

Called to Pioneer: Building God's Kingdom Through Community

There's something deeply stirring about the call to pioneer—to leave the familiar and venture into uncharted territory. Throughout Scripture, we see this pattern repeated: Abraham leaving his father's house at seventy-five years old, Moses fleeing Egypt only to return as a deliverer, David moving from shepherd boy to king. These weren't easy journeys. They were marked by uncertainty, sacrifice, and constant dependence on God.

But here's what makes pioneering worthwhile: when we're uprooted from everything familiar, we have the opportunity to be rooted in something eternal—the character and presence of God himself.

The Purpose Behind the Struggle

Moses' life offers a profound picture of this truth. Raised in Pharaoh's palace while his people suffered in slavery, he belonged fully to neither world. He wasn't rooted in Egyptian culture or Israelite tradition. This might have seemed like a disadvantage, a life of perpetual displacement. Yet when God called him to lead His people, Moses could stand on the foundation of relationship with God alone, unburdened by competing loyalties.

There's always purpose in the struggle. When we find ourselves in seasons of uncertainty, asking "Why, Lord?" we can trust that God is doing something deeper than we can see. He's not just moving us from place to place randomly. He's establishing us in Himself, making us people who can be certain of His character even when circumstances are uncertain.

The righteous live by faith, and God orders the steps of the righteous. Our righteousness isn't about our performance—it's about our faith in Him. When we trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding, He directs our paths.

Transformation Through Beholding

Second Corinthians 3 reveals a powerful truth: as we behold the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into the image we behold. This is an ancient principle of worship—we become what we focus on.

Think about how this applies to our struggles with sin. We often approach it with determination: "I need to stop this behavior. I'll focus all my energy on not doing this thing." But in focusing on the sin, we're actually beholding it, and we become what we behold.

The gospel offers a better way. When we behold Jesus—His beauty, His character, His love—the things that entangle us fall away naturally. We're transformed not by willpower but by worship. The shackles break in the presence of His glory.

This transformation isn't just a one-time event at salvation. The gospel continues working in us as we submit daily to Christ. We experience His suffering, His death, and His resurrection in our own lives as we're sanctified and made new. And then—beautifully—the gospel works through us to others.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations so that we may comfort others with the very comfort we were comforted with." This is the gospel in motion—receiving from God and giving to others.

The Body Functions Together

Ephesians 4:15-16 paints a stunning picture: "Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

Read that again slowly. When each part is working properly, the body builds itself up in love.

This challenges the consumer mentality that often pervades Western Christianity—the idea that church is a place where we show up to be served by professional ministers. The truth is far more beautiful and demanding: every single member has a vital role to play.

We were set free not just to be free, but to serve. Our salvation came with a calling, a purpose. And that purpose is found in functioning as part of Christ's body, using the gifts He's given us to build up the whole.

Romans 12 makes this clear. We have different gifts—prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, showing mercy. Not everyone is called to be a pastor or worship leader. Some are gifted in hospitality, others in faith, others in encouragement. Each gift is necessary. Each person matters.

Consider the story of Moses in battle, holding up his arms so Israel would prevail. When he grew tired, his friends came alongside to hold his arms up. Some fight the battle. Some lead the charge. Some support those leading. All are necessary.

Living Out Christian Ethics

Romans 12:1-2 begins with a crucial foundation: "Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. This is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Notice those first words: "in view of the mercies of God." This isn't about striving in our own strength. It's about beholding God's mercy and being transformed by it. When we try to live righteously apart from His mercy, we become like the Pharisees—burdening ourselves and others with expectations we can't meet.

But in view of His mercies, transformation becomes possible. Our hearts of stone are replaced with hearts of flesh. God writes His law on our hearts, and the desires of our hearts become aligned with His desires.

From this foundation, we can live out what follows in Romans 12:9-21—the practical ethics of Christian community:

- Let love be without hypocrisy
- Outdo one another in showing honor
- Be fervent in spirit
- Rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction
- Share with the saints in their needs
- Bless those who persecute you
- Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep
- Live in harmony with one another
- Do not repay evil for evil
- If possible, live at peace with everyone

Imagine a community that truly lived this way. This is the general calling for all believers—the foundation upon which our specific callings are built. As we pursue this way of life, the things that weigh us down fall away, and we begin to run freely in the purposes God has for us.

The Generational Perspective

When God spoke to Abraham, He had Isaac and Jacob in mind—and likely our generation as well. He thinks generationally because He is eternal. Shouldn't we think the same way?

Building for generations requires being rooted in the eternal One. Without Christ as our foundation, we can't see beyond ourselves or these present circumstances. But rooted in Him, we become part of something vast—the advancement of God's kingdom across nations and generations until Christ returns.

The kingdom of God is being advanced everywhere, in every generation. We get to be part of this greater work by building on the foundation of

Jesus. Not in our own strength or wisdom, but in view of His mercies, beholding His glory, and being transformed into His image.

This is the call—not to check a box on Sunday morning, but to be equipped, edified, and sent out as the hands and feet of Jesus. There are spaces and regions you can reach that others cannot. You have been set free for this purpose: to see the kingdom of God come on earth as it is in heaven.