

**Sermon Outline - Sun, September 11, 2022 – Calling – To Whom Are You Called?**  
Ecclesiastes 4:1-12; Isaiah 58:6-12;

**Keyword Summary** –

**Overview** – We are in the second week of our annual reflection on calling and discernment. We work with the equation - CALLING = God's Plan + Your Gifts & Experiences + Community/ies of Engagement. Last week we reflected on the fact that (1) We are Relational Beings; (2) Transformative Change requires the support of others; (3) Knowing who you are called to can often reveal what you are called to do.

**Exegesis**

- The Ecclesiastes scripture about connection is relatively well known – weddings, sermons about family or friendship but people rarely read the preceding scripture talking about the things that keep us from being connected, but we should look at that advice
- It talks about all the oppression in the world and names some specific examples of things that keep humans from a place of purpose and contentment
- Verse 4 talks about how people waste their talents because they are envious of other people. Rather than focusing on what they are called to, they are looking at others
- In verse 5-7 it talks about the person who spends all their energy trying to amass wealth and then doesn't even have anyone to share it with
- In Verses 1 & 7 we see the loneliness of the person trying to make it on their own.

**Key Points** – We are Literally Made for Connection

1. **Things that Stand in the way of Connection and Calling**
  - a. **Unhealthy Focus on Money** – Spending so much time trying to get more; trading time for money, earning money in ways that abuse others (Vs 5-7)
  - b. **Comparing Yourself to Others** – Being driven by jealousy and insecurity (Vs 4)
  - c. **Trying to do it On Your Own** – Shame or Power Grabbing (Vs1 & 7)
2. **Things that Facilitate Connection and Calling**
  - a. **Giving and Generosity** – Sharing resources, feeding people
  - b. **Recognizing the Unique Beauty in Everyone**– Knowing we are all God's children
  - c. **Embracing Vulnerability** – Being willing to ask for help and to support others

This is not just about individual practice but about calling out the dynamics in our society that push us apart from each other. We must put back on these things both in the way we behave on a daily basis, but also in the way we create new systems based on God's principles of interdependence.

**Questions** –

1. When you look at your time- how much of it is spent trying to gain more resources versus time you spend having meals together, mentoring or other forms of sharing that create and sustain connection?
2. How much time do you spend time comparing yourself to others? Do you judge people for what they have vs. who they are? How can you create more space to recognize the unique gifts of every person including yourself?
3. Where do you see yourself falling into the traps of trying to do it all on your own? How can you embrace vulnerability and be willing to receive support and give support?