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Embracing Our Calling Rather Than Our Comfort

Intro: Cruise Ship Vs Battleship video: How do you look at the church...cruise ship or a battle ship? A cruise ship is ALL about comfort. A Battleship is ALL about fulfilling its calling. A cruise ship is all about catering to its passengers. A battleship is all about obeying orders from the Commander and chief. If we are ever to become what God wants us to be, we have to leave the idea of comfort (cruise ship mentality) in order to fully embrace our calling. HOW?

I. Believe That God Has Given Us A Calling

A. Every believer has a calling upon their lives

II Tim. 1:9 "...who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace..." (NASB)

1. Every believer is not just saved, they are also called. This calling does not come from us it comes from God. This calling is not according to our will or our purpose, but it is according to God's will and purpose for our lives. (doesn't originate from us)
2. God doesn't just have a calling on a few selected people either (Billy Graham...He has a calling – Rick Warren / Mother Teresa / Bill Gates – calling to make money / Pastors / Missionaries / - God has a calling on every believer's life!
3. So what does that calling look like? It will be a purpose that God gives you to Fulfill that fits the way He created you. It will fit your personality / spiritual gifting / natural talents / combined with your life experiences /
4. It will be something that is progressive, where you learn and grow into it. The more we mature the more of our calling we understand. The more we mature, the more of it we experience.
5. Your calling will be connected to advancing the Kingdom of God in some creative way. Our calling is a call to participate with Jesus in His Kingdom – Jesus said, "Follow Me" / It's Kingdom work we are called to.
6. Therefore, being a carpenter is not a calling – a musician – an accountant / truck driver / etc... BUT, God does use all those things to help us grow into and fulfill our calling. Those can be pieces of our calling.
7. God calls us individually but He also has a corporate calling for our church body. God has called Foothills to specific Kingdom work – Explain – Take the 101 Class

8. Whether or not you can identify your God given calling, it doesn't change the fact that God has a calling on your life. You are just as called as I am!

B. Believing in this calling gives us hope

Eph. 1:18-20 "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms...(NIV)"

1. I think many Christian's eyes are darkened to the hope of their calling. How many of you are already doubting whether or not you have one? Doubting if you can do anything of value for the Kingdom of God? Doubting if God even wants you or not? Where is the hope in that? So many believers are hopeless because they haven't embraced their calling.
 2. I believe we need to allow God to enlighten our eyes (open our minds) to the truth of what He says in Scripture. There is tremendous hope in believing and then experiencing our calling.
 3. Satan would like nothing better than to get you to think you are insignificant in the Kingdom of God. You have nothing to offer. You have no calling. He knows that if believers start embracing and following their calling, He is in trouble. WHY?
 4. Look at what we have to hope in if we believe and embrace our calling. **First**, there are the "*riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints.*" What does this mean? Because I am a child of God, I am entitled to the inheritance of being part of His family. There are rights and privileges that come with the family.
 5. All that is available to Jesus is now available to me! I have all the privileges of sonship! I have resources at my disposal. I inherit certain things in this life and look forward to my full inheritance in the next. (We're adopted into the family!)
 6. It gets even better. We also have hope because of *his incomparably great power for us who believe.* God's supernatural power is experienced as we live out our calling. God doesn't abandon us. He empowers us!
 7. We have all the resources at our disposal with all the power we'll ever need! Can you imagine what would happen if we started believing this? Do you see what we are forfeiting for not believing this? (Our inheritance and His power)
- Will you choose to believe what the God says about you...YOU are called! Can we also believe what God has called us to do as His church? Believe YOU are part of this!

II. Accept The Qualifications For Our Calling

A. God's qualifications are different than this world's

I Cor. 1:26-29 "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak

things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.” (NIV)

1. You wouldn't find that list on a resume. What God is looking for is different than the world's system. We are usually the ones telling God why we are not qualified to serve His purposes. We offer up to God our long list of excuses.
2. This has always been the Biblical example. Moses / Gideon / David / What about the 12 disciples? They were certainly not the social elite! If I were going to pick 12 men to change the world, I wouldn't have chosen these guys!
3. What about the Apostle Paul? Murderer turned Missionary? Why would God do such things?

B. Our weaknesses are channels for God's power

II Cor. 4:7 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing Power is from God and not from us.” (NIV)

1. Do you see why? The treasure is our relationship with Jesus that results in living out His Kingdom purposes...His calling on our lives. As we live this way, it is apparent that the power we have doesn't come from us but God. Our relationship with Jesus and our calling are lived out publicly for all to see.
 2. Our weaknesses do not disqualify us, they give God's supernatural power opportunity to flow through us. Our weaknesses just keep us tethered to Him.
 3. If all we ever do is attempt things we can accomplish ourselves, we will never see the supernatural power of God. We don't need Him. BUT, our calling will require us to attempt things so great for God that they are doomed to fail unless God is in them!
 4. How is accomplishing what only we can do a witness of God's greatness? The Christian life is a supernatural existence. Our lives should give evidence of the reality of God. Our church should be a witness of the reality and power of God.
 5. Unless we embrace our calling, this will not be a reality. People are desperate to know if God is real. If we follow our calling despite our weaknesses, they will know!
- Will you accept that you are qualified to pursue God's calling for your life?

III. Embrace Our Responsibility For Our Calling

A. Our lifestyle should reflect our spiritual calling

Eph. 4:1 “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” (NIV)

1. Our calling should influence our life; rather than our life influence our calling. We are commanded to live in a way that is consistent with our spiritual calling. Our calling as believers in Christ should be a driving force in our lives.
2. How we live should reflect that we are believers on a mission / living with purpose / moving forward / Kingdom minded / We have to stop trying to fit God and His

purposes into our hectic lives. Our calling should be what brings clarity to our lives!

3. There is a responsibility that comes with our calling that we must embrace. If I am called, then I need to give myself to live in a manner consistent with that. BUT, what does that look like?
 - Letting God transform your life (character) Our calling will never be realized unless we allow God to transform us. We are to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Internal transformation must be ongoing.)
 - Letting God transform your lifestyle (values / priorities / use of time) Many believers are just unwilling to readjust their lifestyles – priorities – their use of time and money. (God is compartmentalized)
 - Letting God use you to transform the lives of others. (service / ministry) For this to be effective, we have to be committed to the first two! People who jump to this one first, don't see God's power in their serving. God's power for serving only comes through being transformed!
4. As a church, we must give ourselves to these things if we are ever going to live a life worthy of our calling.

- How long do we live this way?

B. Our calling lasts until it is accomplished

Col. 4:17 "And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord." (ESV)

II Tim. 4:5 "But you should keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you." (NLT)

1. Let me apply this corporately for us as a church. God has called us to reach 1000s of unchurched people in our geographic area for Him. When is that done? When do we get to quit? When do we stop? ANSWER: When our calling is fulfilled!
2. Calling is a life-long thing. The responsibilities may change over the years / the pace may change / our assignments may change, but the calling continues. Our calling is what plays itself out over the course of our lives.
3. We don't retire from our calling. Take spiritual social security and go on a Kingdom hiatus. We chase after it for life. We are committed to fulfill it.
4. God has given Foothills an assignment...a calling. We must embrace our responsibility in living in a manner worthy of it until it is completed. We will stand before God and give an account for it. I want to hear..."Well done!"

IV. Reject Our Love Of Comfort To Fulfill Our Calling

A. We can't have divided loyalties

I John 2:15-17 " Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a

craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.” (NLT)

1. We can't be loyal to our own comfort and loyal to our calling at the same time. It's a spiritual impossibility. If we love this world, it squeezes out our love and devotion to God. This world is all about promoting comfort. (comfort of pleasure – possessions – positions) Don't fall in love with these things!!!
2. What's wrong with being comfortable? I like being comfortable. I've worked hard to achieve a certain level of comfort for me and my family! Are you telling me this is wrong?
3. Being comfortable is not a sin. It becomes sin when we refuse to leave our comfort to walk in our calling. If we love comfort more than the calling of God. If the only reason we won't serve / give / sacrifice / is we don't want to be uncomfortable, that is resisting God and His will for our lives. Our loyalties are divided.
4. If a church is filled with people who love their calling more than their comfort, there will be no shortage of people to serve, and no shortage of finances to keep expanding the vision.
5. Time and money = comfort. This is why there is such an emotional reaction from people when it is brought up. “How dare you threaten my comfort!” If you really want to follow Jesus, your comfort will be threatened! You have to decide which you love more?

B. Embracing comfort leads to crisis

- This is why we have such a crisis in the church today! The church has lost its influence and power.

II Tim. 4:9-10 “Timothy, please come as soon as you can. Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica.” (NLT)

- Here was a man with divided loyalties who went AWOL on Paul. How many believers have deserted their post because of comfort?

II Tim. 3:1-5 “You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money... They will be boastful and proud... They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving... and love pleasure rather than God. They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly...” (NLT)

1. We have too many people across our country embracing a comfortable religion with no power / no influence / no transformation. There is a crisis in the church! People are leaving their posts / loving the world / and abandoning the lost / and forfeiting their divine calling from God.
2. I do not say all this to lay a guilt trip on you today. I just want you to know that what God has called us to is so glorious...so precious...it's worth fighting for. It's

worth giving up your comfort in order to embrace your calling. (Lord of Rings – clip)

If we're willing to embrace our calling rather than our comfort, what can we expect?

I Thess. 5:24 “*Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.*” (NASB) The fulfillment of everything He has ever promised! That's what we can expect! Our calling will become reality!

How is God calling you to embrace your calling rather than comfort? What practical steps can you take?