

**Matt. 20:25-28;**

**Nov. 6, 2022**

**Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Peter 4:8-11**

## **YOU ARE CALLED TO BLESS**

### **It's Your Call – Part 5**

**It's your call. God is calling people ... including you... calling you to your true purpose in life. God created you – the unique person you are - for His purposes. God is calling you to be loved, by Him ... God is calling you to belong to His family, the church, the Body of Christ. God is also calling you to become (I spoke of this last week) more like Christ, to having the characteristics of His family. God is not calling us just to grow old in the Lord, but to grow up in the Lord.**

**Today, All Saints Sunday, we remember those who have gone before us in the faith. Those who trusted in Christ's grace to bring them to the perfection we know in Christ Jesus. Early in its history the church commemorated the martyrdom of its members on certain days. These were the various saint's days. But soon the calendar was filled with so many saints' days that it was cluttered and confusing. After the Reformation, Protestants went back to the New Testament usage of the term saint to include all those who put their faith in Christ, and to commemorate all the deceased saints on one day - All Saints Day. (It is kind of like the church's Memorial Day.)**

**The New Testament even calls all who are baptized “the saints;” in Ephesians Paul says, *I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints . . .* Eph. 1:15. Wouldn't that include you and me? And would any one of us claim to be models of holy perfection? Here's a definition of a SAINT: a sinner revised and edited. They are believers who allowed their Savior to so permeate their lives that holy blessings flow through them. This brings me to the fourth calling God has for us:**

#### **Called to Bless**

**The fourth purpose of my life: I am called to bless God and my neighbor. God wants to make a difference with your life. Blessing God and others begins with knowing (in your heart and soul) that Jesus went to the cross and died for our sins, not out of sympathy for our condition, but by identification. He was made to be sin. His obedience to His Father, not His sympathy for us, brought him to the cross. We are received by God, not because of our obedience, but because of the sacrifice of Christ. That's it. (Now some say that Jesus came to reveal the loving-kindness of God the Father, and it is true He reflected the Father's love. But the real reason He came was to bear away the sin of the world. The revelation of His Father comes to those who know Him as Savior.)**

**It is not the case that Christ died for me and therefore I go scot-free. No. He died for all (not just me) and through identification with His death we can be freed from sin and have imparted to us His very righteousness. He, who knew no sin, was made to be sin *that we might be made the righteousness of God...* 2 Cor. 5:21. It is not Christ for me unless I am determined to have Christ formed in me.<sup>1</sup>**

**This righteous of God, the blessing, issues in service. When you became a believer, you “entered the service.” *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. Where it says**

**“good works” that means service, and service is ministry; they’re the same in the Bible. A servant of Christ does ministry and a minister serves. If somebody asks you how many ministers does our church have? You can say several hundred. This is stated over and over again in our membership class (Discovering Membership at First Church): every believer is a minister.**

**Let’s be clear: our service flows from the other callings (to be loved, to belong, to become). Some Christians are eager to jump into service without seriously hearkening to these calls from God. “We slander God by our very eagerness to work for Him without knowing Him,”<sup>2</sup> But when your service flows from a heart that genuinely knows the Lord, not seeking recognition or gain, you are a blessing. You’re living in the manner of your Maker and Savior.**

**Your Christian ministry is not just for Sunday... it’s seven days a week. We all know this in our heads and forget it in our hearts, so the flow of blessings sometimes becomes a trickle after Sunday. It’s not just church volunteering, but your job and your retirement are also a means to honor God. So, *...Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*, Colossians 3:17. It doesn’t matter if you’re a top professional or a janitor. You can serve God by doing your job well and helping people around you. Even mundane tasks become meaningful when done out of love for God and to bless others. Think of Brother Lawrence, the 16<sup>th</sup> century Carmelite monk who washed dishes in the monastery. He left us a classic devotion and instruction, *The Practice of the Presence of God*. In it he shares the blessings of moment-by-moment fellowship with God through his service to others. When you change your focus from self to service, some amazing things happen to you:**

### **1. Serving others unselfishly will give your life meaning.**

**Here’s a big paradox that most people don’t get: the way to find meaning in life is to give your life away. God wired the universe on this principle. Money has many good uses. But no amount of money will ever give your life meaning. Meaning comes from ministry. Jesus said it like this, *...whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it*, Mark 8:35.**

**The Bible says, *Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your work in the Lord is not in vain*, 1 Corinthians 15:58. Everything you do for Christ has a purpose, so don’t be half-hearted about it. It may seem insignificant and maybe no one else seems to know about it but it’s important. The Bible says that even if you give a cup of cold water in Jesus’ name, you’ll get rewarded for that in eternity.**

### **2. Your relationships will improve.**

**Who doesn’t need better relationships? The root of relationship problems is self-centeredness. *Pride only breeds quarrels*, Proverbs 13:10. Where there’s egos involved, contention follows. Most of the time you and I can take away half the conflict in our relationships. The more you practice unselfish serving, the more your relationships will improve. Because when you change, your relationships change. 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*, Philippians 2:5-6. Remember the Marathon to Maturity from last week, the lifelong race to become like Jesus? Copy Him. ... *the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...* Matthew 20:28. If you want better relationships start serving others.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Joy will come into your life.

Most people are looking for happiness in all the wrong places. Happiness isn't found in pleasure, power, possessions, position, prestige, or popularity. Those are all temporary. God wants you to have real joy, that lasts forever. He wired us to be filled with joy. Why? Because he wants you to be like His Son. Let me share a couple of secrets with you here:

a) It's no accident that the word "miser" and "miserable" come from the same root word. The more you focus on you, the more miserable you're going to be. The joy comes when you get your eyes off yourself. Helpful people are happy people. Here's St. Paul: *But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all*, Philippians 2:17. This is in the letter where he talks so much about joy. The more unselfish you are, the more joy flows into your life. That's the way God wired us.

The second secret is this: When you use the gifts that God gave you to help other people (without expecting reward) it brings you joy. The Bible says this: As each one has received a special gift, employ it... to make a ton of money! Oops! Wrong version. That's in the Reviled Substandard Perversion Translation. Here's the real one: *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*, 1 Peter 4:10. God blesses you so you can bless other people.

### 4. You will leave a legacy.

What are you going to be remembered for? What will people say when you die? I've officiated at more funerals than I can count. I don't recall anyone being remembered for the size of their bank account. The truth is everybody wants their life to count for something; to have significance, to have meaning, and purpose. You want to do something great with your life. And there's nothing wrong with that. You ought to want to do something great with your life.

Here's how Jesus said you become great: *Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant*, Matthew 20:26. Then he washed His disciples' feet (John 13:12-17). William Booth, Founder of Salvation Army, taught leadership through servant hood. New recruits were set to polishing the boots of those who went out to serve.

We're talking about the Mother Teresa model of ministry. She ministered to the poorest of the poor, in Calcutta, India, blessing the least influential people in life. Yet, God gave her enormous influence around the world. (She spoke to the Congress, the United Nations, and many gatherings of world leaders. People from around the world came to Calcutta to meet her. When she died, she was given a state funeral.) The more you live for others, the greater your life will be.

**Actually, you'll leave two legacies: one on earth and one in eternity. The one on earth probably won't last more than three generations. People soon forget. Your trophies and accomplishments will be over-ridden. You might get your name on a building, but rarely will anyone ask who that person was.**

**Nevertheless, *The memory of the righteous will be a blessing*, Proverbs 10:7. So we've got three choices in life: spend your life, waste your life, or invest your life. The best thing is to invest your life in something that will outlast your life.**

**Your legacy in heaven, of course, will go on forever. Maybe for years you sacrificed comfort and money for the sake of others, and nobody noticed. But when you put aside pleasure and convenience to help someone in need... God notices. *For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints*, Hebrews 6:10.**

**Likely none of us will ever receive a Congressional Medal of Honor, the Noble Peace Prize, or the Presidential Medal of Freedom. But there is a higher prize that each of us can win. Jesus says, *If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him*, John 12:26.**

**When you change your focus from self to service, it creates joy in your life, improves your relationships, makes your life meaningful, and you will leave a legacy of blessing. If you want to be great you learn to be the servant of all. God is calling you to bless others.**

***...Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*, Colossians 3:17.**

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<sup>1</sup> Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oct. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, Oct. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *If you serve Christ in this way, you will please God and be respected by people*, Romans 14:18. *A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed*, Proverbs 11:25.