

LIVING ON CALL –PSALM 101

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” (my entire youth: a comic book artist)

As we grow up – and especially in Church culture - that question “what do you want to be” graduates to: *“What do you feel called to?”*

The implication is often that God has a blueprint for your life, and the Holy Spirit is a Divine Guidance Counselor that will lead you into this specific calling

But see then you keep getting older. You graduate. You grind. Finding your calling seems complicated, mysterious, and hard to figure out. So we make our way through each day doing what needs to be done but wondering if we’re somehow missing the mark. Busyness replaces soul-searching. And we live unsettled.

I’d tell you much of the concern with “calling” today does more harm than good, because so many of our ideas about calling are shallow cultural concepts covered in Christianese to sound deep.

Calling in the Bible is there.

King David was anointed to be king not once but 3 times over seven years. That seems like a pretty clear calling!

But even David’s life and his own writings show us that the concept of **calling** goes far deeper than a specific task or career.

It is believed by many that Psalm 101 was written by David in the season he became king.

My favorite verse in the chapter is easily the last one: *“My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the Lord from their grip”* - Ps 101:8

It sounds like a superhero's calling or mission statement. I think one of the many reasons we are drawn to superheroes is that we envy the clarity of conviction and sense of calling many heroes have.

If I told you today that God had a clear call for your life to walk in and asked if you wanted to hear it, many of you would be excited with anticipation, and full of faith say I’m all in, count me down for the call.

When you realize you’re called it emboldens you.

When you realize you’re called it enriches your sense of purpose.

When you realize you’re called it builds daily anticipation.

“My daily task will be to ferret out the wicked and free the city of the Lord from their grip” ...it has an awesome ring to it. But when you look at Psalm 101, it’s the final verse

Often we focus on the verse 11 finish, but we're starting in the wrong place.

Let's start at the beginning... verse 1:

"I will sing of your love and justice Lord, I will praise you with songs."

For all our callings in life the first and foremost calling is a **CALL TO CHRIST**

Here David, who among many things was a skilled musician, speaks to singing.

We're all called to that again and again in scripture.

But we can't think of worship as only singing on a weekend...

Worship as defined by **Romans 12** in the Message version:

Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering... this is your spiritual act of worship

Listen to how Paul speaks of our **calling** in this same letter to the Church in Rome:

At the outset in **Romans 1:6** he says - *you [Romans] are included among the Gentiles who have been called ... (called to what?) ... to belong to Jesus Christ.*

And then in **Romans 8:28** we get a famous verse - *We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them...*

*...For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, **he called them to come to him.***

Calling for Paul isn't as much some itinerary for our future as it is first and foremost a call to Christ in the present.

When we pray for *calling* we often picture a blueprint. A master plan.

And sadly when we do this we can relate to God as a resource instead of King.

We can drift into pursuing the idea of God's will over God himself.

But Jesus puts it plainly for us in John 15:

Apart from our call to God there is no calling... just a chasing after the wind.

Not that you can't DO. But it's Ecclesiastes all over again. Seemingly meaningless.

Tom Brady - a few years ago, when he already had more Super Bowl rings than nearly all players in NFL history... he said: *"Why do I still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, 'Hey man, this is what it is.' I reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think, 'It's got to be more than this.' I mean this isn't... this can't be what it's all cracked up to be."*

When the interviewer asked him, *"What's the answer?"* Brady responded, *"I wish I knew. I wish I knew."*

I think so often God will allow us to feel unsettled for a season so we'll get stripped of our reliance on our own will and agenda, and we'll actually take our everyday ordinary life lay it before him as an offering of worship.

Think about the days and nights David spent sitting on stones next to his sheep before he ever sat on a throne to lead Israel.

Think about the caves he spent time in with other outcasts before he led the Israelites into battle for victory after victory.

Seemingly stripped of everything, no doubt sometimes feeling like he was stripped of agency... and yet how many Psalms of praise were written as he worshipped God in those seasons?

David walked in a daily call to God and worship of Him LONG before he walked in his eventual calling as King.

This is a part of the second call here in Psalm 101: **CALL TO CHARACTER**
"I will be careful to live a blameless life- when will you come to help me?"

We picture our call as coming in monumental moments in our life.

Those moments with a fork in the road and we must choose the right path.

But we also have a **daily call** to a **higher standard**.

We think of calling as what we are to **DO**.

God *starts with* the **WHO**.

The tragedy would be is we spend our whole lives waiting for a specific calling and when it arrives we aren't ready because we were waiting for a specific calling and didn't walk in our daily one.

Or Elisabeth Elliot once asked - *Does it make sense to pray for guidance about the future if we are not obeying in the thing that lies before us today?*

Often as we wait for the "big things"

We forget the weight of small things...

THE PATRIOT - "Aim small, miss small"

Aim for the man and miss the man, you miss the man.

Aim for the button on his coat and miss the button, you hit the man.

When we miss the mark in life? It's often when we forget the weight of small things.

"Well done good and faithful servant..."

It doesn't read "well done good and faithful servant" because you toppled the giant or won the biggest victory. It reads because "you have been faithful in handling this small amount" One translation reads: *"because you were trustworthy in a small matter."*

What does he give these servants who were faithful in the small matter?

More responsibility. He hires them on to do more.
In Luke's version he makes them governors over cities. He hires them as leaders.

What is crucial and highly regarded in the hiring process? Ability.
But what will get you fired, end your marriage, destroy your life? Character
This is what is backwards in so much of our ideas of leadership, and calling, and alike.

Many kings and great leaders crumble not because of challenges that prove too large,
But because they forget the weight of small things.

Look no further than church culture, where we've seen a disorienting dose of failings
from prominent figures in the faith recently, from a megachurch pastor, to the face of
Christian apologetics and even a financial guru.

King David had his own failings.
And yet we read of him in Acts 13:36 – he *“served God's purpose in his own generation.”*

CALL TO HOME

“I will lead a life of integrity in my own home. I will refuse to look at anything vile or vulgar.”

What is public vs what is private.

Dorothy Day once said:
“Everybody wants a revolution... but nobody wants to do the dishes”

Joshua had the calling of leading an entire nation of God's people into their Promised Land- one of the biggest most revolutionary callings in the Bible. And yet the most famous words from his mouth are *“as for me and MY HOUSE, we will serve the Lord.”*

No matter our calling in the world, we have to get it right at home.

King David wrote Psalm 101.
Sadly, if his life had one chief failing, it's that he although he sat on the throne and led Israel well, but he led his home terribly. He forsook one of his core callings.

If you're married then your marriage to your spouse - outside of our call to God- is the premier calling in your life. Your call to your kids is a paramount purpose in your life. And the greatest gift you can give them is your marriage.

And maybe you aren't walking in either of those unique callings.
David doesn't mention them anyways. But there's still a focus for our home.

Song of Songs - this book written by youth— says in 2:15 - ***“Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love, for the grapevines are blossoming!”***

The home is the vineyard where we grow and learn that the world doesn't revolve around us. We're called to love – whether it's our roommate, our siblings, or our spouse. It's a vineyard where the fruit is to learn to serve and love others.

Before we go out on conquests to slay proverbial dragons, let us be faithful in chasing and catching the “little” foxes that would infiltrate our home, our marriages, and our parenting.

The enemy daily makes war, and he knows our stronghold is our home. It's why David resolved and refused to look at anything vile or vulgar in his home. He rejected perverse ideas and stayed away from every evil in his home.

Before we get to freeing the city of the Lord and the city we're in, let's keep our homes free and let's keep ourselves faithful.

And yet there's one more call we can't forget: **CALL TO COMMUNITY**
“I will search for faithful people to be my companions”

David spends a lot of other verses on who WON'T be his companions, and in the end half of the Psalm's 8 verses deal with the company you keep. This serves to show how crucial community is to calling. We are called to community.

This runs counter to so much of what we think about with calling in our culture. Because if we are honest and peel it back, so much of our ideas about calling are little more than individualism and self help cloaked with Christianese.

Don't get me wrong – ambition is a good thing and it doesn't run counter to humility. Jesus says in Matthew 20 - *“you want to be great? BAD. Go head and get behind me again..”* No actually he says? *“you want to be great? OK. Here's how: be the servant of all.”*

But you can't do that outside of community... both in terms of the people you reach and the impact you can have when you've locked arms with others in serving.

Our family is our foundation.
But if our home lays the foundation, our friendships set the trajectory.

Who do you go to battle with and recover from battles with?
When we think of David where does our mind often immediately go to?
David and Goliath.
David marching out into a battle field mano a mano, one on one to take down his foe and unlock his destiny...

But what was his destiny? What was his calling? To lead a nation into many bigger battles. He could have never walked out his destiny walking onto those battlefields alone.

He had Jonathan early on.

When Jonathan passed he had his whole crew of Mighty Men.

When we plot the course of our lives and chase our callings we often pay careful attention to factors like our job and income, our city or place to live. People become replaceable commodities. Money replaces relationships as priorities when we chase our calling on our culture's terms. Yet in scripture we're continually called to Christian community.

In life we commonly go about **evaluating opportunities**.

We need to spend equal or more time **evaluating our relationships**.

**We spend our lives trying to find ourselves,
but we will never fully find ourselves until we find our people.**

2 Corinthians 5 – Call to reconciliation.

We want the master plan that we wait for.

God gives us a game plan to walk in.

“When will you come and help me?”

The Holy Spirit lives in us.

***“But I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh...
If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit”***

Galatians 5:16,25

We too often get fixated on finding **“God's will for my life”**

And forsake **“The Holy Spirit's leading for today.”**

Why is this so easy to do? Because meditating on what God may or may not want from you next year is way less demanding than asking what he wants from you right now.

But what you do right now,

what you do today,

is what gets you to where you need to be next year.

ANYBODY HAVE A JOB WHERE THEY ARE ON CALL?

APPLICATION - stop living wondering about your calling like it's over the horizon.

Live like you're on call.

A Call to Christ. A Call to Character. A Call to Home. A Call to Community.