

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The Hope of His Calling

by Dan Trygg

“Because of this, I too, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; ¹⁷ in order that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the intensive-knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ ...the eyes of your heart having-been-enlightened, unto you to know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power unto us, the ones believing. These are in accordance with the in-working of the mighty-strength of His robust-power ²⁰ which He in-worked in the Christ, raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies”

Ephesians 1:15-20

“I... entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called...”

Ephesians 4:1

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as also y’all were called in one hope of your calling; ¹³...until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature person, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ... ¹⁵ But, truthing in love, we are to grow up all things into Him who is the head, Christ, ¹⁶ out-from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.”

Ephesians 4:4,13,15-16

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling...”

Hebrews 3:3

Paul had prayed that we would know three things that he identified in Ephesians 1. These are “mysteries”, things that are beyond our observation, or our comprehension and are founded in Christ. **He prayed that we might come to know what is “the hope of our calling, what are the riches of our inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe” (vss. 18,19).**

The knowledge and experience of these things are clarified through the “true knowledge of Him”. The word for “true knowledge” is a word that indicates an “intense-revelatory-experiential knowledge”. Before going any farther in talking about this, **the first lesson to gather is that God wants us to experientially-know Him.** It is not sufficient for us to simply know *about* Him. We cannot truly know all that He is, ...He is infinite, after all. But even ***an intellectual understanding of who He is, and what He is like, is not adequate.*** It is not sufficient for us, and it is not sufficient for God. He desires to share more of Himself with us. He has revealed aspects of Himself through the world He has made, and through His interactions with people in history, but as valuable as these glimpses of His being and His character might be, they cannot fill the longing of our hearts. **We were made for God. We were designed for personal fellowship with Him. We were created to experientially-know Him.** He is the unmet need of our hearts, the water to quench the thirsting of our souls, the sustenance to satisfy the emptiness within, and the Love to fill the longing of our inner selves. He Himself is what we need to fulfill us inside. **It is in relationship with Him that we find life. It is in partnership with Him we find purpose. And it is in communion with Him that we find satisfaction and fulfillment.**

While all of this is true, it is important to remember that **God was not created to fulfill us, or to give us purpose, or to satisfy us.** God is eternal; He existed long before humans existed. **We were created for Him. We find our place and purpose in the universe in relation to Him, not the other way around.** While we know that humankind chose to disobey and turn from God as their Source, and experienced the corruption of sin and death, that is not the end of the story. **What we learned from the first part of this chapter is that God also determined, before the foundation of the world, that those who would be in Christ would be holy and blameless before Him, they would be adopted as full heirs, and that they would be to the praise of His glory.** This was God’s plan determined *before* there ever was any sin, or even any planet on which human life would be created. **God knew what was going to happen, but also knew that He could do something with humanity that would be much greater than the effects of sin.** He could turn all of this around to bring praise and honor to His name, and blessing and fulfillment to those who would choose Him. **All of what Paul says, in the rest of this chapter, is for those who choose Jesus.** Those who have heard the word of truth, the “good news of your salvation”, and have believed or entrusted themselves to Jesus, and who have been marked and sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13) are those for whom Paul is writing. **To them, God has already prepared a “redemption package”, ...a purpose, provision and empowerment for their fulfillment.**

The three things Paul prayed that we might come to perceive and understand have to do with these three areas: **the hope of our calling, the riches of our inheritance in the saints, and the surpassing greatness of His power toward us.** Purpose, provision and empowerment. **Calling, inheritance and power.** They are *not* random thoughts. They are tied together.

The word translated as “calling” is similar to our English word, in that it has numerous meanings. The most basic meaning is the verbal idea of “to call” or “invite”. It can refer to a name, e.g., “She had a sister called Mary” (Lk. 10:39). Of the 148 times the verb occurs in the NT, it is usually used in these three senses: the designation of a name; to call someone; or to invite someone. **In addition to these basic ideas, there is a related noun, which occurs 11 times, which is translated as “calling”** (as in Eph. 1:18), which, again, generally means “call, calling or invitation”, but which **can also refer to an activity or opportunity or position that one is invited to. A job was considered a “calling”,** in that it usually was the result of an opportunity provided by an employer, an “invitation, summons or call” to work. In a similar way, an overlord would “call, invite, or summon” his subjects to serve him. The responsibilities of his “calling” would be determined by the overlord. **In this way, the word, “calling” is much like our English word, “vocation”. “Vocation” is from the Latin root, which also means “to call, invite”.**

What the NT tells us is that **“God has saved us, and called us to a holy calling,** not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace” (2 Tim. 1:9). **We are “participating-partners of a heavenly calling”** (Heb. 3:1), and are encouraged to not disregard the voice of God, but to be faithful. In Philippians 3:14, Paul was writing about how the things he had thought were valuable, and had striven to obtain, had become less than nothing in comparison with what was in Christ. He had come to the place where he had designed his life to most effectively pursue the goal of the prize of **the upward calling of God in Christ.** He went on to say that all who are mature should live in such a way. He grieved over those who chose to live only for earthly interests, because they are more than ineffective, ...they divert people away from Jesus, instead of toward Him.

What does this mean? We have been “called” by our Savior and King to serve Him, ...to do the work of His kingdom purposes! Notice that **we are not left directionless or unguided.** We are to do this in accordance with His own purpose and grace, ...by being faithful and following His voice, ...and by designing our lives to honor and serve Him. Our “calling” is not “ours”, as if it somehow belonged to us, or was up to our own human ingenuity or efforts. No, **God has called us to a “holy calling”, a way of living and serving that is distinctly “separate”, uniquely “set apart” from what may be expected.** It is living as “dedicated to God” and in agreement with His purposes and grace. **We are called to be “participating-partners” with God Himself in His work in this world.** We are called to “work-together with Him” (2 Cor. 6:1). That doesn’t mean that we are in charge. We get our direction from Him. **We are associates, assistances, even accomplices with Him in His activities.** He has called and invited us to assist in this work. **Finally, the work is here upon the earth, but not for the earth.** We are called to serve the King of heaven. Our citizenship is *not* primarily here. **Our focus is not to be about saving society, or saving the planet, it is to be saving those who will hear the good news and respond to the invitation of God.**

There are two passages that talk about this process. **What is to be our focus?** The first passage is **Ephesians 4:1-16.** It should not be a great surprise to us to see that Paul returns to this key theme as the letter develops. This is really one of the most clearly delineated passages about how the Church is supposed to function. **The thrust of this entire section is that we are in this together. God has made us one.** We are one in Him, and we are one with each other. **In order to fulfill our calling, we must learn to function together.** Christianity is not meant to be “an individual sport”, ...it is clearly a “team sport”. When you read the first sixteen verses of this chapter, this becomes so apparent. **Do you want to “walk worthily of the calling of which you were called”? You do it by bending over backwards, with pride-crushing lowly-mindedness, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another in love.** You work zealously to keep the unity of the Spirit in the binding-together-bond of peace. There is only one Body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling. We are not to let anything disrupt our unity. **The one God and Father of all has called us together, and given us gifts, to enable us to help one another grow up to a unity of the faith, an experiential knowledge of Jesus, and a maturity that looks like Jesus. We all need to help one another in this, because this is the way God designed the church to work, and this is how together we can fulfill the calling of God.** We do it by raising up *mature people in Christ*, ...and especially a *visible community of people* living a walk that looks like Jesus.

The other passage is **2 Thessalonians 1:11,12:** “...we pray for you always, in order that our God will make you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power,¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him...” Paul was praying that God might *make them worthy* of their calling, and would work within and through them, so that their every good intention to do what is beneficial and to serve Him would be filled full of His power. **There are going to be other things outside of the local body of the church that God will lead His people to do that will bring Him glory.** Paul was praying for God to fulfill their good desires and intentions to serve, and bless their efforts with productive results, so that the name of Jesus might clearly shine out from them, and they might shine in Him, according to the grace of God.

The hope of our calling is that we might be partners with Jesus in the work He has for us to do. May God help us to recognize His leading, respond to His voice, and be faithful to do as He reveals. May He fulfill this desire with His radiant glory and power, so that His name would be exalted in what we do.