

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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How Are We To Live?

by Dan Trygg

“Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mindset in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be held on to, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being made in the likeness of humans. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself (‘made Himself low’, or ‘lowered Himself’) by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Philippians 2:1-8

“You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised Him on the third day and made Him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with Him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To Him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

Acts 10:37-43

“Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For ‘Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.’ ¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed.

1 Peter 3:8-14

As we consider Jesus’ coming to earth as a human child, we must remember that **this is not just a story for us to remember. It is an example we are to follow.** The eternal Word of God came here to dwell in our midst to show us something, and to accomplish something. **He came to show us the Father’s heart, and He came to seek and save those who were lost.** He did not come by accident. He came here on purpose. He made a free-will choice to set aside His glory, His power, His self-comfort in order to live among people who did not know Him. **He set aside His self-life in order to accomplish the Father’s will, ...to reveal, to seek, to save and to train serious committed followers to live as He did.** His entire life here on this planet, from beginning to end, and even now in heaven at the Father’s right hand is all about mission, purpose, calling out those who will follow, and take up His mission as their own.

We, therefore, are called to also lay aside our own selfish ways of living, and empty ourselves of our own pride and self-agenda. **We, too, are to be people of purpose, people who freely choose to no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose on our behalf.** We are called to follow the example of Jesus. **We are to reveal Christ by our lives, ...intentionally choosing to live in ways that demonstrate the heart of God.** We are to see ourselves as commissioned with a mission, ...to live among people who are lost in darkness, and live in such a way that they can see the light of God’s goodness and grace through our lives. We are to always **be seeking to reveal Jesus’ heart, ...looking for ways to show His working within us by doing good, by living lives that are more than ordinary, ...lives that have a dimension of “God at work”, made evident consistently through the things we say and do.** **We are to see our selves as disciples, active-followers and apprentices of Jesus. We are more than students, we are practitioners. We are learning to do as Jesus did.** We are to learn to walk in the power of the Spirit, as Jesus did. We are to learn to live in dependent awareness of the calling of God in our lives. We are to learn to watch for what the Father is doing, so that we can join Him in His working, as Jesus did (Jn. 5:19,20). We are always to be ready to put aside our own agenda to be able to engage with Him. **We are to be seeking, ...seeking intimacy and direction from God, ...seeking avenues of kindness, good will and service to others,** and seeking opportunities to step through doors that God is opening in front of us to engage in the lives of others. **We are to be seeking people.** Like Jesus, we are to become all things to all people that by any means we might save some. We are to be seeking to reveal Jesus to them by our words and deeds, and **we are to be seeking for those who will be responsive and interested in finding out more.** When people are responsive, that is God at work in their lives. Then, **we are to be praying and seeking for those who are willing to join us in following Christ.** We are to do what we can to “show them the ropes”, to get them started on their journey with Jesus. We are to see our role as encouragers, and help them to see God at work in their lives. **We are to help them to see themselves as apprentices,** people in training to learn to live and operate as Jesus did in this

world. **We are to help them become *people of purpose*, ...people who are willing to do God's will, no matter what.** They are to learn how to grow deeper in their faith, and **come to see themselves as also people on mission for Christ.**

These three passages describe Jesus' heart, His willingness to set aside His own agenda in order to serve others. *We are to follow His example.* We are to have the same mindset. We are to love like He did. We are to be united in Spirit, ...literally, "joint-souls". **We are to think "the one thing". *What one thing?* We are to think like Jesus did. We are to emulate Him, ...His attitude, ...His mind-set.** Sometimes we bandy about words, and we don't really allow them to settle on us with full impact. **We are to have Jesus' mind-set, ...His willingness to set aside anything and everything else, in order to fulfill the will of His Father.** How did He do that? We see in Acts 10 that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit, and with power. **When did that happen for Jesus? It happened *after* He made a free choice to consecrate Himself to God** at His baptism by John the Baptist. **After He chose to set aside His private life, His personal agenda even as a human being, ...only then did the Holy Spirit come upon Him in power, ...only then was He activated for God in a new, empowered way.** You see, **Jesus did not just empty Himself once, ...He had to empty Himself over and over, day-in and day-out, ...right up until He embraced the cross.**

It will be the same way for us. If we want to emulate Christ, ...if we want the mind-set that He had..., then we, too, must *choose to empty ourselves*, ...we must consecrate ourselves to serve God. It is a clear, freely chosen decision that we make. It is a decision we make once, as a commitment, ...but then we must live that commitment out by making that choice to empty ourselves of our agenda over and over, ...as often as necessary. **It is a mind-set, ...a setting or determination of the mind. The choice to consecrate ourselves to Christ is *followed up by a pattern of repeated choices* to walk out that determination to live for Him each day, and in each situation we must face.**

This choice of Jesus' was a decision that *activated* His life for ministry. From that day on, His purpose was to live out, to express, the will of God in His dealings with others to a larger measure than He had before. He emptied Himself to come from heaven to earth. He emptied Himself to order Himself under His parents. Now, **He had to empty Himself from just living a normal, quiet life. *His consecration activated His focus on ministering to others*, ...and He never went back on that new commitment.** Notice that "He went about doing good..." **His life was filled with actions that others saw as good and beneficial, ...and this "good" was seen in acts of ministry and service to other people.** He went about doing good, healing people and casting out demons. Why? Because God was with Him. **People recognized that God was at work in Him, because He was doing things that were beyond ordinary.** He did not "cook these things up". God opened up and initiated these opportunities. **The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus to do things that were beyond the normal human response, ...and people saw God at work.**

God is asking for us to make a decision to consecrate our lives to Him, ...a decision that will *activate our lives for God in a new way.* We must dedicate ourselves to *serve* God, ...to *discern* and to *do* His will. This commitment will require a day-in and day-out mind-set of determination to know God and do His will at an intensified level in our lives. **This is a decision to go deeper, ...to live *more boldly and freely* for Christ.** It is a determination to do whatever it takes to be led by and empowered by the Holy Spirit. **It is a commitment to follow hard after God, and to step out in new ways.** It involves a willingness to empty yourself of a private agenda in order to live for the kingdom of God in a new way. **It entails *stepping up and stepping out in a new capacity.*** It will require us to step out in things of the Spirit. **If we are to be apprentices of Christ, we must be willing to *do as He did*, and allow Him to teach us.** We must be willing to pray for the sick, depend on the Holy Spirit to enable us to say and do what is required. We must be willing to learn about and engage in spiritual warfare, as Jesus and the apostles did. Casting out demons is part of our calling. **We must see ourselves as becoming equipped to be encouragers, trainers and mentors of others.** We are to take on that as part of our responsibility and calling in Christ. We don't have to necessarily train someone up one-on-one, ...but we are to be part of a team working to encourage, support and train others to be active followers of Christ, engaged and purposeful members of the body.

The passage in 1 Peter 3:8-14 draws our attention back to the body of Christ. Just as Philippians 2:1-8 began with focusing on our relationships with one another in Christ, so here Peter directs our minds to think the same, feel with each other, have open hearts toward each other, and a humble mind. **We are not meant to be "lone ranger Christians" or "isolated pilgrims". We are meant to be in community, ...to be surrounded by a supportive family of believers to help each other grow, and deal with the ups and downs of life.** He warns against retaliating against one another. Romans 12:17-19 and I Thessalonians 5:15 address a similar concern. **We are going to have disagreements and conflicts. We are going to irritate one another and offend one another, at times.** There *will be* rough-edged, difficult people we will have to deal with *even in the body of Christ.* Because we are all in a process of growth. **What is important is that we do our part to keep from reciprocating or escalating hurtful or inappropriate exchanges.** Again, look to Jesus' example. He did not retaliate. God knows. He will sort it out. **If you do what is right and good, and seek peace and pursue that, God will use that to bring what is true and good to the light, ...and He will take care of you!**