

THE LEADER AND CALLING

Introduction

As Scott just pointed out, we've had an amazing day today as part of the Newfrontiers Global conference. We should have been away all together in Cyprus, there were 500 of us booked in from multiple nations and obviously we couldn't do it so we've put everything online and just the feedback I would give to you is, it's amazing how God seems to be saying the same kind of things all around the world.

And so just when you think you're the only ones that are facing something. It's remarkable to then realise the whole globe is going through this at the moment and every other every church leader is trying to find out how we're meant to do life in this kind of new world and it's all positive, it's all about God teaching us a new way of doing things and asking questions like, you know in the past we've done things but is it time to change these things and then God showing us ways to do that so I dare say you're going to hear more of the sort of interaction that we're having with one another across the world.

It is wonderful to be part of a global family I'm so thrilled that I'm not in something which is UK based but something which is international. Because we need to grow and learn through one another all the time. Amen.

So, last week, we looked at the whole subject of making disciples and again, I found it interesting this week as it's made me think more intentionally I've been asking questions about who I'm actually involved with in terms of discipling people, who's actually influencing my own life and I said last week that it needs a mind shift to happen in our thinking so that we're always thinking positively about making disciples. It's something that's very intentional. My question for you, not only in this last week but in the weeks and months to come is to keep on thinking about how every time you do something, you're **DISPLAYING** something to people who are watching, you're **DEFINING** things in their lives and then the joy is that you're **DELEGATING** them to go forward and to make new things happen in their lives, to be an example to other people as well and this way the church will continue to keep on growing and moving forward.







THE LEADER AND CALLING

So today our topic is the Leader and Calling.

If you've got a pad and a pen that might be helpful because when you get in to your discussion groups, there are some things I'm going to cover off on that I want you to pick up on. This is a huge topic, obviously, but in as much as week by week we're trying to see Paul's relationship with Timothy, I believe that through Paul's relationship with Timothy we discover, very important issues related to us discovering our calling in God.

And you know, calling. Knowing God's called you to do something is absolutely vital. It's an internal knowledge that the reason I do what I do is not because I'm just a good person, but I do what I do because God has called me to do it and there's actually no other reason to do it other than that.

You may say, "Well, I am in leadership but the reason I'm leadership is someone asked me to lead this small group or they asked me to do this or that" and it's good that someone has spotted the potential of leadership in you, but it's not enough.

You need to know deep down inside of you that God has called you to do these things. It's not that other people say, "I think you're called, you should do it" but you need to know internally that you are called to do this thing. Why is the calling of God upon our lives so important? Well if you're not called, you will be in big trouble. There are so many potential disappointments. There's so many big issues that you face. There's a lot of opposition sometimes to us as we're called to lead God's people and to be honest with you, you'll be very tempted to give up. And the only reason sometimes that you don't give up is because you haven't got permission to give up because you know that God has called you to do this very thing!

Nehemiah is a wonderful example of the calling of God, and Nehemiah chapter six is one of my favourite chapters in the Bible, and at some point in this next week, I'd like you to read Nehemiah chapter six, and I'd like you, as you read through Nehemiah six, to discover how many times you see 'a man who's called of God'.

It's a story of when he is up on the walls, building what we would call the House of the Lord, and people come to oppose him and people come to ask him to be distracted, and there's wonderful verse where it says, people were coming to kill his life, to end his life, and they try to say to him "flee away" and he says, "Can a man like me flee away?"







A man like what? Well the answer is a man who knows he is called of God! I can't stop this just because my life is being threatened. I know I'm called by God. And when you're in leadership for any period of time you will know that this sense of calling is tested, and it's sometimes the calling of God, that makes you continue when everybody else has stopped.

So my own experience bears this out in the very early days of the local church that I'm still a part of, we had many battles we had, we went through many, many struggles and I remember there were moments when I just wanted to give up. I remember being tempted to write a resignation letter to the trustees and say I can do this no longer! They never got the letter! Do you know why?

I felt God say, "Have I given you permission to write this letter?"

DH: "No Lord!"

God: "Well then you don't do it!"

So I scrapped it and threw it away. There have been times when I think "Why do I keep going and believing this stuff?" and the answer, the only answer is **the calling of God**.

When I first moved into what we might call apostolic ministry I was working with a whole crowd of churches in London initially, and unbeknownst to me one by one as I spent time with these eldership teams, I just hit problem after problem after problem. I had to ask people in eldership teams to lay down their eldership for all kinds of different reasons. It was just a battle and I remember coming home and I would come home late from another long, long elders meeting and I slip into bed and Liz would say "Are you all right?" and I'd say, "I want to stop doing this! It is terrible!"

But you know God had called me, and I wasn't helping these churches because there was no one else to do it, or because I had a bit of wisdom, it was because God had called me to do it.

A number of years ago and Scott will remember this when our friend Simon Pettit died, he had all the things we were doing in South Africa and other African nations, and Liz and I were called to go down to South Africa, and for two years we stayed in the area and started to input into all sorts of different situations and it wasn't an easy time. And there were some moments where I would hear opposition about some of the things we felt needed to happen. The temptation to jump on a plane and fly back to the UK was very great but we did not, we persisted, why? Because the one thing we knew was that God had called us to do this.







So, that is why the calling of God is so vital in our lives I hope you've really got that this evening, because we're going to be looking about how do you know that God has called you to do certain things.

What I see in one and two Timothy, is this:

- I see Paul's absolute clarity of what God has called him to do
- And once again, we see Timothy's potential uncertainty, his cautious.

So we're going to look at Paul's certainty of calling and then we're going to look at Timothy's reticence, at the calling of God, and then we're going finish by being very practical and asking questions about how we can do these things for ourselves.

1. PAUL'S CERTAINTY OF GOD'S CALLING

So we only have to look at 1 Timothy 1v1 to see Paul's absolute clarity in terms of calling.

1 Timothy 1v1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope,

Then looking at 2Timothy 1v1, so the next letter. The calling hasn't diminished.

2 Timothy 1v1

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus,

So right up front Paul is telling us: "I am an apostle. That's my calling. God has called me. There are people who don't think I'm an apostle, there are people that don't like me because I'm an apostle, but I'm an apostle for this reason: **the calling of God**.

Now he goes on to clarify that in chapter one of one Timothy, and verse 12, where he says:

1 Timothy 1v12-14

¹² I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.







So he is stating, "my calling isn't on the basis of me. In fact, I'm disqualified if you look at my past. My calling is through the grace of God and because he chose me to be his servants."

1Timothy 2v7

⁷ For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

He is showing us the absolute certainty of his calling in God.

2 Timothy 1v10

¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light **through the gospel**, ¹¹ **for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher**,

We will just leave one Timothy just for a moment and we'll find ourselves in Romans chapter one, I'm just trying to show you the clarity of calling in Paul's life.

Romans 1v1 and 5 and 13

Paul, a servant^[a] of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,.... ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.... ¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, ^[a] that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles.

And then finally just wanting to very quickly that that Galatians:

Galatians 2v7

⁷ On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised,(the context is Paul has gone up to Jerusalem to meet the original apostles, it is a kind of interview really and he says) just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised ⁸ (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles), ⁹ and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.







It is possible today that many of you listening to this would describe yourself as being on a journey. So if I was to say to you, "what have you been called to or what has God called you to do?" Some of you would be able to say "I think it's this, I'm pretty sure it's that." But for a lot of you, you might not be able to answer that question right now. You would say that "I don't really know what God's called me to do, I'm on a journey. And I believe that God will call me. I know I'm called to leadership, but I don't quite know what that looks like."

I would have described myself as that in the early years of the calling into leadership. I knew I was called to leadership but I didn't really know what that was going to look like. I'm far more certain about what God has called me to do today than I was in the early days.

My passion tonight, is that even though you can't know it right now you put yourself on a journey, whereby you will know what God has called you to do. So for me it's very interesting that your calling can become very, very specific.

It says in Philippians chapter three that Paul says, I lay hold of that for which I've been made laid hold of in Christ Jesus. There's an interesting phrase. He's really is imprisoned in saying God I know you saved me but what is the thing you've really, really called me to do, because you know you can't be called everywhere and do everything.

So it's interesting for me that through the epistles, the apostle Paul starts to define the things that God has called him to do. We've already seen them through the Scriptures this evening. I am an apostle. So what does he discover is an apostle. It's also recognised as we've just seen in Romans through other people and through Galatians. He says I'm called, I'm set apart, he says in Romans 1 for the gospel. If you ask Paul what is the thing you're called to do the most. It is to proclaim the gospel, then we know that he's called primarily to the Gentiles. So this is really interesting. Paul is getting a specific calling in his life.

An Apostle, the gospel, primarily the Gentiles.

In another scripture he describes himself as a master builder. He's described himself as a teacher, and as an evangelist.

In other words, the calling of God on our lives is not random. It actually is quite specific. And the reason this is important is because there were other people alongside you, that all I also have callings from God, but they're not the same as yours, because we all need to fulfil the calling of God on our lives as individuals.







Paul is clear. He discovered what the calling of God on his life was, and I think it's God's will for you and I to know exactly what that is as well.

2. TIMOTHY'S UNCERTAINTY OF GOD'S CALLING

Now let's quickly turn our attention to Timothy. Timothy is calling actually begins in the book of Acts, it's the first time we hear him mentioned. So let's just turn to that Acts chapter 16.

He's a young guy he might have been in his late teens, early 20s for all we know and it says this in

Acts 16v 1-3

Paul[®] came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy (so he is a disciple already, someone's been disciplining him), the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brothers[®] at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews

Now, here's an interesting thing Paul's rocked up into the church spotted Timothy, he's a disciple of Jesus already, and everyone speaks well of it. I believe that call solving Timothy the calling of God upon his life. Huge potential. So Paul takes him and disciples in, and he disciples him into becoming apostolic. That's the calling of Timothy no doubt on his life. In fact, he was an apostolic delegate. We saw this the other week in one Corinthians chapter four, and verse, 17, Paul says the church of Corinth, "I can't come to be with you but I'm sending Timothy, and he's being sent with authority to sort you out, and to teach and to correct the things that are wrong."

1 Corinthians 4v 17

¹⁷ That is why I sent[©] you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, [©] as I teach them everywhere in every church.

No doubt Paul only sent Timothy because he saw the Apostolic calling of God upon his life and by this time Timothy himself must have knowing that deep within. He carried huge responsibilities. He was a companion of Titus. Paul says to Titus "Appoint elders" and that something apostles do, and Timothy must have been doing the same as Titus as well. By the time we come to the letters of Timothy one and two, Timothy is now a leading this vibrant church in Ephesus The calling of God on Timothy, is to be a pastor. It is to be a teacher, because he's called to stop things that are wrong in certain doctrines and







most commentators would say that out of this relationship with the Apostle Paul, and what he was learning in Ephesus, Timothy grew into an Apostolic ministry to the region around and beyond.

But I think when Paul's writing these letters to Timothy one and two, that hesitancy that we've looked at before has crept back into Timothy's life. You know when you read one or two Timothy, it's interesting that Paul keeps saying to him "I charge you. I charge you. I charge." It's kind of like Paul's saying, "Come on, Timothy, you're called of God to do this, and you know it, I am appealing to you, I'm urging you, I'm charging you to fulfil the calling that God has put upon your life."

We've looked at these passages haven't we so often, but we'll just touch on them, maybe, once again, but we find here in <u>1 Timothy 1v 18</u>

¹⁸ This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

It's like, "Timothy, you know God's called you! Why are you hesitating? It's the calling of God on your leadership gift that really, really matters. I'm charging you to remind yourself of these things, please don't forget!"

And again that infamous verse in 2 Timothy 1v6

⁶ For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame the gift of God**, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

It's the calling of God in your life it's not us telling you, it's already there within you to do these things.

And 2 Timothy 4v 5 Paul again speaking to this younger man says,

⁵ As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, (and I love this phrase) fulfil your ministry.

This isn't Paul telling Timothy what to do. This is Paul reminding Timothy of what he knows God has already called him to do. In other words, some of us when we are called of God, we need our calling renewed. I wonder tonight if there are some of you here that know God has called you to do something, but over the years for different reasons it may be opposition, or disappointment, or it may be you felt you have potential but it's never been realised. If God has called you to do these things, nothing has







changed. And tonight, for some of you, I really do believe this, I felt this when I was preparing this. You need to be stirred again to remind yourself, what God has called you to do and you need to come back into your calling. Because when you do, God will bless and will own that for His glory.

3. Getting Practical

Right we've covered a lot of ground in a very short space of time an I'd like to just now practicalize all of this for us this evening.

How can I know a confirmation of my calling in God?

We've already said that some of us tonight are still on the journey and still don't quite know what it is. But God's will is that you come to the place where you do and he will confirm that to you, whereby you will be able to say I know God has called me to do this and he's not called me to do that.

When you know what God's called you to do, it's a very, very challenging time, because you've got to

stick with what God's called you to do. You can't do everything everywhere. And for me, this was a real revelation early in, in the calling of God on my life. Once I knew what God had called me to do, I had to be disciplined to stay within that calling because if you don't, you end up doing everything and some of those things you're not called to do and you might even be preventing other people from doing that because you know what, there's no one as good as doing this as you are. Well actually there is! There's people who've been called of God, and they're better than you at doing some of these things. And actually you could even be in the way.

So here are some practical ways to know what God has called you to do:

• God has spoken to you Internally

Firstly, and this is not a subjective thing but it is very important, you know God's called you to do this, because he's spoken to you internally. It's subjective, but you just know. There's no point everybody else being excited about what you're called to do and you don't know whether you are on the inside. So I know what God's called me to do because he's spoken to me. Now it may not be an audible voice but somehow it's so real, and so deeply within you that it doesn't matter what people say, it doesn't matter what circumstances come in your life, you know, because you know, because you know because God has called you to do this. You know, in the Old Testament God often spoke in an audible voice. It happens in the New Testament, remember Ananias who went to the Apostle Paul when he came down to persecute the Christians in Damascus. And God speaks to Ananias audibly and says go to my servant Paul. So God can speak in an audible voice but most of all, God speaks through an inner audible voice called the Holy Spirit. It's one of the big differences between the Old Covenant







and the New Covenant. You don't need to hear an audible voice, because you have an audible voice speaking inside of you. A guy called Jack Deere, many years ago wrote a book called 'Surprised by the voice of God'. It is an excellent book and he argues in this book that the reason we don't need to hear an external audible voice is because we're hearing an internal audible voice on a regular basis, because the Holy Spirit dwells within us. So the calling of God is confirmed by this subjective inner reality of what God has called me to do.

I remember when I first started out in leadership, the two things I knew, and it was God spoke to me was a leadership gift that he's put upon me and you know if ever I tried not to lead and this is going to sound a bit strange, but if ever I saw, I'm not going to lead I'm just going to stand back, it's like the anointing of God lifts off me. I've tried to sit on the back row and keep quiet. Can you imagine Scott Marques sitting on the back row and keeping quiet? It's not going to happen! Do you know why? Because it's not just because he's a loud Portuguese kind of person it is because God has called him. So he has to speak, and he has to sit on the front row, if you understand my meaning, that's been true of me as well. Totally.

I also knew from the early days that I was pulled beyond the local church. I was pastoring a church that everything inside of me was saying go beyond the local that's not the calling everybody has but subjectively, I knew that this was true.

• External confirmation of God's calling

Next thing to know the confirmation of God's call is an objective reality. So you have a subjective inner certainty, and then it's confirmed by the objective. In other words, I think God has called me to do this and it's been confirmed. It's a bit like robots green light, green light, green light. Every time I come to this particular junction, it's like permission to go. Constantly, objectively things are confirmed that God's calling upon your life.

Confirmation of others

Thirdly, the confirmation of others. It's just so wonderful when you think God called you to do something, others who know you can come and say, "Yes, amen. I see the calling of God in your life." And this, brothers and sisters, is one and two Timothy. This what Paul is trying to do to Timothy! "Timothy you know you're called. You know what God's called you to do. There's objective confirmation even prophecies have come over your life. And now I'm confirming that calling on your life as well. We've seen the fruit." In other words, other people see the fruit in our lives, and then say yes and amen God's called you to do this.







When I felt God was calling me to do an apostolic work, I really didn't know and as the years went by, it was the confirmation of people who knew me who would encourage me in that direction. It wasn't me going "rah rah, you know I'm the Big Cheese, I'm gonna make this happen." It was the complete opposite. It was people saying to me "Dave we really believe that God has put this anointing upon your life."

So the context of confirmation is really important. And can I just say this very quickly, the context of discovering your calling is the local church, you will not discover what call God's called you to do in isolation, and I praise God, that the confirmation of my calling has come through my brothers and sisters.

I think there's just too much emphasis these days on individualistic calling. Of course we are individuals, but at the end of the day, our calling is a corporate thing, not just an individual thing. You fulfil your calling because others alongside you are fulfilling their calling. You know I wouldn't even be on this zoom call tonight, if God hadn't raised up other leaders around me who have released me to be here this evening. Do you understand? I can't do everything so others around me are doing things, Praise God, which then gives me the freedom to do this.

Now we are going to run out of time tonight. I really, enjoy talking about calling but what it means is I can talk about it too much.

So, I'm just going to quickly go through some other things. We've had internal subjective, we've had the objective and we have had the confirmation of others.

The next big thing is the grace of God!

• The Grace of God

Did you notice how often we were looking at those verses Paul referred to the grace of God on his life, and upon Timothy as his life as well?

The grace of God is given to **confirm** that you are doing what God has called you to do. I look at other people and watch what they do in the calling of God, and I am amazed, and I just look at them and think I could never do that. They on the other hand, are just loving what they're doing. Why? Because God's grace is upon. If you want to know what God's called you to do, you will know the grace of God upon you to do it. If you're not called to do something the grace of God isn't there for you. It's just sweat and toil and hard work. It's not very pleasant. The confirmation is the grace of God.







<u>1 Timothy 1v14, 2 Timothy 2v1</u> and you remember that passage in <u>Ephesians 4v11</u> where he's talking about God has given some to be apostles and prophets and pastors and teachers, verse 11 is preceded by a conversation about grace. t's like the grace of God has been given, so that some will become apostles etc. You don't become that through your own merits but through the grace of God. We can't do anything without God's grace.

And then the final thing is this the gift of God.

• The Gift of God

Those people in Ephesians 4 for it says, Grace was given and the gift of God was given to do these things. I am confirmed in my calling through God's grace to do it. I'm confirmed in my calling through the fact that I'm anointed to do it by the power of the Spirit, and the gift of God!

I am coming to a close.

You and I need to get to a place where we are increasingly confident in the things that God has called us to do and the one thing I haven't mentioned is this that confidence comes increasingly by knowing the peace of God. Jesus said, "My sheep will hear my voice." The Holy Spirit within you will help you to understand the will of God. God's word, it says is a lamp to my feet. When I need to discover something that God has called me to do. And I have known occasions in my life when I felt God had called me to do something and so I started to walk down a certain track. The further I walked down this track, the more inner turmoil and uncertainty began to grip, my life. No peace. Do you know what, I realised that I hadn't heard from God and I was doing something that I actually wanted to do.

I learned the lesson that I have to go back to where I started, hear from God again and walk down a certain other path. When I'm walking down that path, I find peace, and more peace and more peace.

So the calling of God is flooded with peace, and the confidence we have is this God has promised to speak, if you're a sheep, the Shepherd will tell you what to do.

Every now and again I come across a Christian who's very intense about the calling of God upon your life. I really want to encourage you this evening, you don't need to get all uptight and intense. If you don't know what God's called you to do, be at peace because His calling will be made known to you.

It's not a mystical whisper. It is a clear, clear voice from God and I rejoice that we're going to learn these things together. Let me finish with this:

Does the call of God change over the years?







I think that fundamentally the calling of God upon our lives stays the same but probably it adapts and evolves and changes as we go into different contexts that need different skills, but you're always going to need the grace and the gifting of God to do these things that God has called you to do. And whenever, whenever the situation you're in changes, your identity is not in what you do, it's in who you are! And that's a very, very important thing to keep learning.

There's been times in my life where I've been very clearly called of God to do something but then, things are taken away. Other people come through and they start to do these things and I'm saying, "Well Lord, what have you called me to do?"

And at that moment, my identity cannot be what's the next thing, it's in who I am in Christ. He will then speak to me, and show me, other things that he wants me to do.

Sometimes we have to learn to wait. And that's not an easy thing to do. Before we go into our breakout rooms, I just really wanted to pray this evening because I'm very conscious that some of us may be needing more guidance, needing more confirmation. And some of us are still only just starting out the journey we don't really know what we're called to do and I want tonight to for God to begin to speak. In other words, this evening is not just about a theoretical thing. For many of you, this is a kind of real deal so can we pray together.

Scott: Dave, I was going to ask you to do that at this point, I'm thrilled that you're going there. So please don't worry about the time. Go for it.

Dave: Father, I really thank you for Paul's relationship with Timothy that we're looking and his deep concern that Timothy, knows without a shadow of a doubt, that he knows what you've called him to do, but was coming to the end of his life and he knows is not going to be around for much longer He longs for Timothy to know that so tonight in some kind of similar way, Lord I'm longing that everybody on this screen and perhaps those who are going to listen to this later, know what you have called them to do.

It's such a big thing. We're not here tonight by chance, or here tonight because someone else thought it was a good idea. In the sovereignty of God we're here because you've called us and now Lord I pray for anybody tonight who when asked, "What's God called you to do?" and doesn't yet know that answer, that the journey will begin this evening. And that men or women here tonight will go on an exciting adventure, discovering the calling of God upon their lives, and that you will confirm this, You'll confirm it is subjectively, objectively, through others who know these people, and above all, Lord, You will saturate us with grace and anointing to do these things. But I even pray tonight for some Timothy's who may be







in the past have known the calling of God on their lives, but for whatever reason, it's become foggy and misty and uncertain. And now I pray, a new journey will begin for many people like that.

But Lord you will you will take people, and reconfirm, renew that calling on their lives, that they might rekindle once again that passion to serve you, under the anointing of God. And finally I pray for brothers and sisters here tonight, who are pretty, pretty confident in what you've called them to do.

I pray that they will constantly know the anointing, and the empowering and the strengthening of the Holy Spirit, so that what they know their call to do might be even more fruitful in the months and years to come. May we not be people who look back and remember that day when we were called as if it's in the past but may we know that calling as fresh today as it's ever been. Now Holy Spirit just come upon us, and bring that confirmation and even in our breakout rooms, as we share and discuss and pray, that something will be kick started in our lives. The leader and calling. It's so crucial for us.

Help us, Lord, we pray, all of these things in Jesus mighty name.

Amen.



