, **N**ecessitates Growth. Now we move to the 2nd part of the conversation about Our Gifts & Experiences.

Exegesis

- Quick Nehemiah reminder -
 - 70 years of captivity and Nehemiah is called to lead the people back to rebuild Jerusalem which was in shambles
- They get the rebuilding done by having each group of people take on a part of the task. The Levites get it started and it says that everyone falls into line taking on a piece of the rebuilding. Some do gates, and some walls and some repair locks. Everyone has a contribution → No has to do it all if everyone does their part
- This is a great example of how it plays out in practice and we turn to Ephesians to understand how gifts can be united to make something like this happen
- According to tradition this is written while Paul is literally locked up
- For the Ephesians maybe but more likely a circular letter to address common struggles
- REMINDER – Calling is not just about an individual. We will talk about this more, but in these stories there is always an assumption of collective calling
- Ujima – Collective Work and Responsibility

Key Points – How do the gifts work?

- Each of us is gifted and incomplete
 - God is not looking for perfect people.
 - Instead people who recognize their own spark and see it in others
 - Recognize their own limitations and lean into the divine and the collective
- The Goal is Not Self-Sufficiency But Interdependent Connection → Our Gifts are Made Powerful when Connected
- We have a responsibility to share our gifts AND make room for others to share their gifts with us!!!

We will go deeper into our individual gifts in the coming weeks, but I want to reiterate 50 times that God's calling is not about individual fulfillment but individual contribution to collective action. There is no Nehemiah without all the tribes and there is no personal calling without collective calling!

Questions

1. What are your gifts? The things that you do naturally or with joy?
2. Where are the places that you struggle and you need to lean into support from others? How are you at being vulnerable about those shortcomings and asking for help?
3. In what ways can you go deeper in sharing your gifts? I