

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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What Did We Learn?

by Dan Trygg

“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers,¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature person, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;¹⁵ but truthing in love, we are to grow everything into Him who is the head, even Christ,¹⁶ out-from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.” Ephesians 4:11-16

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;¹³ for God is the one in-working in you, both the to-desire and the to-in-work for His good purpose.¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling (discontented-murmuring or complaining) or disputing (questioning about what is true; divisive-opinions)¹⁵ in order that you might become blameless (without cause for censure) and innocent (without mixture), children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing” Philippians 2:12-16

The last time I was able to preach here was August 29th. The title of that message was “Handing Over the Ministry to Others”. I knew I was going to be out for about six weeks, after ankle-replacement surgery. But I also knew that we have created and fostered a culture here where we are *not* dependent upon me or any other one person. In fact, from the time I came here six years ago, my intent and my focus has been to teach, train and encourage *every person* to come to see that *they* are important to the ministry of Jesus Christ that happens here, and that reaches out from this place. The ministry has never been about *me*. It has always been about what God wants to do with *us*.

It has always been God’s plan to recruit a people for Himself, ...a people who are willing to respond to Him, seek Him, follow Him and live to do His will. He is a God of covenant. He made a covenant with the children of Israel, and, through Jesus, He has invited *us* to be His covenant people, ...a people to live for Him and to do His will. To accomplish that, He has not just come to dwell in a tent or building in some town in our country. He has come to dwell within *us*, His people. He has come to put His radiant glory inside of *us*. He has removed every obstacle to our being able to be *His* and to walk *with Him* and *in His power*. Christ came to not only pay for our sins, but He put us to death in and with Him, ...forever breaking the bondage of sin, the law, the flesh, and the claims or authority of the powers of darkness in our lives. He offers this to us as a gift, ...if we will *take it by faith* and *choose to follow Him* as our King. When we have done that, we are born from above, and made new as the Spirit of God comes into our lives.

Over the years, I taught a series on spiritual warfare, ...because we have an enemy, and our objective, as Jesus’ called-out people is to assault the strongholds of the enemy and set people free. We did a series on the Holy Spirit, ...who He is, and how to learn to walk with Him. We worked our way through the gospel of John and the book of Romans to get a solid undergirding for our understanding of Jesus’ ministry, and how that is meant to be worked out in our lives. I taught a series on *agapē*-love, because it is to be the goal of our instruction (1 Tim. 1:5), and the most powerful identifying mark that we are active followers of Jesus. We talked about the Kingdom of God, and how important it is to understand our relationship to God as our King, and our calling to give Him our full allegiance and serve Him. We live in a world filled with the siren-calls of other “kingdoms” trying to recruit us to their agendas or demand our allegiance. For us, however, there is to be only one Lord and King, Jesus Christ. Our focus is to live to serve Him and do His will. We did another series on the Holy Spirit, between Easter and Pentecost in 2020, while we also began a series on spiritual gifts, which continued through the spring of this year. We also have talked a great deal about learning to recognize God at work in our lives. He desires to use *each of us* as integral players in His work, both in and for the church, as well as in bringing His Kingdom to the neighborhoods where we live, and the places we go.

We have spent a great deal of time talking about what the church is supposed to be, and how God intends for it to operate. The church is not a place. It is not a building. It is a gathering of people, ...you, me, all of us who are called by God to meet together, ...*whenever* and *wherever* He calls us to. We all have a purpose for meeting: It is to encourage and support one another, and help each other grow. This is an “every member” calling and responsibility. You have something to bring to the table. You have spiritual gifts and abilities to share with others. We all have need for one another, as well. We need what others bring to the table. We need what God has placed inside of them to be used for the team, ...and for us. No one of us can say, “I have no need of you” (1 Cor. 12:21). God’s plan has always been to recruit *a people* to do His will. He wants to work through *an interactive community*. This is challenging to us, because we have not been instructed as to how to operate in this fashion, ...especially here in the U.S., with our

individualistic culture. But *this* is God's plan, ...to work through an interactive community of active followers of Jesus Christ, who are intent on discerning His will and doing it in the partnership and power of the Holy Spirit.

What have we learned while I was gone?

Well, *I* have been on the receiving end of a lot of prayer, encouragement, and practical service in the form of meals, gift cards, financial support, phone calls, emails, texts and personal visits. *I* have seen the service-oriented ministry of this group of people in a much larger, direct way than ever before, ...because I was in a place of need. *You* were there for *me*, when I needed you. I thank you for all the love and support you have *demonstrated* and *expressed* toward me. I know others have experienced this kind of ministry from our body, before, and I have observed that, ...but to be on the receiving end is just all that much more powerful. Thank you!

Secondly, ...and even *more gratifying* to me..., was the realization that you all could carry on just fine without me. I know I was missed, but we had no problem finding people to give great messages every week. There were testimonies that allowed us to get to know these people better, along with good, solid teaching and encouragement to go along with each message. We could have had someone come in from the outside, but I think that this was more personal and powerful. We *know* these people. We get to *fellowship* with these people. And, now we have a little better understanding of who *they* are, and what *they* can bring to the table. The church did not miss a beat, while I was out. I told someone that I could die and go to heaven, knowing that nothing was going to "fall apart" just because I was gone. I am confident that there is a good, solid base of people in our church who have been impacted by what God has been doing through me in these past number of years. If something *did* happen to me, the foundation is laid, and, as long as we follow what has been laid down in the scriptures, ...what we *have been* implementing and experiencing..., we will continue to see things blossom and flourish. We have been following the blueprint of Ephesians 4:11-16. People who have been growing in every way into Jesus are being led by Him to express their gifts through avenues of ministry that are in accordance with their gifting, ...and the body is building up the body in love.

Let's finish this out by working through Philippians 2:12-16. You can't really understand these verses apart from the earlier part of the chapter. Paul appeals to the Philippians, saying that "if there is any encouragement (lit., 'coming-alongside-to-help') in Christ, any comfort of *agapē*-love, any sharing of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, fulfill my joy in order that *you* might think the same way, having the same *agapē*-love, being joint-souls, thinking *the one thing*, ...nothing according to self-promotion, nor according to empty-pride, rather in lowly-mindedness considering one another before yourselves, ...not each one looking for the things of themselves, but also the things of the others. Think *this* among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus..." (vss. 1-5). What was Jesus' mind? Although He had *everything*, He was willing to *empty Himself* to become human like us, ...and being like us, He was willing to be a slave, and humbled Himself even *more*, ...to *become obedient* ('hear-under-and-obey') to the point of death, death on a cross. God was pleased with *that*, and, for that reason, has chosen to highly exalt Jesus.

Then we come to the beginning of verse 12, "so then", or "with the result that", "...according as y'all have always obeyed ('hear-under-and-obey'), ...not just when I was present, but now much more in my absence..., with fear and trembling work out (produce, bring about, lit., 'work according to') the salvation of yourselves, for God is the One in-working in y'all. He is inworking both the desire and ability on behalf of His good purpose."

So, we are to have the mind of Christ, ...a mindset of being willing to give up our own privileges, power and possessions in order to serve God and help others. If we call ourselves servants of God, we must willingly offer Him all that we have and all that we are, with open hearts and hands, ...with no restrictions. We are not to be just looking out for our own selves, but also be concerned for and willing to help one another, according as God speaks to us. There are two very important aspects to this, ...*a total willingness to give up all we have and are for God*, ...and then *the ability to hear and respond to God*, when He speaks to us. The word for obedience, both in verse 7 and 12 literally means to "hear under". There are two very different words for obedience in the NT. There is *peithō*, which means "I comply because I am persuaded", ...I see, understand and agree with the reason why I am asked to do something. That is *not* the word used here. This word, "I hear-under", refers to responding to God simply because He is asking you to do something. You don't necessarily see or understand why, or see how it will work out, but you *do it*, simply because *you have learned to trust God*. The first kind of obedience does not need to be *learned*, because it makes sense to us. The second kind of obedience, however, *must be learned through experience*. Jesus Himself had to *learn* this type of obedience in order to be prepared to face the cross. He learned this through many difficult trials (Heb. 5:7). The Greek actually says, "He experientially-learned through what-things He suffered the 'hearing-under-obedience'". Many, many believers are simply *not willing to go there*. Again, especially we Americans. We, who have so much, are not willing to empty ourselves in order to serve God and others, ...especially when we don't understand. The key, however is the inner prompting of God. *He* will work in us the desire and ability to do His will, ...*if* we will obey. Note the danger of discontent and divisive opinions. Those attitudes are just like the crooked and twisted world we live in. *We* are to be people that *no one should have cause to censure*, unmixed in motive, *shining brightly* for Jesus.