

The Called- God's Chosen (combined study)

Matthew 13:10-11 (explains why God speaks in parables)

God's people understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. When Jesus spoke in parables He wasn't trying to hide the truth from sincere seekers. Those receptive to spiritual truth understood his illustrations. For others, his parables were only stories without any real meaning.

Ephesians 4: 1-3 (characteristics of those Called)

The Called begin to live a life worthy of the calling, called repentance. [how you know you're called]

Paul writes from prison and states that those who are Called must exemplify certain life characteristics (humble, gentle, patient, understanding, peaceful) as someone who is called. The Called are one with the Holy Spirit and operate as a representative of Christ.

Acts 11:18

Acts chapter 11 explains that both Jew and Gentile can be called (anyone can be called). Repentance isn't just for who we think it belongs to. We can't begin to know who He will call and how He plans to do it.

God had given 3 men from Ceasarea a vision, as well as Peter. He told the 3 men that Peter would tell them how they could be saved.

Anyone can be called and utilized for God's work. People don't have a choice in rejecting who God has chosen. Someone might deny you because they believe you do not possess the qualities of a "Chosen" candidate but that decision is God's alone.

Note: It's in Antioch that believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26)

Matthew 10:1 (Jesus calls and equips the disciples)

Jesus called the disciples and then gave them the authority to cast out evil spirits and heal.

*God equips whomever He calls. The Called are given authority

Personal Example:

I'm a good basketball player, so my coach expects me to lead my team to victories. Part of that call involves intensive training, increased expectations, and tougher discipline. I have a greater responsibility so I am treated differently from all the other players (ex: greater pay, more leeway/grace), but I also carry the majority of the pressure. All of these different aspects comes with being called and/or chosen. Being called by God is similar, with respect to expectation and experience.

Those who are called begin to have a deeper understanding and knowledge of the Word. They WANT to be a better person.

Why would anyone even care if they are called?

We all have an innate longing for a sense of belonging/purpose. There is a spiritual paternal bond with our Father (God) that creates a sense of connectivity. That connectivity is attached to the Call. Good luck trying to escape that one! God is persistent in calling...

People want to know that they are Called, regardless of their ability or willingness to accept it.

Isaiah 30: 20-21 (Hearing God, Reassurance that He is always there)

It is instinctive to recognize God's voice. It's like a child to his mother.

We, like Judah, are God's chosen people. Regardless of how we try to seek help outside of God, it will not work. Judah no longer wanted to hear the truth from their prophets. They preferred to be told lies that fed their inner desires and made them feel good. Judah wanted to seek help from Egypt but God warned them that their help would be rendered incapable.

In verses 20 and 21, God says that even though He allows adversity and suffering to take place in our lives; He will be there and He is teaching us something. He also goes on to say that we will hear Him and know where to go and what to do.

[Prayer: Father, thank you for being with me in the midst of my adversity and suffering. Show me what lessons I am to learn in this place. Your Word says I will hear you and know where to go and what to do. Direct my path. Incline my ear unto your Word. Let your will be made plain in my life.]

God's chosen and called have a peace about that calling. There is also confirmation (which can come from people, the bible, situations or circumstances, etc...)

God desires all men to be saved and know the truth [1 Timothy 2:4]

Personal Testimony: I think about this time when I went to preach for a special program. I completely flopped and I couldn't understand why this happened. I began to question my calling and I doubted that I was really called to share the Word of God. God shared something with me in a way I could understand after that experience. He said this: When your coach puts you in the game he knows what you are capable of doing, regardless of your actual performance. Just because you miss the shot doesn't mean that you're not the best person to take the shot. It doesn't even mean that your team is losing (that you're not accomplishing the goal set forth). It is time to apply what you do in practice to this game of life! I'd like to share that same word with anyone reading this right now. You are the best person to take the shot and even if you're having a bad shooting game, you can and will win.

Luke 7: 18-23 (Defeating Doubt)

John the Baptist doubted whether or not Jesus was the Messiah so he sent some of his disciples to go and ask Jesus if he was really the Messiah. John was unsure because he was receiving incomplete reports about Jesus. Jesus responded by having John's 2 disciples witness His miracles. Jesus said that He was obviously doing what the Messiah was prophesied to be doing (so the proof was in the pudding).

*We will doubt, at times, whether we are on the right track or called by God, but it's only when we face our doubts honestly can we begin to resolve them.

Check out these bible characters who were all called by God, yet experienced doubt:

Moses
David
Abraham
Jacob
Esther
Paul

Numbers 11:29 (Being chosen even when don't feel worthy)

Moses needed some help addressing the needs of the Israelites. God decided to give 70 elders the Holy Spirit so that they could assist Moses by preaching, praying, and praising God. The elders were at the tabernacle when they received the Holy Spirit (with the exception of 2 men who didn't feel worthy enough to be there). Because the elders were given the Holy Spirit, they were able to share the things of God with the people.

The 2 elders that were at the camp (Eldad and Medad) did not go to the tabernacle because they felt weak and unworthy; BUT the Spirit of God found them! [God will find you wherever you are] When they received the Spirit they were able to share the things of God with the people. They spake and moved by the Holy Ghost.

Those that humble themselves shalt be exalted.

Because the Holy Spirit was given to the 2 elders outside of the tabernacle (in a place where people didn't think they should be able to receive it: physical/mental/spiritual place), Joshua (minister of Moses) wanted the men to be shut up. Moses wasn't afraid or bothered by them receiving the Holy Spirit in their place of residence. He wished that all could receive the Holy Spirit . [When you are firm in who God has called you to be, you are unbothered about others rising up against you]. There is something for everyone.

God doesn't care about where you are positioned in life. Your title doesn't make you great, instead it reiterates the great work that needs to be done. The greater the call, the greater the consequences for misuse of that calling. Be content with where God places you. Where you are now could very well determine how your'e utilized in the future.

The Call

John 6: 44, 65

[John 6: 1-14 is where Jesus feeds the 5,000]

[John 6: 15-21 Jesus walks on water]

[John 6: 22-59 Jesus is the Bread of Life]

[John 6: 60-71 Many disciples desert Jesus]

{John 6: 26-27}

People were amazed at how Jesus fed the 5000 with only 5 loafs and 2 fishes. They wanted to force Him to be their king after seeing the miracle He had done. Jesus disappeared into the hills once the people tried to force him to be king. They followed Him because of what He

could do for them [He had fed them loaves and fish and they were looking for Him]. We need to follow Him because of who He is, because the things that are done can and will disappear. They (things/what's done) are perishable. Who He is never changes. Focus needs to be placed on what cannot pass away (eternal life). We must want what satisfies the Spirit, not the flesh for even the flesh is perishable or transient. **Feed what's eternal (our spirit) with THE eternal (Jesus Christ).**

Humans are spiritual beings utilizing transient vessels.

Examples: (things that temporarily and eternally satisfy human needs)

Money won't satisfy you because it's transient. You'll never have enough.

Food cannot satisfy you because it's transient. You have to keep eating to be filled.

The Word (bible) CAN satisfy you because it caters to the needs of a spiritual recipient.

The Holy Spirit CAN satisfy any and every need because it embodies all that is spiritual.

{John 6: 28}

The people were amazed with what Jesus had done and now stated that they too wanted to perform God's work. Jesus responds in **Verse 29** that the ONLY work God wants from them is to BELIEVE in Jesus. (**Note:** there is nothing we can DO to please God. Don't condemn yourself when you make mistakes or "fail" God. Believe in Him and trust Him to use your mistakes for miracles. **Religion is a response to what people believe God wants them to do, BUT His response is simply this: Believe in Jesus Christ, who He has sent).**

The people then ask God to show them miraculous signs so that they might believe. They bragged on how Moses had given their ancestors bread from heaven (manna) to eat so that they could live. Jesus responds: That's not the truth. His Father, God, provided bread from heaven and NOW offers the true bread of heaven (the true bread of God who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world).

The people then ask for THAT bread that Jesus was talking about and Jesus responds: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. The Israelites ate physical bread (manna) and died in the wilderness just the same, but if they would eat and drink of Jesus (Bread of Life), they would never die. **[vs. 22-59]**

{John 6: **44, 45**}

This is Jesus response to the murmuring of the people saying that He didn't come from heaven. The people were saying that He did not come from heaven because they knew His mother and father on earth. Jesus says : **No one comes to Him or is drawn to Him unless God sends them (the CHOSEN).** Those that belong to Him are sent by God. **Verse 45** was a response to the unbelief of the people. Jesus knew that He would be betrayed and that some disciples (followers of Christ) wouldn't believe. This is why He says it again that God sends to Him whomever belongs to Him.

Matthew 13: 10-11 (understanding the mystery of the kingdom of God)

Ephesians 4:1 (begin to live life worthy of calling: called repentance)

Acts 11:18