

## ***Transformed by Receiving the Spirit of Revelation, Part 2***

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Ephesians 1:16, Paul said, “I do not cease making mention of you in my prayers” (Eph. 1:16, paraphrased). Then he gives the particular prayer that he prays.

Now, you know that if Paul prays this without ceasing, this is a very significant prayer that’s on his heart. He prays the one prayer with the three different aspects to it. He says, “Father of glory, I ask You to give the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Jesus” —in other words, we want to know what His heart is like, what His mind is like, and what His personality is like.

Then he goes on in verse 18 to rephrase what the spirit of wisdom and revelation is. It means the opening of the eyes of understanding. Then, one of the three aspects of it that I want to focus on tonight: “So that you would know” —so that you would experience—“the hope of [God’s] calling” in our lives.

This is the first of the three different aspects of this prayer.

Paul said, “I pray unceasingly that a spirit of revelation would touch your heart, so that you would know about your divine calling.” This is a huge statement, that Paul thinks this is worthy of praying for night and day. It’s the first of the three different prayers he offers in this verse.

So we know that Paul understands something we don’t understand about the need to have confidence about our calling in God. You have the notes there, and obviously we’re not going to cover them all tonight. You have a lot more than you’ll need; we’ll just cover some of it. The notes are on the Internet if any of you want them. We’ve got some in the back as well.

### **WALKING IN CONFIDENCE**

Roman numeral I. Walking in confidence in God’s threefold calling in our life. It’s imperative that we walk in the confidence that this calling is flowing out of the wisdom of God.

Paragraph A. Paul prayed that people would receive revelation on how God views their calling. We must have clarity; we must have confidence about it, so that we know what we’re supposed to be doing, and know what we’re supposed to be focused on. Beloved, we need clarity on what we’re supposed to be doing and what we’re supposed to be focused on in our relationship with God. God created us with a longing, every one of us: to participate in something that is deep and lasting in its significance and relevance. Every one of us longs to be involved with something that is deeply significant. You cannot repent of that longing; God put it in you.

The only things that are significant are the things that are significant to God. We all know that, but we lose our way in it so easily.

Now, this message is either going to liberate you or it’s going to trouble you, and some of you it’s going to make mad. I’m going to present some things that are a little different than some of the normal ways of thinking. So, either your heart will be liberated, or some of you will be troubled. Others of you won’t have either one of those responses, I’m sure.

## **INTERNAL, EXTERNAL, ETERNAL**

Paragraph C. The revelation of God's call in our life is a vast subject; it's a big subject. It's got lots of sub-points to it.

There are three basic dimensions to God's call in our life. There's an internal calling, as to what we're supposed to do at the heart level; there's an external calling, which is what we do on the functional and ministry level. There's an eternal aspect of what we're going to do in our heart and our function in the age to come.

So there's an internal, an external, and an eternal dimension. Each of these have an individual and a corporate dimension. I'm not really going to get into the corporate dimension, but I wanted to note that we have a calling as a generation. There's a calling on nations; there's a calling in ministries that's part of our accounting of our life to God. We do part of it together with the mandate He gave us together. That's a vast subject, and a very important part of our calling, but that's not what we're looking at tonight.

## **THE WILL OF GOD IS WISE AND GOOD**

Paragraph D. Premise number one is that the will of God is wise, and the will of God is good. As God has declared His will in His calling, the point of His calling, His wise and good calling, is to liberate our hearts and lead us to greatness.

God is contending for our greatness. He wants our greatness to be established. *Contending* is probably not the best word to say with God: He *desires* our greatness. He has offered grace and an invitation that we would be liberated; that we would enter into greatness.

## **HIGHLY-ESTEEMED ABOMINATIONS**

Premise number two: Jesus said in Luke 16, "That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

That is a very significant and powerful and disturbing statement, that what God values and plans is nearly opposite of what men would naturally plan and value. It's very different. What you and I by nature would naturally value is opposite of what God values.

Therefore, in these three dimensions of our calling, the internal, the external, and the eternal, the most natural and common way to think of these three callings is exactly opposite of how God thinks about them. So, it takes a spirit of revelation for us to see it from God's point of view. If we pursue those three callings in the natural way we think about them, we'll end up not living a life of significance and relevance in the way God has called us. We have to agree with God as we pursue these three callings.

I want to say it again: The way we think of these three is exactly opposite of how God thinks of them. It requires a spirit of revelation in order to have the hope, or the confidence, that God's calling on our life is wise and good and satisfying to us—wise and good in His sight. It takes revelation to know that.

Let's look at the first one for just a moment: the internal calling. Each one of us has an internal calling. Our internal calling is to be a faithful disciple of Jesus. We all know that, but it's remarkable how that's not on most people's radar when they think of their life vision and their calling.

## **EMBRACING WHAT THE WORLD CALLS FOOLISH AND WEAK**

Our primary calling in life, paragraph A, is to be a faithful disciple who embraces what the world calls foolish and weak. What the world calls foolish and weak is the serving, the giving, the fasting, the praying, the blessing of enemies. It's the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle. We are called to embrace this, but the world calls this foolishness and weakness.

1 Corinthians 1:27. Paul wrote in verse 27: "God has chosen the" —and you need to add "the so-called foolish things" —"of the world" —fasting, prayer, serving, blessing our enemies, giving our money away; the world calls it absolutely foolishness to live this way (1 Cor. 1:27). God has called these things to put to shame, to openly shame, what the world calls wise. Of course this is most apparent in a historical way at the second coming of Christ. The things that the world calls wise and mighty, God will put them to open shame by the people who embraced what God calls weakness, which is, in essence, the Sermon on the Mount lifestyle.

## **THE SOURCES OF WEALTH AND MIGHT**

Paul goes on and says, "God has chosen"—what the world calls—"the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27).

I'm talking about how the armies of the world, the power sources of the earth are going to be put to open shame in a historical way at the second coming of Christ. The Lord is going to use the Body of Christ in this grand victory. He is going to completely shift history, and break into it in such a dramatic way that the things the world now calls weak and foolish will be the primary ways in which His kingdom is run, for ever and ever. It will disrupt the kingdoms that now exist, and then God will run His kingdom forever through these principles. I mean, even in the resurrection we will be living in prayer and worship and teaching and serving and sowing. We will be doing all of these things.

## **OUR PRIMARY CALLING IN THIS LIFE IS INTERNAL**

Paragraph B. Our primary calling in this life is internal. Again, the reason I'm mentioning this is, when I talk to people, I love to ask them, "What is the vision of your life?" Almost no one mentions their calling or their vision to be a disciple of Jesus. They mostly think, "Well, I'm supposed to work in the marketplace, or I'm supposed to be in this church or do this and this field of ministry."

I want to encourage you that your calling and the primary focus in your calling is to be a disciple who embraces the weak things that are valuable to God. These things are valuable to God. When we see that they're valuable to God, it gives us power to embrace this calling, instead of despising it. "No, I know about that calling! My real calling..." We despise our real calling, and our first calling is to be a disciple. We don't see its value, and we don't see how embracing these weak things is powerful in God's sight.

## **IT'S ENOUGH TO BE A SERVANT**

I've written down there at the end of paragraph B, "It's enough to be a servant." The fact that He accepts us in His family—I don't mean the sons and the bride, let's take it down a notch. It's enough that we're His servants. We don't need the promise of fame and fortune in this life; it's enough that we're His servants.

Many people in the Body of Christ have disappointment and frustration, in pain and anger over circumstances not working. It's not enough to them that they're even God's servants. That doesn't strike them as powerful.

## **OUR EXTERNAL CALLING**

Roman numeral III. Our external calling. I'm talking about our ministry calling; the calling we have to reach others in our life around us.

Our external calling, paragraph A, includes our position or our function. It might be in the marketplace, it might be in a ministry organization, it might even be in the home. This is the dimension of a person's calling that they usually focus on. When you ask about their calling, mostly they talk about their temporal, external calling. This is an important part of our calling; it really is. Though it's the least important of the three, it's important. I'm not minimizing its importance, but I am appealing that we get it in its right order.

## **LEARNING TO BE FAITHFUL IN LITTLE**

Paragraph B. Our culture tells us that we're only successful if we have a big numerical impact in man's eyes, in terms of marketplace or ministry. If we have a big impact, then we're successful. However, the Lord has given the vast majority of the Body of Christ an assignment only to be faithful over a few things.

Let's look at the verse here, Matthew 25:21. Here's what Jesus said: "You were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many" (Mt. 25:21). This is a revelation; we don't grasp this by nature. Our hearts think contrarily to this revelation, except the Spirit of God write it on our hearts.

Jesus said in Luke 19, "You were faithful in a very little" (Lk. 19:17). Here's what I want you to focus on, is this: Jesus gives more people few and little. Few and little. Most people only have a few things that God has entrusted to them, and a very, very little impact. That's what He says, but He's going to transfer it all and exchange it all when He comes at the second coming.

## **SOME NUMBERS, FOR THE SAKE OF PERSPECTIVE**

Now, I'm going to throw out some numbers. I'm not claiming they're accurate, but they give you the feel of what the truth is. Say there are a billion people in the body of Christ. Some people who study numbers estimate that there are that many—a billion believers.

My guess is that there are only about a thousand worldwide who have a ministry impact that directly touches 5,000 people in a direct way—5,000 out of a billion believers worldwide. Only a thousand people touch 5,000 people or more in a direct way. I'm talking about impact in terms of what's observable and measurable by man. By the natural, I'm not talking about our impact in the Spirit; I'm talking about our ministry impact. That means—I'm not good at these numbers—999,999,000 don't have a ministry of that size.

About a thousand people have a ministry of that size. The other 999,999,000 have a much, much smaller impact. That's the perfect will of God; it's not an accident.

To put it in perspective, reaching 5,000 people is a fraction of the city of Grandview. The largest ministries in the world touch just a fraction of the number of people in Grandview. The mayor of Grandview has far more responsibility over people than 99.9999 percent of the members of the Body of Christ in terms of their ministry, of the thousand that touch 5,000 people. That's a made-up number; it may be two or three thousand, but I don't think so.

### **THE NEAR IMPOSSIBILITY OF FAME**

Paragraph C. Only a small fraction of one percent of the Body of Christ, in all of history; a very small fraction, maybe a hundredth of one percent of the Body of Christ in history, is called to any kind of numerical impact that's 5,000 to 10,000 people.

That's a very small number, five or ten; it really is. However, most of the people in the Body of Christ who are excited about God in ministry, the vast majority, imagine that they will be the exception. They don't sign up mostly to be a disciple; they love God and they know God loves them—they like that a lot—but they sign up mostly with the vision of being among this one hundredth of one percent in human history.

They've been taught and told it's for everyone, and that it will somehow make their life more important. It's not true.

Now, there are maybe a thousand that will touch that, and there may be two or three of you in this room. There may be a few more; there's possibly ten or twenty or thirty or forty of you. I don't know; it doesn't really matter at the end of the day. When we stand before God, He's not going to talk to me about how big the conferences are; He's going to talk to me about how big my heart is.

### **AVOIDING THE SPIRIT OF DISILLUSIONMENT**

Now, if you're one of those thousand, or whatever the number is—maybe there's ten or twenty or thirty, I don't know the real number—of those thousand, there are certainly less than a hundred that have the Billy Graham, Reinhardt Bonnke type of scope. There are only a few that touch millions in all of history, in the body of Christ.

I'm not picking on young people; it's because younger people are more vulnerable to it. Older people believed it when they were younger, but they're worn out. A lot of them are cynical and jaded in their spirit because it didn't happen. They're not even open to believing it.

### **THE INCREASE OF DEMONIC ASSIGNMENTS**

What I'm calling for is that we have a spirit of revelation, and that we walk in reality; that we sign up for the right things for the right reasons. If you're one of those who touches millions, and there may be a few of you in this room, you can be sure of this: If you have a larger ministry impact, you will have a larger demonic assignment against you. For real. It's not a small thing.

We talk about that because no one really has an assignment against them from darkness. So it's a theoretical thing that's fun to talk about. But when Satan buffets a person's body with a thorn; when they end up in prison, and they're beaten with rods and stoned; it's not a small thing to have Satan's rage focused on you as an individual.

Now, we have the name of Jesus. We have the grace of God. When Paul used the name of Jesus, Jesus appeared to him and stood before him. He said, "My grace is sufficient for you" to endure this (2 Cor. 12:9). He says, "I'm not lifting."

"I've got the name of Jesus. Leave in the name of Jesus!"

Jesus appears and says, "No, it's not leaving. This thorn is to keep you from exalting yourself."

So, if you're one of those thousand, or five thousand, or whatever the real number is at the end of the age—I'm sure at the end of the age, the numbers are bigger, but it's still a very small percentage—know that there will be a larger assignment of darkness. I'm not trying to scare you out of it; I'm trying to say that God has a system that's called "the great equalizer." The way that He leads His kingdom gives you a different perspective.

### **WE ARE NOT COMMITTED TO SMALLNESS**

Paragraph D. I want to make it clear that we as a ministry are not committed to smallness. Smallness isn't the goal; the will of God is the goal. Smallness doesn't have a virtue in itself. It's the will of God that's virtuous. Virtue is to embrace the will of God.

I'm saying that 99.999 percent of people in the will of God are called to smallness. It's not smallness I'm rejoicing in; it's the will of God. It just-so-happens that the will of God is small for almost everyone through history.

The problem is that this was one of the things for which Paul was praying that they would have revelation, of the reality of how God viewed their lives. God saw them as successful, and what they did was powerful if they were faithful in smallness. The way it's applied to most believers—I don't know about most, but large numbers are offended by smallness. They look at the Lord and say, "No, I don't accept that. I'm going to have a huge impact in my external ministry." A few of you might.

Again, it won't matter at all when you stand before the Lord, the size of the impact you have. What will matter is the size of your heart.

### **"HOPE DEFERRED MAKES THE HEART SICK"**

Paragraph E. Proverbs 13 says that "Hope deferred" —or expectations that are delayed, dreams that are shattered—"makes the heart sick."

When I look across our nation, there are more people who have been in the kingdom for some years—I'm talking about people my age, in their forties and fifties and sixties, so many of them! I've been in ministry now for over thirty years and so many of them are sick in their heart because their expectations have been delayed or they just didn't happen. It's hope deferred, and their heart is truly sick.

The reason is that they have the wrong expectations. They signed up for the wrong things when they said "yes" to the will of God. They had an agenda for what the will of God was for their life; they didn't have a spirit of revelation for the will of God. They didn't have hope that God's will in their life was good and wise and would make their lives very significant and very important before the Lord.

### **MANY PEOPLE LIVE IN FANTASY**

Paragraph E. Many people live in fantasy. It is truly fantasy, and it's dangerous because it really hurts them. It really does hurt them over the years, not in the first five years or ten years, but in the twenty- and thirty-year time frames. Many people live in fantasy about how big their ministry impact is going to be. They form their expectations around what a motivational self-help teacher said, who sprinkled in a little of the name of Jesus in their messages.

There are a lot of self-help motivational teachers and preachers who don't really carry the truth and the spirit of what the Word of God is saying. They'll use a few Bible verses here or there. These motivational self-help teachers tell them how much money they're going to have, and how much impact they're going to have. They get drunk; they get intoxicated with fantasy.

Of course it's called faith. It goes down as faith, and most of it is fantasy. People get intoxicated with it. When their ministry fails to get big, the guy goes through so much pain and despair trying to figure out why God failed him and why he failed God. Neither happened. He didn't fail God, and God didn't fail him. He got connected and intoxicated with fantasy by the self-help motivational speakers.

When people feel like they failed God in their life, and that God failed them, that's a really debilitating disease. I know multitudes of believers who are twenty and thirty years old in the Lord who are struggling with this sickness.

### **FAITHFULLY EXECUTE THE WILL OF GOD**

Paragraph F. Some believers, and I would say many, are far more committed to doing something big than they are to doing the will of God faithfully. If it's big, it excites them. Whether it's the will of God or not, if it's big, they get excited. Beloved, that's the spirit of the culture. By nature, we're all like this. That's why it takes revelation to go contrary to it. Jesus said, "What men esteem greatly is an abomination in God's sight." It's true of many believers: What men get excited about in their natural thought process, men are excited about it, but God is not.

We can tell the story many times, but it doesn't convince God. Then, when the expectation of having a big ministry really touches them, they're motivated and excited. They're more motivated by bigness than they are by being faithful as a disciple.

Certainly, I say ninety-nine times out of a hundred, the bigness never comes, after decades of waiting for it.

The Lord would say to them, "I would that you had been committed to being a disciple of Mine. I would that you had asked Me what My calling for your life is." The Lord would have spoken first about our internal calling, and then our external calling. He would give us confidence that what we're doing in our external calling, whether it's in the marketplace, the home, a ministry organization, no matter how small it is, it's good and valuable to Him.

When we have revelation of that, our heart becomes alive and there's a revelation of that in our spirit, and there's strength in our spirit.

### **BEING HONEST IN OUR PRESENTATIONS OF THE GOSPEL**

Paragraph G. We must call people to be faithful disciples, without giving them false promises about how large their ministry is going to be if they do these seven steps and support your ministry. We don't want to give false promises about wealth or comfort or ease.

Our nation is filled with people with itching ears, as Paul said in 2 Timothy 4, who are searching out anyone who will tell them these things. We are to call people; we do well if we call them to their internal calling and

their external calling. I don't want to minimize the external calling; I want people to have a revelation of it. I want it to be reality and sober truth.

### **THE SHATTERING DESPAIR OF DISAPPOINTMENT**

The top of page 3. Many are broken-hearted, paragraph H, when they finally conclude that their ministry is ordained by God to be small. I have seen the incredible despair of men and women after twenty years of serving the Lord, and they finally conclude, "My ministry is really, really small."

I say, "That's completely biblical."

They say, "No, no! I'm going to do big things for God!"

I say, "You are, in your internal calling and your eternal calling. If you do your internal calling right, then your eternal calling will take care of itself."

We're focused on our external calling by nature. We think that if we do something and it makes a big impact, somehow we gain more importance in our life. That's a complete falsehood. Billy Graham is no more important because he has filled stadiums time without number. He has gained no importance in God's economy at all by virtue of the fact of filling up stadiums.

### **THE JEALOUSY AND MERCY OF THE LORD'S DECISIONS**

Paragraph H. Many are broken-hearted when they finally conclude this. I've watched this happen. This is painful for me even to read or write. They have endured a slow, painful death from decades of resisting this truth.

I've watched many believers in their forties and fifties. When they were in their twenties, they signed up for that which was primarily rooted in fantasy. For five or ten years it kept them zealous and excited, but their motivation was the bigness. Not because of the Lord—it was unperceived. They couldn't even sort it out: When they were in their twenties, it seemed like the same thing. Their big ministry and the Lord being glorified seemed like one and the same thing.

The Lord was jealous for them. So now it's ten, twenty, thirty years later. They've experienced a slow death, of pain, of resisting the truth.

### **LEARNING TO AVOID UNNECESSARY PAIN**

Here is my point, paragraph H at the end: Much of this pain can be minimized. This pain is unnecessary if we can have expectations that are formed by the spirit of revelation touching our hearts about our calling.

There's a reason Paul said, "Without ceasing—I do not cease to pray this one prayer: that you would have revelation about your calling." If you don't see your calling right, you will end up concluding the opposite about your internal, your external, and your eternal calling. You will have an opposite conclusion, and you'll live aimlessly and shallowly in your spiritual life. It's critical that we get this thing right.

## **HE IS JEALOUS FOR US**

Paragraph I. One of the reasons God gives us a small external assignment, except, again, for that one-hundredth or one-thousandth of one percent that get a big one, who then get an extra assignment from darkness to challenge their life; one of the reasons God gives us a small external assignment, and we don't need to be angry with Him for it, is because He is jealous; He is jealous for us.

He wants to establish our greatness in His sight. He doesn't want us to get our identity, and therefore our value, by what we do in the sight of men. That's naturally how we go: We get our identity and our value by what we accomplish. God says, "No, no, that is not the truth. That is not the truth. If you connect with truth, your heart will get liberated and you will enter into your true greatness."

We get so intoxicated by the vision for our greatness in the external, temporal, right now—in the temporary, external part of our calling.

Again, the temporary, external part of our calling in this age is important. I'm not minimizing it at all; I want to link into it soberly and do it the right way, with clarity and confidence that God calls it wise and good and important. When I have that confidence, I can stay really steady; when I lose that confidence, I lose my way.

## **GOD RESISTS THE PROUD**

Paragraph J. In James 4:6, James says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." This is what's happening: God does not resist the proud out of anger; He resists the proud out of zeal and jealousy for who they are.

In all my years of ministry, I've rarely heard anyone—I was just thinking, maybe one person I can vaguely remember years ago—who thought that James 4:6 was actually happening in their life—except for the second half. I've never met a believer who really believed the resistance in their life was coming from heaven. We all understand that the devil is resisting us; we know that people who don't see our value are resisting us. It never dawns on us that, out of kindness, God is actually resisting us to give us a chance to be realigned before we actually meet Him in the age to come. He's saying, "My resistance is an act of My kindness; it's just a new perspective."

Many have never considered this verse as applying to them. It applies to other people, but people never think it applies to them.

Ask the Lord about it. Say, "Lord, are You resisting my vision for bigness?"

He says, "Well, you can call it that. I'm fighting for My relationship with you and your ultimate destiny in greatness.

"That's what I'm doing. I'm really fighting for our relationship, and I'm fighting for your ultimate destiny in greatness. The best way to do that right now is to resist you; to wake you up."

As I told you, some of you feel liberated, and some of you feel troubled.

## **THE SIMPLICITY OF THE CALL TO BE FAITHFUL**

Let's go to paragraph M. The simplicity of the call to be faithful in little is attainable to everyone. Everyone can do this.

Everyone can do this. The way that Jesus runs His kingdom, everyone can attain success. Everyone! This calling isn't so high that no one can do it. See, some of the callings that we get are so high, no one can do them. "I'm going to win all of Africa! I'm going to win all of Asia!" Our calling is so high that actually, no one can attain it. "Reinhardt Bonnke, move out of the way! Billy Graham, I'm sorry for your small vision."

This calling to be faithful in little isn't so high that no one can do it. Yet, it's so low that few actually do it.

It's so low that few actually do it. Someone said, "This is good!" OK, I've got to tell you. Misty told me this today; I wrote it down. She was on the patio; I came back with my pen and said, "Say that again!" She gave me a few versions of it. I love it. She said, "I love the Lord for leading His kingdom in this way. It's not so high that no one can reach it; it's so low that most people don't want to. I love Him for leading His kingdom this way; it's exciting me that that's who's leading us—that He would think of an entire government based on this principle in this age."

Beloved, I want to press into the second part. It's so low that few want to bother with it. "I don't want to do that! I want to do something big! I want to do something outstanding. This is too low. I don't want to be faithful in little. Eight or ten people I'm touching, not even all at one time. It's a little here and a little there—no way! Let me touch a lot more than that."

## **OUR ETERNAL CALLING IS SURE**

Roman numeral IV. Our eternal calling is sure. I mean, if we're faithful, it is sure. It is big.

What our natural mind says is that our eternal calling is vague; I want to assure you, it's certain and it's big. It takes the spirit of revelation to see that. I want to assure you, the vast majority of your external calling is little, even though we naturally don't want that. It's the spirit of revelation in the Word of God that gives us this understanding, called the Holy Spirit.

It says here in 2 Corinthians 4:16, "Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:16-17).

What Paul is saying is that his outer man is perishing. He's being beaten with rods; he's being stoned. His body is wearing out from the beatings, from the rigors of his travels. He says, "But my inner man is being renewed. This whole affliction is working something in me that has an eternal weight of glory."

He's talking about his calling on the other side; not just about walking down the streets of the New Jerusalem. Many people, their outward man isn't perishing and they're not being afflicted like Paul. He's not just talking about being born again; he's talking about how there's a weight of glory that is related to him faithfully enduring the difficult call God gave him.

## **THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME**

Paul's calling wasn't just about being beaten; it was his calling to weak things: humility, serving, fasting, prayer, giving. It was the Sermon on the Mount. There's an affliction to this calling in our natural life.

Paul went on later and said, in Romans 8, "The sufferings" —the difficulties, the sacrifices—"of this of present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory" (Rom. 8:18) —he's not just talking about the general glory of the resurrected city. Certainly, he means that for sure. But he's also talking in a very particular way. He says, "I cannot compare what my sufferings and my sacrifices are working in me in a personal, individual way."

## **EMBRACING FAITH IN OUR ETERNAL CALLING**

Top of page 4; paragraph B. All three dimensions of our calling demand faith. In order to see the internal dimension, we need faith. We have to have faith that God sees and values it. What our natural, unrenewed mind tells us is that no one sees the internal, that it's too hard, that it's not that important. "No one even sees what I do; it's too important and it's too hard."

The Lord says, "It's massively important, and it's within your reach."

We need faith to embrace our internal calling. When we figure out the truth of our external calling, 99.9 percent of it is way too small, and irrelevant. The Lord says, "No, it takes faith. It's very important to Me; I'm watching it, and it really matters in My kingdom."

Our eternal calling seems vague and distant and not real. It's sure and it's big. It takes faith, all three of these dimensions of our calling.

## **"WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT"**

As a matter of fact, here in 2 Corinthians 4:6, Paul is actually writing in the context of these three chapters. He's writing about persecution and about his fasted lifestyle and his life of weakness and humility. In context, he's talking about how it affects his eternal calling. I mean, in the actual context of these three chapters, he's talking about his struggles and how it verifies the genuineness of his apostolic ministry, but how it brings a greater calling for him.

When Paul says, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7), he's talking about this.

Normally when you hear this verse talked about, it's about how to get more cars and bigger houses. Walking by faith and not by sight is specifically talking about embracing persecution and weakness and serving; believing it matters and results in eternal implications in our life. That's what Paul is talking about in 2 Corinthians 5. The whole chapter is about the resurrected body. That's what he's talking about.

2 Corinthians 4 is about his beatings, and why they'll result in glory in his eternal life. He says, "I walk by confidence; this is real and it matters in my life. I don't walk by the sight that my ministry is small."

## **THE SMALLNESS OF PAUL'S MINISTRY, IN HISTORICAL TERMS**

By the way, Paul's ministry was really small compared to the ministries today. We look at Paul and say, "Oh, he's the main guy!" Well, in Paul's day, the number of people whom Paul touched directly was so much smaller than we imagine.

Paul didn't really become famous, I mean big famous, till Martin Luther came around. Honestly! Until Martin Luther, in the 1500s, told everyone they could read their own Bible, and they printed Bibles, and people started reading them. Paul didn't really become famous until about 1500 years after he died. In his day, he wasn't like the guy who was so famous. He wasn't a mega-personality in the Body of Christ. His world was significantly smaller. He had no microphones to speak to crowds. His body was weak and frail; he spoke to small numbers. Every now and then, he spoke to large numbers, but mostly they were small numbers. The word got out and they didn't have communications systems.

Paul said, "Hey, I'm walking by confidence, by faith, that what I'm doing matters to God. That's good enough for me." The confidence wasn't just that it mattered to God, though that's enough, but that it would actually have an implication to his life.

2 Corinthians 5 is about the resurrection. This isn't talking about getting houses and cars, although I'm all for God giving houses and cars. I love when God gives them, but I think that most of that is by people using their own ingenuity and their own connectedness, and throwing a little Bible language on it. I'm trying to be helpful; I'm not trying to be critical.

So much of what is being presented in our nation today in the spirit of faith is a delusion and a diversion from truth. It really is true: Though there are elements of truth all the way through it, there's lots of delusion, lots of diversion from the spirit of truth. It's a diversion from the things the Lord has called us to as His faithful disciples.

### **SHE DID NOT CONSIDER HER DESTINY**

Paragraph F. Look at what it says about Israel: "She did not consider her destiny; therefore her collapse was awesome" (Lam. 1:9) —the word should be *terrifying*.

Beloved, you've got to be consider your destiny in truth and in reality.

OK, let's go! Where do I want to go? Let's go to the top of page 5.

### **THE HOPE OF OUR CALLING**

Paragraph E. I want to go another minute or two and be done. Let's go to paragraph E. We have to pray; we have to resolve to lay hold of the spirit of revelation in our life—the hope of our calling.

Beloved, the hope of our calling isn't something that automatically comes. Paul says, "I pray without ceasing that you would have the revelation." This is something he labored for; this is something he was focused on, and we have to resolve to lay hold of a spirit of revelation about our calling on all three levels; then individually and corporately on all three levels.

### **ALWAYS LABORING FERVENTLY**

Paragraph E. We pray to receive the spirit of revelation so that the fog lifts off of our hearts; so that we can walk steadily, so that we can live steadily.

I assure you, you cannot live steadily in righteousness without the spirit of revelation about your calling. All of us will get off course.

Pray this prayer for your family, for your friends; pray this prayer for your enemies—for real. The Lord will return it back on you as well.

### **ALWAYS LABORING FERVENTLY**

Look at what Epaphras does in Colossians 4. This is such strong language: “Always laboring fervently” (Col. 4:12). What three huge words. Always fervently laboring, for what? So that you would know the will of God. Epaphras is praying this same reality.

He wasn’t laboring in prayer fervently so that they would know if they should have two church services. “Is it time to start the second one? We’re asking for God’s will.” That’s not what Epaphras was laboring for. “Do we add on another addition to the building? We need the will of God.”

God speaks about those things, but Epaphras wasn’t laboring so that they knew if it was time to plant the next congregation; he was laboring that the people would have a spirit of revelation about the will of God and the call of God. Epaphras knew that if they connected on the internal, the external, the eternal, by God’s revelation, their hearts would be mighty in righteousness.

Let’s go to the top of page 6.

### **THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION**

Paragraph L. Paul prayed this phrase. He said, “We pray for the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that God would release to us the revelation of the knowledge of God.”

Now, what is that talking about? It’s talking about God’s beauty and His splendor and His power. It’s also talking about the revelation of how Jesus thought and how He lived His life in His humanity. Beloved, the spirit of revelation isn’t just about God in the heavens. It’s a revelation about how the God-Man in His humanity carried His heart on the earth. We need the revelation of the knowledge of how He processed life.

Isaiah gives an insight on how Jesus processed His life. Isaiah was prophesying about the Messiah. Look at Isaiah 49:4, right in the middle there.

### **“I HAVE LABORED IN VAIN”**

Verse 4. This is Jesus speaking. He says, “I have labored in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and in vain” (Is. 49:4). He means according to man’s estimation. Here He is after thirty years of faithfully obeying God; then, after three and a half years of ministry, the nation rejects Him.

Many of His disciples turned away from Him; the multitudes denounced Him. One of His own betrayed Him; the others all fell away that night. The nation resisted Him. It says, “I said in My heart before men, ‘They say I labored in vain according to man’s estimation.’”

Here’s Jesus: “I have spent My strength for nothing. I have not produced anything.” However, He’s only talking about it in the same way Paul talked about the so-called weaknesses. He says, “Yet surely My just reward is with the Lord, and My work with My God” (Is. 49:4). He meant ultimately His reward that will be openly manifest at the second coming in the Millennial kingdom, when all the nations come to Him.

Jesus says, “They say I have wasted My life. I have spent my strength for nothing; I have not produced anything that can be seen by men openly.” He had twelve ragtag disciples: One fell away completely; the others denied Him. They weren’t impressive to the natural at all. That’s all He had to show from the natural point of view.

### **IS IT TOO SMALL A THING TO BE GOD’S SERVANT?**

Let’s go to paragraph N. This is the last one. My question is, “Is it too small a thing to be God’s servant?” Do we need the guarantee of a great impact to be in this thing one hundred percent with God?

Many people do.

Of course you know Korah; Korah was a very rebellious man. Korah was called to stand in the presence of the Lord. In some ways, in our language, he was called to be in the presence of the Lord. He was called to do the IHOP thing.

Moses calls Korah in Numbers 16:8 and says, “Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them?” (Num. 16:8-9). Moses says, “Is it too small a thing that I have told you to do the mundane work of the tabernacle?” It was mundane. Korah and the guys who were with him were angry.

He says in verse 10, “And are you seeking the priesthood also?” Korah was seeking to be in the sphere of leadership that Moses and Aaron had. He was angry at God and angry at Moses. Moses said, “Is it too small a thing that God had you stand in His presence?”

Korah said, “No, it is not enough. I want more stature in the sight of men.” He had a whole company with him.

So in verse 11, Moses answers, “Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord” (Num. 16:11). He’s saying, “You are gathered together against God! That is who you are esteemed against. You did not esteem His calling on your life, to be in His presence, enough. You demanded a place before men.” He said, “And the Lord says to you, Korah, ‘You have stood against the Lord in that mindset.’”

Amen.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

Lord, it is enough to us that we are Your servants. Lord, we want to be Your friends. We don’t need a guarantee that we’re going to make a big impact in the sight of men. It’s enough to us that we serve You in weak and small things.

Lord, if You give us a voice to the nations, that’s your business. Lord, we ask You, I ask You across this room for the spirit of wisdom and revelation.