

“Called: Through Each Other”
Ephesians 4:1-6, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
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I want to thank Rev. Cathy for the powerful message last week on Called—For---service and work. As she said last week, she was preaching the second of a 3-part sermon series, that actually began last year with a series of 3, then now with a series of 3 and then later this year with another series of 3. So today is the third sermon in the second series of three sermons of 3 sermon set series!

In other words, before our series on Lent, “Redeemed: Finding Redemption in Our Mess,” that begins March 10th, we will begin a new sermon series next week. Yes, a series of three. It’s a unique series because the title is “Not in the Bible.” Yes, the actual sermon series title is “Not in the Bible.” There are several phrases that people think are in the Bible, but are not actually. Oh, some of the thoughts may be, or how to handle certain things may be, but the actual words are not in the Bible. So next week **(Image)** Not in the Bible: God Won’t Give You More Than You Can Handle. Great phrase, but Not In the Bible. Invite someone next week as we unpack that phrase and use the Bible to show us what’s not in the Bible, and what is!

The Called series concludes today. Called. Called By God. Called To Be Followers of Christ. Calles As We Are. Called From People, Places, or Situations. Called For Service and Work.

Yes, we have been emphasizing prepositions...By, To, As, From, For. Today...Called Through Each Other.

Did you know that God works through you to call others? I can still remember those in my life that helped me understand my call. Mrs. Beltz who asked me to do a first-person drama at church on the life of Pilate. Betty Greer, who asked me to narrate a choir cantata. Rev. Eldon Gourley who helped me surrender to the call of God on my life. Mrs. Beatty a retired Methodist pastor’s wife who said to me, “You and Sarah would make a great couple in ministry.” And as I mentioned before several of the dear chronologically blessed ladies who would squeeze the cheeks of my face and say, “David you ought to go into ministry.” God works through others to confirm and affirm a call. I thank God for those that had the boldness to talk to me about my potential calling, to see gifts in me that perhaps I didn’t even see myself.

I hope that you took the Spiritual Gift Assessment that was in the bulletin online. One way of responding to a call is knowing where your gift set is. Also, sometimes your calling comes by simply becoming plugged in to something that you just enjoy doing. There are some things that come naturally to people, and I might add there are some things that come supernaturally to people.

We need to be using our voice to affirm others gifts and abilities. I have found that we are not in a culture that is very free with compliments. Maybe we feel awkward telling somebody. Maybe we don’t want it to go to their head.

Mark Twain said this, **(image) I can live for 2 months on a good compliment.**

So, he only needed 6 compliments to make it all year. When is the last time you complimented someone? You see we are called through other people. Sometimes we see other's gifts quicker than they do. You see someone that has a beautiful smile... "You have a great smile. Have you ever thought about being a greeter?" "Your eyes light up when you're on this campus. You make me feel good that I'm here. Have you thought about being a parking lot greeter?" You have some great faith stories. Have you ever shared them with our youth?" "You are very well organized and detailed oriented. Have you thought of volunteering in the office?" "When we were singing, I couldn't help turn and look at who was singing...have you talked to Mark about being in the music ministry and choir?"

Who here likes to be complimented? XXXX So this week pay it forward. Compliment and affirm somebody this week...and watch them smile and beam. Be people of affirmation. Your affirmation may be part of a calling through which others respond to God's call. Yes, called THROUGH others.

Perhaps the Apostle Pauls' most favorite preposition is THROUGH.

Let's do a little Bible Study this morning. At least write down the scripture reference as we look at 6 scriptures where Paul uses the word THROUGH.

Galatians 3:26 New International Version (NIV) ²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God THROUGH faith

Preposition IN...IN Christ Jesus you are...did you see and hear that.... you ARE children of God. I wish someone would ask me, "How can that be?" XXXX THROUGH Faith. Oh, I have a birth certificate. It says who my parents are, and that I was born in Centralia, Illinois at St. Mary's Hospital, but the birth certificate is outdated. You see I've been born again.... And I am a child of God. God is my Heavenly Father. Through Faith I am a child of the God who created the universe.

1 Corinthians 15:21 New International Version (NIV) ²¹ For since death came THROUGH a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also THROUGH a man.

Death came through the man Adam. You remember him from Genesis. There was this woman named Eve, and she said to Adam, "Adam will you marry me?" And Adam blushed and said, "Who else dear."

Okay, it was through the first man Adam that our nature became one of sin. Because of that sin there was death. On the curse to Adam (and humanity) after he ate of the fruit God told Adam that he would "return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Death would come. Death came THROUGH a man, but also the resurrection of the dead comes THROUGH a man. That man...fully divine and fully human is Jesus the Christ. Some have often called Jesus the Second Adam. That sin that took place in the Garden of Eden was dealt with at the Garden of Gethsemane.

The first Adam was sent out of the Garden to die. The Second Adam was sent to the cross to die...oh but to dust He did not return...but up from the grave He arose. Resurrection THROUGH a man Jesus, the Son of God.

Romans 5:1 New International Version (NIV) 5 Therefore, since we have been justified THROUGH faith, we have peace with God THROUGH our Lord Jesus Christ,

We have been justified. Just as If we've never sinned through Faith. It's old, but it is so old it's new **(image)** Foraking All I Trust Him=FAITH.

We have been saved, been made righteous in God's sight. Woo-hoo!
We therefore have peace with God---I wish someone would ask me "How?" XXXX
THROUGH our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I do my sermon preparation at my office at my home. Mama Lena, my favorite mother-in law. ---by the way she calls me her favorite son-in law (Sarah has 2 brothers, so I'm her *only* son-in-law). Anyway, this week I was getting ready to go into my office to work on the sermon and I go into her room and I say, "Well, anything you want me to tell them on Sunday?" I love her response. She said, "Well, tell them to get right with the Lord!"

Woo-hoo!!!! That's what I'm talking about!!!! Through faith. Through Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:5 New International Version (NIV) 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts THROUGH the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Ever heard the phrase "soaked through and through?" Caught in a rainstorm. No umbrella. Sky opens up. You finally make inside where it is dry. But you are soaked---through and through. When you walk, your shoes squeak. Water is dripping off your pant leg or skirt. Your hair, or what hair you have is drenched. You are soaked through and through. All the way down undie if you know what I mean.

God's loved has been poured on you so that you are soaked through and through with the Holy Spirit. Yes, into your hearts the Holy Spirit who has been given to you. In you and THROUGH you!!!!

And now the passage that read for us this morning.

**Ephesians 4:1 New International Version (NIV)
4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.**

Paul imprisoned for Jesus urges people to live a life worth...here it is...of the CALLING you have received. Do we live life worthy of being called a follower of Jesus Christ?

² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Oh my, that could be a sermon series in itself. Notice it is the word BE. Like a command. Not if you want to...but BE, it is your calling---be humble. Be gentle. Be patient. Be loving.

³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit THROUGH the bond of peace.

Satan is alive and well trying to have churches be divided. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit.... How---through peace. Let's put down our entitlement. Let's put aside our ego. Let's focus on being humble, gentle...striving to keep unity THROUGH peace.

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and THROUGH all and in all.

There is that word called again. You were called to one hope when you were called. Who is that hope? XXXX Yes, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Who is over all and through all and in all---and is said in Kentucky---for y'all.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 New International Version (NIV)¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

Do you see people in a spiritual way or a worldly way? Do you see people how you want them to be or how God created them? Do see them as Jesus would?

⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

If in Christ...then new. Bye bye to the old...the new is here!!!!

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself THROUGH Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

We were reconciled to God through Christ. But it didn't stop there...He then gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Just saying, do we count people's sins against them. For the sake of reconciliation do we do what God has done in Christ for us and THROUGH us.

²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal THROUGH us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Makes appeal through us. Uses us. Works through us to call others. We are called to make His appeal to others.

To be the kingdom of God...we implore you on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God. Mama Lena was right...tell them to get right with the Lord.

(image) This beautiful picture is making the rounds. It is an actual picture taken in Michigan in 2016.

Jesus and the cross. There is but one way to truly have hope. It's through Jesus. There is only one way to have true peace. It's through Jesus. There is only one way to love as we should. It's through Jesus. There is only way to have a deep-seated Joy in this world. It's through Jesus. He is the only way.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Called By God. Called To Be Followers of Christ. Called As We Are. Called From People, Places, or Situations. Called For Service and Work. Called Through Others.

Let's build His kingdom here. Here in our heart. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done.

We are called people. This week affirm people. This week listen to God's call Through others.