

The Life-changing Calling of God

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Introduction: What does it mean to be a Christian?

- A. We are in a battle to see what is truly valuable. Where is real purpose and peace found? **(Mt 13:44-46)**
 1. Have you ever imagined winning a multi-million-dollar prize?
 2. Understanding what is really rare and valuable is hard because of the false values presented in this world. **(Jer 2:12-13)**
 3. Consider the life-changing blessing of a godly mate. **(Prov 31:10)**
- B. What comes to our minds when we remember our response to God's calling?
 1. There is a common calling for every Christian. **(1 Cor 1:2, 9)**
 2. Do we remember this and are moved by it?
 3. Our baptism must be seen in light of this calling and not as an end within itself.

I. The awesome privilege of receiving this call

- A. What does it **mean to be "called?"** **(1 Cor 1:26-27)**

Calling - κλησις, εως, η as an action *calling, call, invitation*; (1) predominately in a religious sense in the NT, of the divine invitations (PH 3.14); (2) as one's temporal status and position in life *social role, vocation, situation, station* (1C 7.20)

1. What if you received a personal invitation from the president of this country?
Would you treat it lightly?
2. Consider the power of the creator of this universe and then think of personally receiving an invitation from Him!
3. Why would the God of is universe want me for anything? **(Isa 40:28-31)**
- B. Those that receive this calling are utterly without merit to receive it.
 1. That is true from the worldly standpoint. The "mighty" and "wise" of the world reject both the call and especially those that are called.
 2. Understanding our unworthiness makes this call even greater. **(2 Tim 1:8-9)**
 3. How could one so far from God be given such a chance! **(1 Tim 1:13-15)**
 4. Most that receive this call reject it in the blindness of arrogance.
(Mt 20:16; 22:13-14)
- C. Those that respond to this calling should never forget it!
 1. We seek to remember birthdays and anniversaries.
 2. Do we vividly remember our calling? **(2 Thess 2:13-14)**
 3. Would we not want others to share in this same joy?
 4. Let us be sure that we have both responded and remember this calling. Our election is always connected to our calling. **(2 Pt 1:9-10)**
 5. Consider how Isaiah described the desperate place of those that were called by the Messiah. Let us never forget where we came from! **(Isa 42:6-7, 16)**

II. The unexpected path of this call

- A. We are called to be like God. **(Rom 8:28-29)**

1. The enormous gap would seem to be an impossibility. God is perfect! Why even put such a standard before us?
 2. The answer is found in how both His grace and in His power is used to bring real change in men. (2 Thess 1:11-12; 2 Tim 1:8-9)
 3. Consider how the religious leaders saw this power in the apostles! (Acts 4:13)
 4. To see the gradual change in a heart that thinks and acts so differently from the world is exactly how God intended our calling to bring Him glory. (1 Pt 2:12)
- B. We are called to suffer like Christ
1. Why would this be appealing to anyone? It is appealing when we understand who Jesus is and why He did what He did.
 2. In truth, the most meaningful paths in life are filled with sacrifice and suffering.
 3. Why does imitating the steps of Jesus in His suffering bless us? It shows us what real trust is like, and it gives peace to our hearts. (1 Pt 2:20-23; 3:8-9)
 4. When we understand the value of our calling, then suffering becomes a very small thing. (Eph 1:17-19; Rom 8:18)
 5. Consider the paradoxes of this calling. (2 Cor 6:8-10)
- C. It is in this path alone that the care and protection of God is found. (Isa 35:8-9)

III. How this calling changes how we think and how we live

- A. God's path is an upward call that is filled with His wisdom. (Phil 3:14)
1. This is a revealed path that man could not find with worldly wisdom.
 2. We must choose to remember this calling and choose to renew our thoughts.
 3. We are called to a daily, renewed mind that thinks and tests the paths of the world. (Rom 12:1-2; Col 3:1-5)
- B. Our true calling leads us to reject and warn against false callings of men. (Gal 1:6-7)
1. Satan is relentless in pushing substitutes that leave men untouched and unchanged. His call is to worldliness. (1 Pt 1:15-16; 2:11)
 2. Those that seek authority for all teachings and practices understand this calling. (Eph 4:3-6)

IV. The powerful hope of this call

- A. God has a path of assurance and purpose. (Eph 1:17-19)
1. What is hope? It is not a perchance or a maybe.
 2. God's plan will provide a certain finish line for all who walk by faith.
 3. We are never perfect, but we are continually changed by faith. (Rom 8:28-31)
- B. This hope keeps us focused on God and will change how we see everything!
1. How does my world look when I see God?
 2. How do I think and act towards my brethren when I see God? (Col 3:14-15)
 3. How do I see myself when I see God?
 4. How do I see the lost when I see God?

Conclusion: Do we clearly remember our calling?