

Sent 3 – “An Ancient Calling“

Chosen: Context Matters

- We like to be chosen though it depends on what's it for. (Reward for skill or accomplishment?....To receive an exclusive gift?.....to do a chore?)

Genesis 12 – God’s big Choice

- God begins to build a people with one man – Abram, but to do what?
- ¹ The LORD had said to Abram... ² *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*
- Abram was not called because of anything that he had done or special qualities that he possessed.
- It begins like an exclusive gift, but ends blessing all
- It's doubtful Abram thought this of a chore

SO, What Kind of Calling is this?

- Vital question – Leslie Newbigin says the misunderstanding of this call has been the greatest heresy of monotheism.
- It's like the compass coordinates for our God-given mission – if we misread them we will end up in the wrong place.

The Big Idea: God is choosing people not for the sake of exclusion but for inclusion, not for privilege or favor, but responsibility and not even for salvation, but for service.

- In short, *it's a call of service for the benefit of all.* They are *blessed to be a blessing.*

Israel - Dropping the ball

- Though it wasn't always easy to be a blessing when you lived near enemies, Israel failed miserably.
- They became selfish and insular, prideful and exclusive. God favored them and they did little to spread his blessings.
- Fortunately, all that has changed today.....right????

Divine Reminders

- ❶ God working with or blessing outsiders - Mechenalidek, Jethro, Rahab, Boaz, Ruth, Naaman etc
- ❷ Jonah
 - Called to be sent to be a blessing, he feels like it's a chore.

- Jonah is a symbol of Israel, chosen to be a blessing to the nations but instead was selfish and childish.

❸ Through Prophets and Poets

- Psalm 67:8 -.....*that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.*
- Isaiah 42:6.... *I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles.*
- Isa 49:6 - *I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*
- Sadly, Israel in large doesn't listen

Jesus – God’s New Voice

- Mat 5:14-15 ¹⁴*"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."*
- Jesus is re-casting the call in Gen 12!

Food for Thought: “Salt of the Earth” (Mt 5:13, Lk 14:34-35) – Instead of seeing it as a preserver some scholars interpret Jesus using salt in its fertilizing use. So in this way he is calling us to help encourage life – which is the meaning of blessing and in tune with Jesus’ recasting mission.

Matthew 28:19 - *“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,*

The Church – God’s New Chosen People

- Acts 1 *“you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*
- 2 Cor 5:19-20 *...And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us....*

Questions to Leave With:

- ➔ Do others feel like they are blessed by us? Are we carrying out our calling?
- ➔ Are we excited about being part of God's cosmic redemption plan or does it feel like a chore?
- ➔ Do we respond to opportunities with grumbling or with hopeful expectancy?
- ➔ Do we have to repent of thinking that God's choosing was all about us and step down our mountains of privilege so we can begin to kneel in service?
- Song “Changed” by Aaron Niequist

Resources Used:

- “Bearing the Witness of the Spirit – Leslie Newbigin’s Theology of Cultural Plurality”,
- “Perspectives of Election: Five Views,