

The Triune Nature of Our Calling

The Christian Bible gives us two images of a Christian's life, that of a “pilgrim” or “stranger and that of a “citizen of Heaven”.

Hebrews 11:13 [King James] *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

Like aliens in a strange country.

Ephesians 2:19 [NIV] *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household,”*

This is where their real allegiance was, as members of God’s family.

People who were no longer belonging to this present world’s system.

Christians are “called out” – “called together” – “called forth”. This is the “triune nature” of our calling.

Christians are called out

The word “*ekklesia*” is used in the New Testament 114 times and usually translated “church”.

“*Ekklesia*” means “a called-out assembly”.

Luke 19:10 [NIV] *“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”*

Ever since humans sinned God has been seeking lost sinners and calling them to receive His forgiveness.

Mark 2:17 [King James] *“... I [Jesus] came not to call the [self] righteous, but sinners to repentance.”*

Romans 3:10-11 [NIV] *“As it is written: “There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God.”*

God is seeking sinners because sinners are certainly not seeking after God.

Jeremiah 17:9 [NIV] *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”*

The initiative for this calling comes from the loving heart of God not from the rebellious heart of human beings.

How does God go about calling lost sinners?

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 [NIV] *“But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Our calling began in eternity.

We had nothing to do with this decision.

It was purely an act of God's Grace.

John 15:16 [NIV] *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

The lost sinner knows nothing about this eternal decision, nor does he need to know.

What the lost, unsaved, need to hear is the Good News of what God has done for them through their Saviour, Jesus Christ.

God takes the initiative as to whom is called at this time and also ordains the means of this calling.

Romans 10:14 [NIV] *"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"*

As the **second step** in our calling God involves those who have previously been called by Him and have Christ living in them.

The **third step** of this calling involves the Holy Spirit who convicts the sinner and reveals the Saviour.

John 16:8 [NIV] *"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:"*

This is the Triune work of the Holy Spirit on earth.

- a) convict the sinner that they are sinners
- b) point to the righteous Jesus Christ as their Saviour from the penalty of sin, eternal death
- c) remind forgiven sinners that their life from then on will be judged as to the reward they receive at the end of their physical life.

All of the Godhead is involved in our being called out of this society.

God the Father initiated my calling.

Jesus Christ saved us from eternal death by being a substitute for my death on the cross.

But this calling by the Father and the death of His Son Jesus Christ is **not effective** in our lives **until** we yield to the directing of the Holy Spirit.

Only then does it all come together and we become *"born again"* children in God's created family.

We then have a new standing in our lives as called out people.

John 17:16-18 [NIV] *"They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."*

When scripture talks about “*the world*” it is **not** meaning the physical world of people but system by which this society is governed by the invisible influence of a being who is opposed to everything godly.

Colossians 1:13 [NIV] “*For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,*”

This kingdom of darkness is the result of the blinding of humanity by Satan.

1 John 5:19 [NIV] “*We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*”

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] “*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*”

Revelation 12:9 [NIV] “*The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*”

This is the “*world*” that we have been called out of.

This new “called out” position in Jesus Christ should determine our future conduct.

Ephesians 4:1 [NIV] “*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*”

Colossians 3:1 [NIV] “*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*”

When it comes to the worlds system, God's children are “*strangers and pilgrims*”.

A “*stranger*” is away from home.

But a “*pilgrim*” is on the way to home.

As pilgrims we are like Abraham who stepped out in faith and obeyed God's call, living in a tent [this frail human body] looking for his real home.

Hebrews 11:8-10, 14-16 [NIV] “*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a **stranger** in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was **looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**” ... “*People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*”*

Our real home is the same as Abraham a city being prepared in heaven to be brought to earth at Christ's return and our resurrection with Abraham and all who have been faithful to their calling.

Revelation 21:2-3 [NIV] “*I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.”*”

Christians are called together

As “*strangers and pilgrims*” we are not alone in this present world, for we are not only called out but we are called to be together.

Acts 2:44 [King James] “*And all that believed were together, and had all things common;*”

Together because of what they had in common.

The calling from God the Father, salvation from Jesus Christ and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 10:25 [NIV] “*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*”

Together to give each other encouragement and support.

As pilgrims we are all travelling towards the same destiny so it would be good to take the advice Joseph gave to his brothers as they started their journey from Egypt with grain to save his family from starvation.

Genesis 45:24 [NIV] “*... Don’t quarrel on the way!*”

Each local church is “*colony of heaven*” on earth.

Luke 10:20 [NIV] “*However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*”

Churches are made up of people whose citizenship is in heaven because their names are written down in heaven, in the Book of Life.

In Paul’s day a person could acquire Roman citizenship by birth or purchase or as a gift.

Our citizenship in heaven is a gift from Jesus Christ purchased by His Blood as we are “*born again*” into that Kingdom by the Holy Spirit.

Roman citizenship was something to be proud of with many privileges but also with great responsibilities.

Those without this Roman citizenship would judge Rome by the way that these Roman citizens acted.

Our citizenship is no different, God’s Kingdom will be judged by our conduct as we meet together to worship God and encourage each other.

John 13:35 [NIV] “*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

When uncalled people visit our services or know us in day-to-day life, do they by our actions know we are citizens of heaven?

Or do we and our church behave just like people in this world?

If we study the “*one another*” verses in the New Testament we will discover what God expects of His people.

The nearer we are to the “*world*” the less excited we become about being with the people of God.

Christians are called forth

John 17:16-18 [NIV] *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.”*

If we were still of the world we could not help this world, but because we no longer belong to this world system, we are free to lead others into the joy of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

On our pilgrimage from this world towards the new city that God is preparing for His Children, it is our task to persuade as many as we can to join us on this pilgrimage.

Numbers 10:29 [NIV] *“Now Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, ‘We are setting out for the place about which the LORD said, ‘I will give it to you.’ **Come with us and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel.**’”*

This is what we should be saying to those around us as we make our journey.

As citizens of heaven we are under the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we must be prepared to obey Him.

As pilgrims on our earthly journey, we must be careful to have **no** “*attachments*” to our lives that will hold us up on this journey.

Anything in our lives that may hinder us hearing God’s call must be abandoned.

Acts 15:14 [NIV] *“Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself.”*

During this present age God is calling people out to become His people.

Acts 1:8 [NIV] *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

God uses us to share the message of salvation with the “*lost*” in this world.

It is important that we do our job faithfully, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Luke 10:1-2 [NIV] *“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*

Our calling is to dedicate our lives as workers for God to harvest all The Father has called, that they may receive salvation through Jesus Christ and be matured in Christian living by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Then they also can become workers in God’s harvest of humans to enter into His created family.