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 Bridgeway Community Church
 Series: PRECIOUS
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PRECIOUS: “Precious Calling”

Hello Bridgeway, as always, I am honored by your love and enthusiasm. It is my privilege to be one of your pastors, and I feel blessed by the opportunity to share God’s word with you all on this day. I love this church, I love our pastor, and I love you.

Dr. Anderson, again I want to say thank you for being my pastor, a great leader, and a friend. I have become a better person because of you and your example. Thank you for welcoming me into your team and entrusting me to teach such an incredible group of individuals.

Church, today I have an assignment. God and our pastor tasked me with delivering a message on what it means to have “A PRECIOUS CALLING.” As I prepared for this message through prayer, I was reminded about my spiritual journey and how I have struggled for thirty-plus years with embracing GOD’s CALL in my life.

You see, it has always been challenging for me. If I am being honest, I can think of more reasons “why I shouldn’t be called” than “why I am the man for the job.” I often find that regardless of the space I am in, I sometimes feel “less than.” Which is why I went to the Word to discover what God has to say to me about this.

So please turn with me to **1 Corinthians 1:26-29:**

“Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.” (NIV)

I was sharing this week at the WNA class I teach on the Holy Spirit that I was a NO-BODY when the Lord called me to serve him.

- I was a convict,
- I had no education; I was a six-grade drop-out,
- I was an addict,
- I came from a broken family,
- I was a product of the system,

- I was young and immature,
- I had hatred and anger in my heart,
- And I wasn't even looking for HIM.

Yet, HE went into that prison cell looking for me.

I had nothing to offer HIM or the Kingdom of God. But that's not what HE saw. He knew something about me that I didn't know about myself. HE saw something in me that I wasn't even aware of.

Since then, I have walked in gratitude and humbleness –because HE CHOSE ME. I would not have chosen myself, but HE SAW SOMETHING in me worth CALLING. I am still unsure what it is, but I know HE DID, DOES, and will continue to DO SO.

I am forever grateful and indebted to HIM. I am transformed and have become a better person because of HIM.

Before my calling, I had a distorted vision about who I was, what I was supposed to be, and do with my life, but HE has completely revolutionized that stinking–thinking. I grew up in the hood and never left my block unless it was to go do a stick up or something else I shouldn't have been doing. When my youth pastor remember took me to Roxbury Community College, where I got my GED. He took me over to the College, signed me up, and on that same day I was enrolled. I didn't realize how easy it was to enroll, which is why I kept putting it off. I put all these limitations on myself, but all I needed was for someone to take my hand and show me how to fill out an application and a student aid form!

Since being called, I have traveled the world preaching and teaching the gospel message. I went from a dropout to having my Master's Degree. I am an author, a great father, a fantastic husband (if I do say so myself), and a leader. I have been a mentor to hundreds of individuals. I have had the privilege of leading thousands to Christ, and I am a man of prayer. On top of all that, I have the honor of pastoring one of the most amazing congregations in the world. COME ON, SOMEBODY!!!

Thank God that HE doesn't call the qualified, but instead qualifies the CALLED...

I. WHEN GOD CALLS US, HE DOESN'T LOOK AT OUR PRESENT CONDITION BUT RATHER LOOKS AT OUR PURPOSE & DESTINY

- Samuel was sleeping when God called him (1 Samuel 3).
- David was out in the field tending sheep and wasn't even considered by his father when he was called (1 Samuel 16:11).
- Moses was a fugitive tending sheep; he had a stuttering problem and was in the wilderness when God called him (Exodus 2:15, 3:10).

- Saul persecuted Christians when he was called on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6–11).
- The prophet Ezekiel saw a Valley of Dry Bones before they stood on their feet as “A Vast Army” (Ezekiel 37).
- Jesus CALLS Simon’s PURPOSE & DESTINY despite his betrayal: “*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it*” (**Matthew 16:17-18 NIV**).

God is calling some of you, and you keep looking at your present situation as a determining factor and an excuse as to why you cannot accept HIS CALL.

- God said, “*...I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’*” (**Isaiah 46:9b-10 ESV**).

We need to hear this, because sometimes we don’t give people opportunities to step into their calling.

II. GOD CALLS MANY TO MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP, YET THE ULTIMATE CALLING IS REALLY –TO SURRENDER AND SERVE

Often, when discussing God’s Calling, we think about leadership and ministerial mission, but that’s not always true.

There are different types of callings:

- We are called to repent from our sins and surrender to the voice of God (2 Chronicles 7:14).
- We are called to serve and care for others.
- We are called to be saints (Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:12).
- We are called to freedom and liberty (Galatians 5:13).
- We are called for ministry and leadership (Rom. 11:29, Eph. 4:11-12)
- We are called to be witnesses of the gospel (Acts 1:8)
 - “*We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully*” (**Romans 12:6-8 NIV**).

God is calling you! Scripture says that we are “living epistles” written not with ink but with the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). That means *your life* is the only Bible some people will ever read!

Sometimes we have confusion over how we discern our calling. There was never a moment where I heard the voice of God say: “ELI, YOU ARE CALLED.” I sought the presence of God. I started serving. I received opportunities to preach. Slowly I started to notice the unique call and anointing of God on my life, and others started to notice it too.

III. SIGNS THAT YOU ARE CALLED BY GOD

1. **You don’t find what you seek!** In other words, you feel unfulfillment, dissatisfied, and misplaced. Your spirit feels uncomfortable, it’s almost like you are missing part of the puzzle.
2. **Having a persistent thought or pressing in your spirit!** The fact that you are thinking, “*Maybe God is calling me,*” Could be that God is calling you! This could be especially true if this thought of yours comes out of nowhere.
 - ILLUSTRATION: As a non-christian, non-church-cultured individual, I was challenged by the thought that God called me. I felt a call even though no one ever taught me about what a “call” is or how to discern it!
3. **Manifestation of Spiritual Gifts:** They run effortlessly and naturally. Your natural talent and spiritual gift may show you what you are called to do!
 - ILLUSTRATION: Once I went to a restaurant with some friends and didn’t want anyone to know I was a pastor, I just wanted to chill and relax. But by the end of our time there, unbelievers were all around me, asking me to tell them about Jesus! It just happened, because that’s the evangelistic anointing on my life that I flow in.
4. **Others see something in you that you don’t see in yourself:** God’s call is never about you! It is about God and his kingdom. Don’t get me wrong, you are blessed when you are obedient. But at the end of the day, it’s not about you. God’s call will always glorify Jesus.
5. **A Spiritual burden!** You can’t sleep; all you can do is think of a particular audience or ministerial need. The Spirit may keep revealing things to you, and you ignore it. You continue to get a tug in your soul; you have received confirmation after confirmation.

IV. CONCLUSION

- If you’ve lied like Abraham, GOD is willing to call you his friend.
- If you have cheated people like Zacchaeus, HE will befriend you in front of your enemies.

- If you have left home and blown your money like the prodigal son, HE waits for you with open arms.
- If you have been despised like the Samaritan woman, HE will sit down and talk to you.
- If you have been caught in adultery, HE will forgive you in front of your accusers and direct you on the right path.
- If you deny him like Peter, HE will give you a second chance.
- If you are unclean, HE will touch you and cleanse you.
- If you are in prison, HE will visit you.
- If you are hungry, HE will feed you.
- If you are the only one lost out of 100, HE will leave them to find you.
- When Jesus came into this world, HE embodied God's heart for you—a heart that says: "I would go to any lengths possible to have a relationship with you!"

Practical Applications:

1. Stop wondering and pay attention

Rather than constantly wondering, "Maybe...Maybe..." Start by listening. If you listen to the voice of the Spirit, the Spirit will talk! The problem is that we are scattered and all over the place, and the Lord keeps talking but we aren't listening. Stop wondering and pay attention.

2. Humble yourself and try different things. Try different activities until you are happy and find fulfillment and joy

Just because you are an Executive in your corporate world doesn't mean you are going to be an Executive in the Kingdom of God. Sometimes, picking up the chairs is a good sign that someone is called by the Lord. Sometimes, cleaning up the bathroom is a good sign that someone is called by the Lord. And while I'm at, on your way out the door, give the people serving in the parking lot ministry some love! Maybe God wants you to serve there.

3. Pay attention to un-usual desires

Is there something being birthed inside of you that seems like it's from God?

4. Pray for guidance and direction

5. Obey the voice of the Spirit

6. Take our S.H.A.P.E class on MAY 6TH.

Even if the Lord doesn't reveal your calling during the class, it may plant the seeds of your calling that will grow and bear fruit later.

Let's pray...

*Thank you, Lord Jesus,
for your power, for your anointing, and for your call.
In Jesus Christ's name we pray,
Amen & Amen!*