

Volume 5, Day 22: Redeemed and Called

— but Are You a Disciple?

Be careful not to dismiss the call of God to you. Everyone who is saved is called to testify to the changes God affected in you when you were saved. But preaching is not limited to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Preaching is 'to express your affection for anyone or anything in your life. Preaching the Gospel is only one illustration of preaching. You will find yourself preaching all the time about one thing or another that has great meaning for you. It could be to speak proudly about someone you love. It could be to speak passionately about some charitable activity you find personally fulfilling.

Paul is referring in this verse to the pain he would feel if he failed to 'preach' the Gospel which affect was to radically transform him from the inside out. Paul's motives became those of the One who saved him from himself. However, do not apply what Paul says in this connection to souls coming in contact with God for salvation. Paul's words have to do with becoming so overwhelmed by love for Jesus that he wants to be nothing other than a servant of Jesus. And as servants our permission is never asked as to what we will do or where we will go.

God makes us broken bread and poured-out wine to please Himself. To be "separated unto the gospel" means to hear the call of God and be so deeply affected by it that every ambition is nipped in the bud, every desire of self-life quenched, every outlook completely extinguished and blotted out, except for that one thing only - "separated unto the gospel." The soul who tries to go in any other direction when once that call has come to him, will be thoroughly miserable.

We are condemned to salvation through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Discipleship has an option with it - "If any man. . . "

My Confirming Scriptures:

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**Volume 5, Day 23: Concerned About My Reputation
or His Purposes**

"We are made as the filth of the world." 1 Corinthians 4:9-13

These words are not an exaggeration. The reason they are not true of us who call ourselves 'Christians' is not that Paul failed to understand how true they are. He did recognize that we have too many concerns about how people think of us. We are all but **obsessed with the reputation** we have with those around us. We want to be respected, admired and likely even emulated. The last thing we want people to consider us is trash in the dump. "Filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ," that is the 'criminal' image of His crucifixion. These afflictions are not evidence of being a 'Christian.' The evidence is simply living your life solely for the purpose of God in salvation. It is being "**separated** unto the gospel."

"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you," says Peter. Yet many 'Christians' pray away these very trials which are intended by God to help us become mature in faith. We have a definite aversion to adversity. We also simply refuse to accept it as a **blessing from God, the evidence of our love for God and in His purposes for our lives.**

You can be saved by the skin of your teeth if you like. You can refuse to let God count you as one 'separated unto the gospel.' Or you can side with Jesus against the mainstream of humanity. When we are truly intimately passionate with God, we will not care that we are treated as the scum of the earth as long as the Gospel is proclaimed. A true servant of Jesus Christ is one who is willing to go all the way to their own death in order to promote the 'Kingdom of God. This is the reality of the gospel of God. The marvel of the Redemptive Reality of God is that the worst and the vilest person can never extinguish or even thwart His love for them.

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**Volume 5, Day 24: Concerned About Me
or Possessed by Love for God?**

"For the love of Christ constrains us." -- 2 Corinthians 5:14

Paul says he is overruled, overmastered, held as in a vice, by the love of Christ. Very few of us know what it means to be held in a grip by the love of God. We are completely blinded to the love of God because we are so overwhelmed and focused on our personal experiences only. The one thing that held Paul's attention, until there was nothing else on his mind, was the enormous, captivating love of God. "The love of Christ constrains us." When you feel that depth of love and caring in a person, you can never mistake it. You know that the Spirit of God is unhindered by the self-life.

When we are born again of the Spirit of God, the testimony is the transformed motivations within us. But our witness unto Jesus Christ overshadows that. We begin to realize what Jesus meant when He said - "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Not witnesses to what Jesus can do. We will take everything that happens as happening to Him, whether it be praise or blame, persecution or commendation. When and only when, it is no longer about my reputation, can I be true to Jesus Christ in all things. No one can stand with Jesus Christ who is not overwhelmed by the enormity of His unconditional love.

This is the only thing that matters in the Christian life. The strange thing is that it is the last thing actualized in a Christian. Paul says he is gripped by the love of God. Men may call him mad or sober, but he does not care. There is only one thing he is living for, and that is to persuade men of sin, righteousness, judgment seat of God, and of the love of Christ. Abandon to the love of God is the one thing that bears fruit in the life, and it will always leave the impression of the holiness and of the power of God, never of our personal holiness.

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Volume 5, Day 25: Anonymity or Recognition

"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Philippians 2:17

If you do some great thing for God and someone else gets credit for it, are you okay with that? Are you willing to be overlooked or completely ignored while working hard to promote the kingdom of God? Are you willing to pour out your life, that is, to have absolutely no personal agenda or gain, in order to promote faith in others?

Or are you more likely to say, "I am not going to be invisible or anonymous just yet. I want God to endorse my ministry and make it thrive. I want to follow my own vision of ministry for God and choose the scenario of my own sacrifice. I want to have the right kind of people watching and saying, 'Well done.'"

It is one thing to pursue dignified heroism for God. It is quite another thing, if the ministry God has planned for you results in you being a door-mat under other people's feet. Suppose God wants to teach you to say, "I know how to be abased." Are you okay with that? Are you willing to be so hopelessly insignificant that most people don't even see you? Are you okay with never being thought of in connection with the life you lived for God? Are you willing to spend yourself and be used or abused by others, not seeking to receive ministry from others, but to only minister to others?

Some saints cannot do menial work because it is beneath their dignity. But is there anything you will not do for your most significant other on earth? A reality check here is to analyze your motives for service altogether. If it has any self glory in it, it is not God's work at all. If it is done for your own glory it will be consumed by fire in the presence of God. If it is for God's glory alone, it will endure forever.

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**Volume 5, Day 26: Prayer Always Has an Answer,
but Will I Accept It?**

Every fact that the disciples stated was right; but the conclusions they derived from those facts were wrong. Anything that causes me to feel dejection spiritually is always wrong. If depression or oppression come over me, I am to blame. God is not. Nor is anyone else. Dejection springs from one of two sources - I have either satisfied a lust or I have not. Lust means - I must have it right now, without having to wait for it. Spiritual lust makes me demand an answer from God, and to have it right now.

If I am seeking God Who gives the answer, I will be fine with not only His answer, but also His timing. Actually, God answers every prayer. Sometimes His answer is 'yes.' Sometimes it is 'no.' Other times it is 'later.' Instead of asking God for specific results, you might ask Him to divulge His wisdom in bringing the situation into your life since His power is sufficient to have prevented it in the first place.

What have I been trusting God to do? And today - the immediate present - is the third day, and He has not done it. Therefore I think that I am justified in being dejected and in blaming God for withholding information or results.

Whenever the insistence is on the point that God answers prayer, we are thinking wrongly. The meaning of prayer is that we understand the heart and mind of God and cooperate fully with His purposes in every experience of life. Dejection spiritually is wrong, and we are always to blame for it. Dejection results from an expectation of God which is not consistent with His purposes.

We look for visions from heaven, for earthquakes and thunders of God's power and we never imagine that all the time God is in the commonplace things and people around us.

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Volume 5, Day 27: Willing to Pay the Cost of Surrender?

Do we even understand the implications of being sanctified? Paul included the word **wholly**, that is, completely. Although you may think of being sanctified as the process of becoming more like Christ, it is rather in instantaneous effect of a definite, whole-hearted commitment. Sanctification from God's point of view is these two things. We are **set apart** for His use. And we are **declared** to be fully righteous as was His Son, Jesus. Neither of these things are gradual. It may take us a long time to come to the point of crisis wherein we take the leap and say, "I'm all in!"

Are you prepared for what full surrender to God's sanctification will cost you? It will require an intense narrowing of all your interests and an enormous attention to the purposes of God. It requires every power of your body, soul and spirit expended to accomplish God's purposes. Are you prepared for God to do in you all that He separated you for? Are you prepared to separate yourself to God even as Jesus did? Are you willing, **for the sake of others**, to be fully surrendered to God's purposes and plans?

The reason many of us have not entered into the experience of sanctification is that we have not realized and accepted the meaning of sanctification from God's point of view. It means being made one with Jesus so that the motives that inspired Him will be the same motives that inspire us. Are we prepared for what that will cost? It will cost us everything that is not of God in our lives.

The one and only characteristic of the Holy Spirit in a man is a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, and freedom from everything that is unlike Him. Are you willing to be as radically different from all others as Jesus was?

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Volume 5, Day 28: Spiritual Exhaustion Is My Fault

Spiritual exhaustion is not caused by sin. It is caused by service for God which is accomplished by my own efforts. If you are tired and worn out by your ministry to others, it might help to consider this. Jesus said that, “my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” So my exhaustion may be the result of me trying to do what Jesus has offered to do for me. My supply of resources and energy can quickly be depleted. However, God’s resources and energy are inexhaustible. So if you are exhausted in any respect, consider letting the Holy Spirit do the work. Jesus’ words, “Come to me and I will give you rest,” mean exactly this. Come to Jesus. Get in His yoke. Let Him do the pulling.

God uses us as a conduit or connector to help weary and worn people to receive His supplies. God does not intend for you to provide the supplies. God simply wants to use you as His supply chain for them. As you do this, you can also help them find their way into Jesus’ yoke and no longer be needed to assist. It may appear for a time that you are the one providing the supplies. But since you have poured yourself out in surrender to God’s sanctification, it can only be God’s own supplies that are finding their way into these weary lives. You get to serve up the nourishment for other souls until they learn to feed on God directly. They will drain you to the dregs. Be certain that you remain only a supply line of God’s resources, or before long you will be utterly exhausted.

Until other souls learn to draw on the life of the Lord Jesus directly, they have will draw on it through you. Even though they might actually drain you dry, they will receive from God through you whatever they need to grow and thrive.

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