

"Your Calling"

Ephesians 4:1-16

- Paul speaks to the saints at Ephesus in our passage of the day
- Addressing their walk, their vocation, and their calling
- And the spirit with which they must proceed in walking, working, and serving

- These are believers in Christ, which he reminds are part of the body of Christ
- Unified with others who have faith in Him
- Working together for a common purpose
- Possessing individual gifts that contribute to that purpose

- If they - if we - can follow Paul's example and heed his advice
- We can learn to maximize our role in the church
- And develop an effective local church ministry
- (This text is a big help...)

- Today we examine "Your Calling" from Ephesians 4

- There are stretching words, phrases, and concepts in these opening verses
- They challenge us to see ourselves in certain ways if we believe in Christ
- These are ways in which we may not always want to think of ourselves
- They emphasize surrender, unconditional obedience, and diligent effort
- Things that may only arise as the result of the Holy Spirit's work within us

- The title Paul gives himself is first to challenge us...

Ephesians 4:1

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

- Paul is both a literal and figurative prisoner at this time
- Captive, in bonds at Rome, but also captive and in bonds for the Lord
- Suffering imprisonment for His faith
- But fully surrendered, with no reservation (prisoner of the Lord)

- It is Paul's bondage to Christ (in fact) that has led to His physical bondage in Rome

- He is an example
- The scope and intensity of his commitment are instructive and worthy of emulation
- He is not a teacher speaking with no personal experience

- So when he proceeds to "beseech"
- That is to call us to his side
- He does so with great credibility

- And he urges us to live (walk) in a worthy manner
- Knowing that we have a vocation
- A "calling," to which we are most certainly called
- One commentator said...

"We are called Christians; we must answer that name, and live like Christians."

- Paul had, we have, every believer in Jesus has, a calling
- To serve Him faithfully, to serve Him obediently, as He intends for us to serve
- But how?

Ephesians 4:2

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

- This is to have a humble opinion of one's self
- To be gentle
- To have patience and endurance
- To bear with one another in brotherly love
- Our vocation must be approached in this way, with this spirit
- That is, in direct opposition to our own flesh, but in perfect step with the Spirit
- But there will be some work to do...

Ephesians 4:3

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- To endeavor is to exert one's self
- Not to create or manufacture unity, but to keep it
- Because we have it - in the Spirit
- But the world, the flesh, and the devil make it difficult to maintain
- Let's remember...

Ephesians 4:4-6

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

- There is a unity, a commonality, a connection that binds believers
- It strengthens each individual's walk, but also makes so much ministry possible
- And it is a fact that must arise in our minds regularly
- For we are so often tempted to "go it alone"

- But there are more personal reminders...

Ephesians 4:7-12

7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

- There are individual gifts that are provided for each member of the body
- They differ, but are not valued differently
- (Meaning one is not greater than the other...)
- But they instead work together to edify
- To equip
- And to accomplish work

- Because we are headed somewhere...

Ephesians 4:13-14

13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

- God has a plan to grow us
- And to bring us to a point of maturity
- To build for us a solid foundation
- To give us the kind of balance and equilibrium we need to stand
- No matter what the world brings our way

- We should never be the kind of people that are tossed to and fro
- Or deceived by those who would confuse or lead us astray

- Instead...

Ephesians 4:15-16

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

- We having a calling, one which we share with others who have faith in Christ

- And our unity with them
- Our unique role among them
- Will make it possible for God's work (eternal work) to be done

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