

LIVING OUR CALLING AS A CHURCH

Houses of Light Church • December 31, 2023 • Sharon Wilberger

Eph. 4:1-3 *"I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. This passage applies to us at this time; as a church we are in this beautiful transitional place of the wineskins, receiving prophetic words and seeing how they come to life. And it is possible that after having heard all this you ask: Am I part of that? Is the Lord including me? no one has said my name directly, so maybe it's just for someone else or for him leadership. Where am I in this bigger story that the Lord has for Houses of Light, our nation, and the earth?
1. Tomorrow, a new year is starting! Call me a hopeless romantic, but I do believe that the Lord could do something new in us this year!

II. LIVING OUT OUR CALLING

Eph. 4:1 *"... I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."*

- A. Many ask themselves "What is the calling of my life?" Here Paul is stating very clearly that there is a calling on your life but to know our calling we have to know who the One who calls us is. The more we know Him and who He is, the more we will know what He is calling us to.
1. In our American Christian culture, sometimes a call can look like it's about fame and influence. And if you don't have that then you aren't walking in your calling, or you are missing it because you are stuck having to work or go to school. But what is the call really about? Is it just about me or how well known will my name be?
- B. Something that can easily be forgotten is that when we were born again and saved we were grafted into this story of God that began even before Genesis. It is correct to see the Bible as the book of our history, first for Israel and then for us.

Eph. 1:4-5 *"even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will"*

1. All of these questions take us back to the beginning of our story with the Lord when we were saved by His grace and said yes to the Lord. The apostle Paul takes chapters 1-3 of Ephesians to explain this. Our salvation was not simply an escape from hell. It was about saying yes to a man and the story He has written.
2. Salvation was not only a temporary religious act but the Lord promised us to spend eternity with Him! It is a personal and eternal commitment!

Jn. 17:24 *"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world."*

3. When I married Dano, it wasn't about escaping singleness or my own family conflict. It had nothing to do with trying to escape from something. It had everything to do with wanting to spend every day with the man who was going to be my husband. Commitment is saying yes to a person until the day they die, saying yes to their family until the end, saying yes to their history, saying yes to their customs, saying

yes to their needs, dreams and passions, to everything. It's the same the day we said yes to Jesus. We said yes to all of Him.

4. Understanding this, what salvation is really about, gives us insight into what our calling is. It is about Him and partnering with Him to do His will and see His story fully fulfilled. And when we set our eyes on Him and His kingdom, He promises us: I will take care of you, say yes to your dreams, passions, family, etc. What a beautiful exchange!

Matt. 6:33 *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*

5. Now that we have a clearer understanding of our calling, we can hear Paul's urgency to **"walk in a manner worthy of your calling."** How do we do this? He is saying that the evidence of our salvation, of our yes to Him, is by living as He tells us.

Gal. 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."*

Lk. 15:21-22, 24 *"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 'But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."*

- a) I heard Benji say once, "salvation was the Lord promising us eternity with Him!". He related it to a type of getting engaged!

III. HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE OUT OUR CALLING?

Eph. 4:2-3 *"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*

- A. **Humility:** Jesus sets the greatest example of humility. Leaving heaven to be born as a baby. No one would ever do that!

Phili. 2:3-8 *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross"*

1. This is what He calls us into, He says, "Just when you think you've gone low, go even lower."

- a) My dad would always tell me to go low and be the first to apologize, first to initiate and it used to frustrate me because it felt so unfair. "Why always me?" Then one time I remember the Lord told me, "I'll never ask you to do something that I haven't done. So if I'm asking you to do it, it's because I did it first." In other words, it is fair.

- B. **Gentleness:** When I looked up the definition of "gentleness" I saw one dictionary said, "voluntary kindness". I love this because being gentle isn't about a personality, it's a heart posture. It's choosing to be kind and tender towards people.

Matt. 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

1. The first verse says that when we come to Jesus we can give Him our heavy burdens and emotions and He receives us with humility and kindness. Even when we sin, when we are overwhelmed. God is almighty and he has every right to treat us fairly. However, He chooses to treat us gently and that is our goal and example to follow.
- C. **Patience:** I love that patience is a fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22**)! Most of us tend to be impatient with others and even with ourselves. If we look closely, impatience goes hand in hand with legalism. We can become impatient with others and with ourselves when we have set a standard and it seems like that other person is not meeting it. The more I have revelation about how the Lord deals with me when I fail to reach the level of obedience He has established, the more my heart begins to change toward myself and then toward others.
1. Remember, many times, how we are treating other people is a reflection of how we treat ourselves which is a reflection of how we think the Lord thinks of us or treats us.
- D. **Bearing with one another:** I looked this one up and it said: to carry the weight of, endure. Though Paul has been hinting at this in the whole book of Ephesians, here is clearly saying our salvation, our calling, is corporate, it is something that is fulfilled as a community that loves each other.
1. Let the evidence of our love to Jesus be seen when it's inconvenient, it costs money, getting in the mud when our friend needs it. This is the holy, glorious call set before us. This is what it means to walk in a manner worthy.
- E. **In love:** Doing it all (the above) with a smile on our face, expecting nothing in return, free of charge, with real love.
- F. **Make every effort:** Not sometimes, not when you feel like it, not trying and then giving up, make EVERY effort. Every time you have a chance, every time Holy Spirit nudges you, EVERY effort.
- G. **To keep the unity of the Spirit:** To be a party of the Church, the Bride, to take your place inside the body, inside the story God is writing. Not in it for your own story anymore, it's about Him, that means it's about THEM!

IV. EACH OF US DOING OUR PART

Eph. 4:4-5 "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

- A. Paul is emphasizing that our calling in God is about unity with one another. It is important to the Lord that we walk together. Here Paul is urging us to be interested in the Church in general, as well as in the people who are next to us and not just in ourselves. It's more than just going to church, it's about taking my place in church!

Eph. 4:7-8 "But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the

lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe."

- B. These verses remind us that we are not going to do any of this in our own strength. Jesus has done it all, in his ascension and descent he has obtained all power and authority and has given a portion to you! You carry the grace and power to fulfill this calling that has been placed before you!
- C. You have everything to do your part, no one can do what you can do. Just as no one can do your part, we actually need the body to do what we cannot do and complete us.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. The Lord wants to take the global Church to this place of unity. He also wants to do it here in Houses of Light. He is inviting you to walk in the fullness of your calling and say yes to Him and His Church.
 - 1. First, **FALL IN LOVE**: When we get to truly know the One calling us, we will no longer say "yes" to escape something, we will begin to get caught up in His story.
 - 2. Second, **LOVE WHAT HE LOVES**: Then, we will know what He is about (or more like WHO He is about) and begin to get His heart. Love begins to overflow!
 - 3. Third, **ACTIVATE**: Now, I can take ownership of my place in the body. We will no longer need to wait for the few "chosen ones" to do what each of us was actually called to do!
 - 4. Fourth, **WALK IN UNITY**: I now know and understand that I am important to my church, my friends, family, work, school, etc. From where I am I can walk out the fullness of my calling! I am needed and I also need them.

VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- A. According to this passage explain what your calling is.
- B. Do you consider that you are living this call as a church? Explain
- C. Is there anything that prevents you from fulfilling this calling? Share it with your Friendship Group and pray for each other for the unity of the church and each family.

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. **Our Week of Sanctification begins this Tuesday the 2nd and concludes on Friday, January 5th.** It will be from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. and everyone is invited to participate.
- 2. **Our 2024 Devotional of the 21 Days of Consecration is now available.** You can purchase your printed copy in Spanish or English at the table outside or your electronic copy at www.housesoflight.org
- 3. **Good news! On Sunday, January 28 at 5:00 p.m. we started our first service completely in English.** If you wish to support us in this service, please come to the Report Center to sign up. If you speak English, we invite you to come to the entrance table during the second service on Sunday (11:00 a.m.)