

Adventure Camp 2018 Our Special Calling

There is a time coming that will require us to have a full measure of courage, strength, faith, love, compassion, boldness, and a rock-solid resolve.

Revelation 17:1-6, 12-18

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her forehead a name was written:

**MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS
OF THE EARTH.**

6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18 And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

This is describing a worldwide occupation! The only ones standing in Satan's way is Jesus Christ and His saints. Could we have a more crucial role in the lives of all mankind?

Do you see the hope of the future for you and for all of mankind? We've been called to special purpose.

Are you worthy of your calling? Have you taken the time to consider how special it is?

STATE TITLE

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

A lot is required of us if we are to fulfill our calling. But the Creator of the universe is the one who called us. We must not give up or take it lightly. We must be steadfast in our calling and in our hope.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Our victory is assured over the harlot and the beast if we remain steadfast and immovable. This is something Paul wrote about a number of times.

Colossians 1:3-5, 9-13, 19-23

3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel,

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the

gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Without our special calling, we are not worthy and qualified to be with Christ, fighting the beast and Satan and his demons.

But God has made us qualified if we continue in the faith.

Peter also knew the importance of staying steadfast in our lives.

2 Peter 3:8-9, 14-18

8 But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter warns us not to fall from steadfastness. Then he tells how to avoid that: grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

He is speaking of our preparation and what we must do to get ready to fight alongside the Lamb.

Our Preparation

Our preparation to fulfill our calling occurs in two ways.

- Our active part in preparing ourselves.
- God's hand in our lives to prepare us.

Can you see God's hand in preparing you? Or do you just think all the trials and tribulations of life are unfair and unnecessary? Do you view every aspect and stage of your lives as parts of your preparation for that climactic moment with the Lamb?

Think about:

- Where you grew up
- Who your parents are
- Where you went to school
- The jobs you've had
- The Feast sites you've gone to and the people you met there
- Your friends
- All the experiences you've had in your life
- Where you've traveled
- All the financial setbacks, health issues, and death of loved ones

All of it has prepared you to be where you are right now: in God's Church with knowledge and understanding of spiritual things.

Do you see God's hand in your life to prepare you?

Part of the process of conversion is to see our calling and to accept it, changing our lives in obedience to God, not being ashamed of what we believe and hope for.

There is a powerful example of this are in the Bible. No one is outside of God's reach.

Paul's Preparation Before His Conversion

1. Family Background and Birth

Paul was both a Jew and a Roman citizen.

Philippians 3:5

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;

Acts 22:25-28

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

27 Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?" He said, "Yes."

28 The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship." And Paul said, "But I was born a citizen."

Paul was known as a Diaspora Jew. In 586 BC the Babylonians drove the Jews out of Jerusalem. They became scattered throughout Babylon and Egypt.

According to Albert Bell in his book, Exploring the New Testament World, the Diaspora Jews were the descendants of those Jews who were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. "Once a Gentile man converted to Judaism, he could marry a Jewish woman, and their children would be Jews."

According to Jerome Murphy-O'Connor in his book, Paul: A Critical Life, the true origin of Paul's Roman citizenship is not clear but it is believed among scholars that a Roman citizen freed Paul's father from slavery. This allowed Paul's father to become a Roman himself, passing on the citizenship to Paul.

2. Formal Education

Paul's education gave him a clear direction for his life and set the stage for his Gentile ministry. He began his education at a very young age, following Jewish tradition. In Jewish homes...a child's education is supposed to begin at three...boys are to begin study of the Torah at age five, Mishnah [oral traditions of the Jews] at age ten, and Talmud [Jewish commentary on the law] at fifteen.

Paul also took up the trade of tent making. It was a requirement of all young Jewish students to learn a useful trade. In the first century the work of an artisan, such as a tent-maker, was considered slave labor.

1 Corinthians 9:13-19 – Paul explains that because he was a tent-maker he didn't have to receive money from the brethren to preach the Gospel.

Paul was addressing the division within the Corinthian church between wealthy and poor members. He chose not to exercise his right to accept money for his ministry from the brethren and became a slave, working his trade and remaining financially free in order to win some to Jesus Christ.

His formal education in Jerusalem prepared him even more.

Acts 22:3

3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

Understanding Gamaliel's family origins helps to clarify the type of Pharisaical teaching that Paul received from him. Gamaliel did have a rival in his day – Shammai. Shammai refused to see any place for the Gentiles in the purposes of God. Gamaliel, however, had not only welcomed the Gentiles, but even set out to evangelize them.

Paul's background, education, and personal experiences developed and prepared him to be the man who would become one of the most prominent of Christ's followers and the man best suited for the Gentile ministry.

But Paul didn't see all of this preparation until he was struck down and humbled by Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus.

Acts 9:1-6

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

Have you come to the point in your life where you sincerely ask God, "What do You want me to do?"

Can we really get to that point in our conversion if we don't see God's hand in our lives leading up to where we are today?

There are many other examples of men and women in the Bible who God prepared to be his people: King David, Moses, Abraham, Peter, and the Apostles.

Conclusion

Take time to meditate on your calling. Look back on your life and see how God brought you through specific experiences, trials, and events to place you here.

Let's not forget our special calling. There are no unnecessary, meaningless trials, events, and experiences in our lives. We are preparing to rule with Christ.

1 Peter 1:3-9

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that

does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

Let's pray for and develop courage, strength, faith, love, compassion, boldness, and steadfastness so that we can receive the end of our faith – the salvation of our souls – and rule with Jesus Christ for eternity.

We truly have a special calling!