

# One Calling

Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne



John 6:24-35; Ephesians 4:1-16

EPHESIANS 4:1-7, 11-13, 15-16

*Therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift...The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ... But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

PRAYER IF ILLUMINATION

Let us pray:

**May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight O God, our rock and our salvation. Amen.**

Some people have asked me which *Winnie the Pooh* story I am using today. Well, I have news for

you. I am well-educated and widely-read! Without using a language you do not know, and just like Pastor Bruce, I can use words that you can't even define. That even Pastor Bruce cannot define! Actually, even I cannot define! Prepare to be amazed!

Now, listen to these wise words from a man who is a Doctor and a Poet, no less:

*This way to the big tent!  
You'll find your head spinning.  
Why, ladies and gentlemen,  
Youngsters and oldsters,  
Your heads will quite likely spin  
Right off your shouldsters!  
So hurry! Step lively! Quick, ladies and gents!  
And get in your seats in my Tent-of-all-tents!  
My Parade-of-Parades is about to commence!  
You'll see Drum Major Sneelock fling-flang his baton  
And my Organ-McOrgan-McGurkus come on  
With its hot steaming pipes of gold brass-plated tin  
Snorting all sorts of snorts in a bummeling din  
That is super-Stoo-Pendus! Stoo-Roarus!  
And, when I play Dixie, please join in the chorus!  
Then a fluff-muffled Truffle will ride on a Huffle  
And, next in the line, a fine Flummox will shuffle,  
The Flummox will carry a Lunch in a pail  
And a Fibble will carry the Flummox's tail...  
And Then comes a lion who is partly a trout!  
Then more stuff! For forty-five minutes, about!*

There is no excuse for you not to recognize the context of these words. We live in the most 'circus' of towns, with performers and museums and even some clowns!

What does this have to do with our scripture lesson today?

Listen carefully, think deeply. The connection's quite clear. A circus takes all sorts of folks with

“**The One Call, of making disciples for the service of Christ, is the Greatest Calling on Earth. It requires a host of performers and workers – which is to say, the work of the One Call is about relationships. It is about people honoring each other, supporting each other and letting others have the spotlight. “**

all sorts of skills each doing their part from daring to menial, from boring to not, to pull off the show that is the Greatest on Earth.

The Apostle Paul does not have the gift of light words or the fanciful images to help us understand a task far more complex and infinitely more wondrous than a circus or movie or NASA's fly-by of Pluto.

Further, he knows that what God is calling us to do is extremely hard, and sometimes dangerous. It requires a dedicated and unified effort. We have to work hard for something we now see “as in a mirror darkly.”(1 Corinthians 13:12) But that doesn't matter for the Ring-Master Supreme – our God - sees clearly!

Reminding us that he writes from prison, Paul invites us to enter into a dialogue with him. Everything he says and we say is in the context of an opposition and peril that cannot be escaped. The apostle tells us that what we need is not true grit or wall-shattering strength. What we need is “humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the

bond of peace.”(Ephesians 4:2-3)

The **One Call**, of making disciples for the service of Christ, is the Greatest Calling on Earth. It requires a host of performers and workers – which is to say, the work of the **One Call** is about *relationships*. It is about people honoring each other, supporting each other and letting others have the spotlight. What is 'magnificent' is that we all work together on the amazing diversity of what God has and is and will do in the world for the sake of our salvation.

If Paul were Dr. Seuss he would perhaps tell us that whether we are the one who:

flies on the trapeze;  
hammers the tent pegs;  
sells the tickets;  
cooks for the workers;  
hangs the posters; or  
shovels up the elephant droppings,  
we are all part of the **One Body**.

Here Paul becomes more poetic than Dr. Seuss, saying:

There is **one body and one Spirit**, just as you were called to the **one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.**

And then we get to verse 7 of Ephesians 4. It is easy to run past but it is of amazing importance and great comfort. It reads:

*But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift...*

Now, ignore all that is happening in all the other rings of the circus. This is the heart of the message.

We each are given grace to be a part of the "Greatest Calling on Earth." We each have a part to play – but the part we are to play is not limited by our own frailties and blindness. We are given grace to be the role we are to play.

Further, the measure of the grace we are to receive, is determined by Christ's grace. Not only are we not limited, but the one - who is the very Lamb of God, the very savior of our souls, the true Son of God - gives us gifts not based on our limits but on Christ's graciousness. How wonderful and comforting that is.

We receive and are called to use gifts that are worthy of Christ. We enter the struggle not on our own but as Christ's unified body.

The father of Reformed-Presbyterian faith, John Calvin, believed each person's call is equal in value and importance with any other person's call. But Paul goes on to remind us that until "we have achieved the fullness of Christ's stature" we need one another. We must be knit together into one body, that is Christ's body.

Today we come to the Table of our Lord. Here we celebrate the individual gifts of grace Christ has given to us as our calling. We also celebrate the gift of grace beyond grace. As we are taught by the

Gospel According To John (John 4:32, 35) "... it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven." And Jesus said ... "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

Today, we celebrate that Jesus is the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the sacrament of God's love given for us. In coming to this **One Table**, we say who we are. We are the **One body** of Christ sent to fulfill the **One Calling** of God's holy love.

*The Circus McGurkus! The World's Greatest Show  
On the face of the earth, or wherever you go!  
The Circus McGurkus! The cream of the cream!  
The Circus McGurkus! The Circus Supreme!  
The Circus McGurkus! Colossal! Stupendous!  
Astounding, Fantastic, Terrific! Tremendous!  
I'll bring in my acrobats, jugglers and clowns  
From a thousand and thirty-three faraway towns...*

Our many callings bring us together in the **One Call** of God's gracious love, making disciples for the service of Christ.

And that call brings us to this **One Table**, the sacramental meal in which we know ourselves to be accepted and welcomed as part of the **One Body** of Christ. Thanks be to God for this **One Call!** Amen.

#### CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Go in peace, remembering your one call of making disciples for the service of Christ. In the name of the father, of the son and of the holy spirit. Amen.



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Dr. Lal Hmingliani Browne  
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