

Theme: Calling refers to the specific tasks and responsibilities given to us by God, through which God works to serve our neighbors and promote the common good, restraining the effects of the curse and bringing blessing to every realm of life and every corner of creation.

I. Intro – What Does It Mean To Be Called?

- A. Review of calling series so far
- B. Primary calling - to God through Jesus Christ
- C. Secondary calling - God's instruments in the world
- D. These are the philosophical foundation of calling
- E. Today - another foundation stone - understanding
- F. What is the nature of our secondary calling?

II. Our Calling Comes From God

- A. Calling (and associated gifts) given to us by God
 - 1. We saw this in the first teaching as well
 - 2. This true from Abram to the disciples - God calls
 - 3. 1 Peter 4:10 - gifts are received; we administer
 - 4. [Romans 12:6 - gifts according to grace given us]
 - 5. [Hebrews 5:4 - We must be called - like Aaron was]
 - 6. This has two major implications
 - a. Apart from God, calling is distorted
 - b. We do not choose our calling & gifts!
- B. God's sovereignty determines and restricts our calling
 - 1. Jer 29:4-7 - I sent you into exile; here is your call

- 2. Their calling is in light of their circumstances
- 3. This true from Abram to the disciples - God calls
- 4. 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 - God calls us to our situation
 - a. Paul mentions calling 5 times in 7 verses
 - b. Circumcision & slavery are outside our control
 - c. If you can change it - you are free to do so!
 - d. If you can't change it, do not worry - God is Sovereign

C. This runs counter to the spirit of our age

- 1. We want to believe anyone can do anything
- 2. We think gifts and calling are at our discretion
- 3. But this leads to endless frustration & guilt
- 4. Gifts, circumstances, health, opportunities ultimately beyond us
- 5. William Perkins definition of calling
- 6. We are responsible for the calling God gave us
- 7. Not responsible for what we have not been given

III. Our Calling Is For Others - Not Ourselves

- A. Our calling and gifts are given to serve others
 - 1. 1 Peter 4:10 - to serve others
 - 2. God is working through us to serve others
 - 3. 1 Peter 4:11 - speaking God's words; God's strength
- B. Implications of this point

1. Calling is not primarily about my self-fulfillment
2. Calling is not only God given; it is God sustained
3. Calling is focused on meeting the needs of others
4. Our fulfillment is found in being channels of God's work to others
5. The analogy of shooting a rifle at a target

IV. Our Calling Promotes the Common Good

- A. Our calling is given to promote the common good
 1. Jer 29:4-7 - seek peace and prosperity of our city
 - a. Our own good comes as we promote common good
 - b. Includes praying for our city [also in 1 Tim 2:1-4]
 - c. But mainly just everyday life & activities (Jer 29:5-6)
 2. This is like God who sends sun, rain on ALL [Matt 5:45]
 3. Perkins definition of calling
- B. Two key parts to this - restrain curse, extend blessing
 1. Curse came because of sin & touches all callings
 2. But we still do our calling - & restrain curses effects
 3. At creation we were blessed - & to extend it
 4. Continues after the Fall - blessed to be a blessing
 5. Part of God's common grace - and our call!!!
- C. In every real of life & corner of creation
 1. Calling is NOT just about the church

2. Calling is NOT just about sharing the Gospel
3. In includes every realm of life, every corner of creation
4. Worship fuels our walking in our callings - but it is distinct from them

V. Applying the Word

- A. Do I know the calling I have received from God?
 1. Do I know calling comes from God - not myself?
 2. Do I know the callings I have received from God?
 3. Do I gladly receive these callings - or want something else?
 4. God has wired us, placed us to show us how to best serve
 5. This is where joy is found!
- B. Do I know my callings are for others?
 1. Calling and gifts are for others - the common good
 2. Do I live to let God serve others through me?
 3. Do I know how I contribute to the common good?
- C. Prayer - to know and walk in our callings

Understanding Our Calling

1 Peter 4:10-11; Jeremiah 29:4-7

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Prayer

Psalm 67:1-2

10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:10–11

4 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Jeremiah 29:4–7

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17 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. 18 Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. 19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. 20 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. 21 Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you — although if you can gain your freedom, do so. 22 For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

1 Corinthians 7:17–24

Vocation or calling is a kind of life imposed on man for the common good.
William Perkins, Puritan author of major work on Calling and Vocation