**Romans 10:9-17 Nov. 13, 2022**

**2 Corinthians 5:16-20**

**I’M CALLED TO BE SENT!**

**It’s your call! For the past five weeks we’ve been focusing on your call. Your calling has to do with why God created you. It’s not your job, career, vocation, or even your hobbies.**

**The vital questions you can ask in life are these: what am I here for? Does my life mean anything? Does God care about me and how I live? The Bible makes very clear that there really is a point to your life; God created you purposefully, and your life has value and significance. You are not an accident. There may be accidental parents; but there are no accidental children. And if you are here this morning for the first time, or if you’re here because someone invited you, that’s no accident!**

**So, we’ve been looking at the five reasons God has for our lives. The Bible names them your “callings” in life; and they are your true vocation. Regardless of your job, your career, or your past, God put you on this earth and has a purpose for you. Let me briefly review those callings:**

1. **You are called to be loved. This**

**is the foundation of all that follows. God made you to love you. *I am your Creator. You were in my care even before you were born*, Isaiah 44:2a. When you realize that you are totally and completely loved by God, you will have the capacity to move into every area of life with confidence and to experience life in all of its fullness.**

**2) You are called to belong. God loves you and he wants you to belong to His family. *You are members of God’s very own family… and you belong in God’s household with every other Christian,* Ephesians 2:19b. You were made for connection and community. Life’s meaning is found in relationships. God’s family is called the church and He wants you in.**

**3) You are called to become. God made you to become somebody. In His family you take on the characteristics of His Son – Jesus - because you were created to become like Him. Please understand: to become like Jesus doesn’t mean you lose your personality to become a pious, churchy robot. You have a unique DNA that makes you who you are, and God doesn’t want you to be anyone else.**

**At the same time God doesn’t want any of us to stay in spiritual diapers, but to grow to the full stature and maturity of Jesus. Here’s the amazing thing: God can use even our troubles and sufferings to grow us closer to Christ’s character. *In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose,* Romans 8:28. If you understand and hold onto that verse, it’ll help you get through any difficulty in life. God can make something good come out of even your worst circumstances, or your bad choices, or things that have happened to you. The next time you run into problems that are tearing you down remember this verse and instead of asking, “Lord, why is this happening to me? Ask, “Lord, what do you want me to learn from this?”**

**4) You are called to bless. God didn’t put you on earth to live only for yourself. *We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do,* Ephesians 2:10. It’s not all about you or me. It’s all about God and other people. When we join God’s family, we join in serving the purpose of the family – which is to love others as God has loved us. When you bless other people, you are blessed yourself.**

**These calls from God, all prepare us for one more … one that really begins with God‘s plan for history. Ever since humans fell from their original state of grace and perfect fellowship with their Creator, God has been working to redeem us. He’s gathering a family that will love Him, as He loves us, and be with Him forever. The Bible makes this very clear: *His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure,* Ephesians 1:5. The message was brought to us first by the nation of Israel: God’s message given to the Jews to give to the rest of us. Then God came in person, that’s Jesus, to invite us personally into His family.**

**God wants all people to be in His family. But you’ve got to want it also. Made in God’s image, we have freedom to choose, including to love or to reject Him. God created us to love us, but doesn’t force Himself on us. It’s not genuine love if it’s forced. God doesn’t use coercion and neither do we. We simply extend God’s invitation. In the market place of philosophies, lifestyles, and beliefs we say, “May the best idea win.”**

**Those who choose to love Him become a member of God’s own family, and they are given a mission. The Bible says, *Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they’ve never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is what the Scripture means… ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News!’* Romans 10:13-15. This verse draws me to the fifth calling God has for us:**

**5) We Are Called To Be Sent. We’re sent to invite others into God’s family. Sounds kind of funny – called to be sent. Some of you might be thinking, “Hey, I just got here! What do you mean, ‘be sent?’” It’s like this: God in person - that’s Jesus - invites us into His family and calls on us to share His invitation. That’s the “called to be sent part.” (If I had a sure-fire cure for baldness and didn’t tell anyone about it …) If I had the cure for cancer and I didn’t tell anybody about it…**

**God has given us an even greater message – how to have our past misdeeds forgiven, how to have a purpose for living, how to have a home in heaven. To not share that would be criminal. That’s why God gave us this calling. This is the one calling that most people shy away from but it’s part of being in God’s family. You don’t have to be able to quote the Bible or know world religions. You only have to tell how Jesus has made a difference in your life.**

**How Do You Do This? Simple: you follow the example of Jesus. *Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you,’* John 20:21. Now, there are some things Jesus did that you can’t do. Like dying on the cross for the redemption of sins and the forgiveness of the human race. I can’t do that and you can’t do that. But Jesus did five things that we can do: build up the church – God’s family; equip servant leaders; help the poor; care for the sick; teach the next generation.**

**Jesus educated the next generation. He said, *Let the little children come to me … for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these,* Matt. 19:14. If you truly care about the kingdom of God you’ve got to care about the next generation. With what’s happening around us these days, now more than ever God is calling on us to reach the next generation. We’ve got the good news that God loves us and wants us in His family, and He has a better life in store for each of us.**

**That’s the reason we’re putting emphasis on reaching families in our community through events like Trunk or Treat, having Kids’ Church, and our preschool, and now this new venture with modern style worship in the renovated Hall. We know Jesus Christ is the cure for the human condition. We just have to share him! We don’t want to live off the next generation we want to pass life on to them… life in it’s fullness!**

**What methods should you use as you’re sent? Here’s three that we can all do:**

**1) Pray… pray that people will say yes to God. The Holy Spirit is active in our lives and our world today. Our church logo is the cross and flame. The flame represents the Holy Spirit. We know that when we pray for the Holy Spirit to go before us, He goes to open hearts for people to say yes to God. If you’re here this morning because someone invited you; well, the Holy Spirit’s been at work, because someone’s been praying for you. Pray and ask to be given a heart to reach those have yet to know Jesus as Savior.**

**So we pray because we know that *…the Spirit helps us in our weakness…because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will,* Romans 8:26. (Also - John 14:26; John 16:7-15.) We pray because everybody deserves to hear the good news.**

**2) Give… give to help others go. Everyone can share God’s love and invite someone into God’s family right where they are. But we can’t all go beyond that. Maybe you’re at home with little ones, preschoolers, and you have trouble getting across town, let alone somewhere in the world. Or maybe you’re an elderly person and you’ve got a hitch in your get-along. You can still help get the Word out by supporting others who go out on good news missions. When you support them you participate in their reward (3 John 1:5-8), so give generously.**

**3) Step out… step out in faith… just like the Old Testament prophet Isaiah *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send?* [called to be sent!] *Who will go for us?’ And I said to the Lord, ‘Here am I, Lord. Send me!’* Isaiah 6:8.**

**I dare you to pray the single most dangerous prayer you could ever pray. It’s just three words: Lord, use me. Last week, when I talked about how we’re called to bless, I mentioned that every Christian is really a minister. In the same manner, every one of us is an ambassador for Christ, called to be sent to those who do not yet know Him. Here’s our church mission and vision: To bring people to the transforming power of Jesus Christ through membership in His family and to equip the members for ministry in the church and the world. That’s what we’re here for … that’s what we’re supposed to do.**

**2 Timothy 4:5, … do the work of an evangelist. Why? So people will experience His love, have their past forgiven, know his peace, and discover a purpose for living; all the things that God offers. To be prepared for this:**

**Put These Truths in Your Heart**

**You are called to be loved by God. Your life counts and counts very much. God loves you with an everlasting love, yesterday, today, tomorrow, and all the tomorrows to come. Let this truth sink into the depths of your soul and transform your life.**

**You are called to belong to God’s own family. He wants you in His family. Every Christian needs a church family, to grow in Christ, to be supported in tough times, so their kids can know the love of God. His is the most valuable family you can ever be in!**

**You are called to be a blessing to God and everyone around you. By His strength we can.**

**You are called to be sent. Every Christian has the privilege of inviting others into God’s family. So let’s do it!**

**Jesus didn’t come to give us religion. He said I’ve come that you may have life, and have it in abundance. Not religion, but life. A relationship with your true Father in heaven – the Author of life - and the right relationships with other people; that’s what brings real living!**

***…how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?* Romans 10:14.**