

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Equipping As Healing

by Dan Trygg

“Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them.”

Matthew 4:21

“Brethren, if a person is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

Galatians 6:1

“...avoid such people as these. ⁶ For among them are those who... captivate vulnerable-women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 2 Timothy 3:5-7

“And He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors-and-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 experiential-knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness 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 speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ out-from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which 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

“...we keep praying most earnestly that we may ...complete what is lacking in your faith.” 1 Thessalonians 3:10

Last week, we began to look at our need to be equipped, prepared and “fitted-out” with all that we need to fulfill God’s purpose in our lives. We made reference to the Greek word, *katartizō*, which is used in a number of passages to describe this process. It is translated in a variety of ways: for example, “mend, prepare, restore, train, complete, equip or perfect” in the NASB version. The root word, *artios*, means “to fit-out”, that is, to give the tools, skills, understanding, and ability to be proficient to meet whatever need or challenge a person may be called to face. The prefix, *kata*, means “according to”, as in according to who *you* are, ...or according to what *purpose* you may be called to address. **We all have room to grow, ...to expand our abilities, understanding or skills to become more proficient in living our lives, ...especially learning to grow in our relationship with Christ, our partnership with the Holy Spirit, and our effectiveness in ministry.** The “according to” part of this is that, because we all have unique personal histories, and different spiritual giftings and ministry callings, we will need to be equipped in ways that suit *us* and *our* needs.

One of the intriguing word pictures for this process is dangled before our minds by the first occurrence of this word in the NT. It is actually used in this same context *twice*, in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19. **It is used to describe what James and John were doing with their fish nets, ...they were “mending” their nets.** They were *preparing* their nets to be used for *future use*, *after* they had been worn out, broken or torn from *past use*. The nets were torn, frayed or broken, ...and needed repair..., or, they were simply full of junk that needed to be removed so that they would be best prepared for their use and purpose. Actually, as I mentioned, **mending might be too narrow a definition.** Maybe there were *no* tears, ...they *still* needed to be cleaned, washed and arranged, so that they could be effectively deployed on their next fishing excursion. Even new fish nets might need to be “fitted out” with weights, so that the desired edge would sink to the bottom. Some large nets had weights for the bottom, and floats for the top edge, so that the net would hang like a wall in the water. Other smaller nets were designed for casting. These were smaller, and had weights all around their edge, and a cord or rope that would close the net as it would be drawn in. As you can see, **“outfitting” one’s nets could mean a wide variety of things, depending on the context and the need.**

These different applications of to “fit-out” a fishing net are illustrative of similar applications for “equipping” *us*. Let’s meditate on this a bit:

The first application is about *mending*, as in healing or restoring us in an area where we have been wounded, broken and injured by life experiences. Like the fishnet that would need to be repaired, we too may have been torn or scarred by life. Jesus intends to address those hurts, and help us to heal and recover from those debilitating episodes we may have encountered in our journey. He is the healer and restorer of our souls. **Like the fish net, we may have been worn out, broken or torn in the past, and need to be repaired and prepared for our future purpose in Christ.**

Maybe you haven’t thought of, or experienced, “church” as a soul-repair place. Maybe it hasn’t been that for you, ...but it is supposed to be. “Church” was not intended to be a religious meeting, with formal, liturgical rituals and performances. What Jesus intended the church to be was a called-out gathering of people who meet together to help one another grow. **The “church” is not a place, ...it is the people, ...people who are to become “equipped” to do the work of serving one another in the process of learning, ...developing relationship with Christ, ...and becoming like Him** (Eph. 4:11-16). As we grow in every way into Christ, He will teach us how to come alongside one another to encourage

one another, and to help each other find freedom, healing and purpose in Him. **When you understand that *this* is what church is to be about, then two realities become very apparent: (1.) We *all* need to grow; and, (2.) We *all* need to learn the skills to help one another grow.** Take a moment to meditate on that passage from Ephesians, and you will see that this is God's plan. We are *all* to become capable at helping one another. We need to develop our own understanding, our own intimacy with Jesus, and our own people skills in order to do that effectively.

Galatians 6:1 says that if any one of us is "caught" in a trespass, the ones who are "spiritual" are to restore such a person. There is a lot of depth to this verse. It sounds like someone who is caught red-handed in a sin, but that is *not* necessarily what is being expressed by the original Greek. **What it really is describing is a person who is overtaken or seized by a stumbling, or a false step.** In other words, this is not a deliberate transgression. It is used to describe an unseen or unexpected stumbling. **The person did not see the trap, snare, or danger that was waiting for him or her to fall into. However, he or she ended up there.** This could be an insight into the issue of addiction. No one starts drinking because they want to become an alcoholic. No one experiments with drugs because they intend to become an addict. They do not recognize, ...or they ignore..., the danger, ...and they get "caught". As they get "caught", they often become entrapped in a complicated mess of consequences that become too big for anyone to bear. **The focus of the passage is *not* on blame or judgment. It is upon restoration, repair, "mending" or equipping.** The ones who are spiritual are to come alongside this person to do this work. **Those who are more spiritually mature are the ones called to do this work.** If you look at the "works of the flesh" versus the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:19-23, you can see that fleshly people are often judgmental, divisive, and prone to angry outbursts. That is *not* what is needed here. **People who have been caught in a stumble don't need to be judged, ...they need to be approached with humble and gentle affirmation with truth that is clear.** Spiritual people can help them in an attitude of meekness and gentleness, keeping an eye on themselves, so that they are not tempted. **They are not only to do the work of repair and restoration, but also to equip that person to be more aware of the potential dangers, and to avoid such false steps in the future.** Part of this process may be to help them bear their burden, ...to help them deal with the mess that is too big for them, in helpful and healthy ways, ...so that they can find freedom, and carry a load that is appropriate. Paul exhorts us to "bear one another's burdens (too big to carry), and so fulfill the law of Christ", and "each one will have to bear his or her own load (a manageable, appropriate load)" (Gal. 6:2,5).

We have another clear description of a need for soul repair in 2 Timothy 3:6,7. There, false teachers and manipulative people are able to take advantage of people who are not fully mature and sound. **These are vulnerable, weak or gullible people who "have been weighed down with sins".** The Greek says, "having been overwhelmed by", or "having been buried under a pile of sin upon sin", and "being carried away by various lusts". Again, it is easy to view these people as having created their own problems, ...but **the original language seems to indicate that it is the sins that other people have heaped upon them that started them down this perilous pathway. They are people who have been sinned against, ...hurt, wounded, emotionally and spiritually scarred and impaired.** They are vulnerable to being taken captive, because they have not developed a healthy and sound world view or sense of self. **They are easily dragged into drama and led into poor choices.** Maybe you know people like that. If they come to Christ, they are in need of soul repair. **They need to be "mended", ...healed from hurt and "fitted-out" with healthy boundaries and skills.** This is not something to be resolved in a class room, or by simply learning information. (In fact, Paul says that this *won't* work. They are "always learning but never coming to a real-knowledge of the truth.") Their hurt goes deeper than that. Truth, love, and healthy relationships need to be demonstrated, experienced and modeled in a network of affirming relationships. This will generally require a number of spiritual people, working together to befriend, support, and invest in these people, ...expressing the truth in love.

These are more extreme examples of what we *all* need help with. We all have been exposed to false beliefs, hurtful messages, arguments, speculations, lines of reasoning that have been raised up in our lives to block the experiential knowledge of God from coming through to our inner man (2 Cor. 10:5). Part of our preparation and "mending" process is to root out these demonic-induced strongholds from our lives, ...to expose them and tear them down by means of the power of God. We are to bring every thought and perception captive unto the obedience of Christ. The word picture represented by that language is to bring every thought like a captive soldier at the point of a spear before Christ. If it does not fit with the truth that is in Him, ...what He has done for us and who we now are in Him..., then it is to be rejected. **We must replace the lie with the truth of Christ for us, ...and embrace that truth in our lives.**

Again, a key part of God's plan for our "mending and restoration" is to take place as we interact with each other in a healthy, interactive group of Spirit-minded believers. As we share with one another, we are to keep our eyes and ears open to see what may be needed, and our heart and spirit open to God for what He might reveal to us to share with one another that would be helpful. **We are to do what we can to support, encourage and edify each other.**