

02 | You are Called

FULFILLING YOUR CALLING Series

Welcome to Part Two of this series. Today's title is, "You are called." I want us to look at Ephesians 1:1. Such a small little portion of Ephesians, Chapter One. But verse one, Paul is writing and it says this, "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints." I want to establish something--the book of Ephesians was written to the saints. Now we know that Paul was specifically writing to the saints in Ephesus, but the scripture is not of any private interpretation, or only for a certain group. This Scripture--now the prophetic word of God written--is for us.

And so Paul is writing to us today as the saints. And it's important that we establish that because the Book of Ephesians talks so much about the church and the gifts and the callings. And if we think he's talking to a specific group of saints, we don't even realize that what He's saying applies to us. So it's important, again--that little verse--Ephesians 1:1, Paul is writing to the saints, and saints are just believers, those who have made Jesus Lord. So it is you and I. So as we read through, I want you to recognize he's

talking to you today. Ephesians Four. Now we're going to look at verses one through eight, Ephesians 4:1-8. It says this. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." "Worthy of the calling with which you were called." And who is He talking to? Talking to saints. So, it's like Paul through the word--actually, it's like God through the written word--is pleading with us today, saying, "I want you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." Verse four it says, "There is one body, one spirit, just as you were called, in one hope of your calling." And then verse seven of Ephesians Four says, "But to each one of us ...", to each one of us, who? To "each one of us saints" or to each one of us believers, grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gifts. So, Paul is establishing, "You were called. You're a saint. You were called with a holy calling." And now he's urging us, "... walk worthy of that calling with which you were called." And then he goes on to say, "... to each one of us who is called, grace was given to us according to the measure of Christ's gift."

So, to each called person, there is a measure of Christ's gift that was given to them. So you and I literally have a measure of Christ's gift--a grace that was given to us because we are called. So, with your calling comes gifts that were given to us. And let me tell you that call and those gifts match

beautifully. So, I want us to look at First Corinthians Chapter 15. I want to focus on verses nine and ten ... (repeats) verses nine and ten. This is still Paul speaking. And it says this, "For I am the least of the apostles who am not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the Church of God." Verse ten. "But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain." Isn't that something? Paul recognizes. He said, "Listen, my works didn't earn this calling." He said, "I should be of anything, the least of all the apostles, because I actually persecuted the church. I was there when Stephen was being stoned. I approved of that. I took men and women into prisons. I saw them executed. Paul said, "My actions should make me the least of all apostles." But he said, "My actions are not what brought this calling. This calling came before I was even alive. It was before I was even in my mother's womb. God already had called me. And this calling is based on grace--the grace of God, the goodness of God, the plan of God, the power of God. It's by this grace that I am what I am, Paul says, and his grace toward me was not in vain. Paul is saying, "... it's because of God's grace that I'm the apostle that I am. But also, His grace is not in vain in my life because I am running with the calling that He has given to me. He didn't waste that grace on me. Oh, no, I am pursuing His calling. I'm pursuing the gifts that He has given to me. And I'm using everything towards this Ministry of Reconciliation to see men and women come to

know Jesus." And you know this--Paul's commitment to this calling was unto death.

Most of us will not die for the call of God. But I believe that in our hearts there has to be this thing that is settled. "That Lord, regardless of what it costs, Your Grace on my life was not in vain, because I will fulfill what You have said. Regardless of the attacks that may come, regardless of how many people may get upset, regardless of how many people don't like what I'm doing ... regardless ... regardless ... regardless ... Your grace, Lord, was not in vain because we settle it in our hearts that we're going to not just pursue it, but we're going to fulfill it."

So, that means that hard times don't cause us to draw back from that calling. Difficult challenges don't cause us to draw back from that calling. We have to have the same tenacity as Paul did... that, "I'm going to finish this race and I'm going to finish it with joy." So, you've been called before you were in your mother's womb. You were called, and your calling has nothing to do with your previous, before-Jesus life. So many of us disqualify ourselves because perhaps we come from some deep bondages ... deep sins .. deep. I mean, you may think, "Oh, I am the worst of all sinners." All right, maybe you have been, but you've been saved by such a great salvation that all that sin is washed away because you confessed it. And the

calling on your life is not based on your past life.

Remember what Corinthians said? We are new creations. Old things have passed away. All that stuff, all the things that we would feel so guilty and ashamed and condemned of--all that has passed away. All things now are new and they are of God. So, this calling is of God, not based on your works, not based on your previous life, but based on the grace of God, based on His love and His intentional plan for our lives that released everything we would need to be able to fulfill His plan. So I want to say of me, and I hope you want to say of you that this grace of God has not been in vain over your life because you will pursue it regardless of what it cost, you will pursue it, and you will finish this race with joy. That's what Paul said. He said, "I've determined I'm going to finish this race, but I'm going to do it with joy." And I believe even as Paul was dying, there was a joy in his heart, knowing, "I have fulfilled what God called me to." And actually, you can tell by I wish I had the passage. It would come to mind where it is. But Paul really had said, "You know, the reason why I'm here is because of my calling. The reason why I stay here on Earth is because of my calling," he said, "Because really, if it was about me, I'd be with the Father right now." He had such an understanding of not only heaven, but of His calling--that His calling was worth Him staying here and even suffering persecution and all the things that come from fulfilling the calling. He said, "It's worth

it because more people will be reconciled to God."

So by the grace of God, the calling is on your life. It's not based on your works. But let's not let this grace be in vain. Now I want to look at 2 Timothy, Chapter One. I want to read verses eight and nine. This is Paul speaking to Timothy, and he says, "Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner; but share with me in the sufferings for the Gospel according to the power of God." Those are the kind of scriptures we don't like reading too much. But Paul saying, "Listen, there is a suffering that comes because of the gospel." There are sufferings that will come because of the gospel, but they're worth it because lives--for eternity are impacted. And it's part of our calling.

Now, I want you to listen specifically to verse nine. I actually want to read it again and I want it to flow--verses eight and nine from 2 Timothy, Chapter One. "Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, His prisoner. But share with me in the sufferings for the Gospel according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling; Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began." So again, this calling on your life that was given to you before you were in your mother's womb. He calls it a

holy calling. Holy means, "set apart." It it's pure. It's right. It's worthy to be pursued. You've been called with a holy calling. Your calling is not casual. It's not cheap. No, it's a holy calling. It's a set apart, glorious calling. And again, Paul reiterates, "... not according to our works, but according to His purpose." So, notice that this call of God on your life is according to God's purpose. God had a purpose for your life. Not only does He love communing with you, but He actually has a purpose. When He created you, it was purposeful. And so this calling and this purpose go hand in hand. And then there's this grace of God that makes us able to fulfill the call of God on our lives, regardless of how difficult it is. Isn't that just beautiful? Every time I read that and I've read it so many different times, it just stirs my heart that the call of God in my life is a holy calling. It's a set-apart calling, and so is yours ... so is yours.

Now, Romans 11:29 talks about this holy calling. It says, "For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." "For the gifts, and the calling of God are irrevocable." This calling that has been given to you and assigned to you according to God's purpose before time begin and the grace to be able to fulfill it, Romans tells us it's irrevocable. God does not have a Plan B for you. This is the call of God. This is the purpose of God. It has been established. It has been settled and it is irrevocable. Irrevocable--cannot be undone. God has not

changed his mind ... will never change His mind about the original purpose for why He designed you and He created you. So, whether you have been pursuing that, calling, whether you have even maybe walked away from the Lord and are just coming back, whether you are new to the Lord and again, you feel like there's so much baggage that you come in with. I just want you to know you're not going to be able to talk God out of the calling with which He called you. It's a holy calling and it's irreversible. We can say it that way, and so it is worth pursuing.

So, I believe that it's so important that we settle in our hearts--that this holy calling we must pursue--that regardless of the challenges we face or even our own issues. You know, if you wait until you get there, until you make it, until you are a true saint, until you have been perfected to walk in your calling, you never will. There will always be reasons why you shouldn't pursue your calling with the utmost passion and zealousness. Maybe because it's the season of life or you may think, "Well, I'm just not mature enough." There will always be a reason to not pursue this irrevocable calling. And so, you've got to guard against those things. You've got to watch out and guard your heart so that you don't get distracted or deceived into thinking, "Some other day I can help people be reconciled to God." No, it's every day. This is part of our calling--to reconcile people to God. By what? By preaching the gospel. By sharing the gospel. By leading people into water baptism and

filling them with the Holy Spirit. This is our calling. This is part of our calling.

It may look different for you because maybe you're a business person and you're out in the marketplace. It looks different for me-- I'm inside of a local church. The way our callings play out looks very different, and it's based too, on again, the gifts that God has given to us. But the calling absolutely includes reconciling people to God by preaching and declaring the good news. We are ambassadors regardless of where we work, what degrees we have. We're ambassadors for Christ and God has said, "I want to plead to man through your voice that they may hear my voice pleading with them to be reconciled.". So, you are called. Period.

You are called--whether you feel like you deserve it or not. It has nothing to do with it, because it is by the grace of God that you've been called. And now the urgency is-- would you walk worthy of that calling? Would you pursue that calling with your whole heart? Would you make this a priority in your life--seeking the Kingdom of God first, going after the things that are in the heart of God first? Would you make that your priority? Because if you do, then you are fulfilling the call of God in your life. You're fulfilling it. Guess what? God adds to you the things that people that don't have God have to work for. He will add them to you. He will add favor to you. He will add provision. He will add everything that you need because you truly are pursuing this call of God on

your life. At the end of your life--there's so many things that matter right now that will not matter to you. I just know that at the end of my life, if Jesus doesn't come by then, I want to be able to look back and say, "I gave it my all. I pursued this calling. I walked in my gifts. I rejoiced in the grace to make it through the tough times. And I fulfilled the call of God." May that be your cry to as God is looking to us to reconcile man back to Himself.