

## One Calling, Many Gifts : Week 1: Called into one body

### Series Overview:

Week 1: Called into one body

Week 2: Introduction to the gifts & prophecy

Week 3: Ministry (brief review) and teaching  
(break)

Week 4: Exhortation

Week 5: Giving

Week 6: Ruling

Week 7: Mercy

### 2 Main-learning points:

- 1) We all have one calling into one body. It was God who called us due to no works of our own. Take assurance in that.
- 2) Our gifts determine our calling. God freely gave these gifts as He saw fit. Take comfort in that.

### Outline:

- 1. We are called unto salvation. One calling. One gospel.**
- 2. Calling was predetermined.**
- 3. Instances where “called” is used outside of the call to salvation:**
- 4. One Body: Gifts determine place in the body**
- 5. Any “divine calling” from God does not overrule the authority of scripture.**

## **1. We are called unto salvation. One calling. One gospel.**

God’s people are called by unto salvation through Jesus Christ; there is salvation in none other (Acts 4:12). This is our one calling. Most of the time when the New Testament references a calling in relation to God, it seems to almost always be talking about us being called unto salvation in the singular form. As shown in the scriptures below, we are called unto grace, the gospel, eternal glory, God in Christ Jesus, the heavenly calling... and these all refer to one calling. It would make sense to refer to “the high calling, or the holy calling”. Jude simply says “called”. These are all singular because God does not call us into salvation in any other way than Jesus Christ. That is the only way (John 14:16). There is only one gospel (Gal 1:6-7). There is only one faith (Eph 4:5).

*[Eph 4:4 KJV] 4 [There is] **one body**, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope **of your calling**;*

One Body, in that body there is one Spirit that divides gifts to each individual as He sees fit. We are all called to the body of Christ. What a glorious thought. Jew, Gentile, white, black, slave, freeman, Paul, Peter, James, John and you, all called to equal importance in the same body.

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(I'll briefly read through these scriptures to show how "called" and "calling" are used).

*[2Ti 1:9 KJV] 9 Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

*[Gal 1:6 KJV] 6 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. (Jesus plus the law is not the gospel, it is an accursed belief)*

*[2 Thes 2:14 KJV] 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. God will use whatever or whomever, but the call is still his, therefore the sower and him who waters have nothing to boast in.*

*[1Pe 5:10 KJV] 10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you].*

*[Jde 1:1 KJV] 1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, [and] called:*

*[Jde 1:1 3:14 KJV] 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Notice he does not say, I press towards obtaining a call, but obtaining the prize, which is a product of God already calling him.*

*[Heb 3:1 KJV] 1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

*[Rom 11:29 KJV] 29 For the gifts and calling of God [are] without repentance. This context is referring to God's calling of Israel, regardless of their current state of rebellion, God's call and gifts of grace are not to be repented of, God will save those he has called.*

## 2. Calling was predetermined.

*[2Ti 1:9 KJV] 9 Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to **his own purpose and grace**, which was given us in Christ Jesus **before the world began**,*

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*Rom 8:28-30 KJV] 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are **the called** according to [his] purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he **also called**: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

Let's break down some key words in this scripture that will help us fully realize the depth and love of God's call.

**Foreknow.** God knew you before you were born, learned how to talk, made any decisions, developed your personality, etc:

*[Jer 1:5 KJV] 5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

*[Psa 139:14-16 KJV] 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully [and] wonderfully made: marvellous [are] thy works; and [that] my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, [and] curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all [my members] were written, [which] in continuance were fashioned, when [as yet there was] none of them.*

Look at how much marvelous care God put into forming our beings, look at how much personal interest he took into giving us each an individual destiny. God does not look at us after birth and react. He does not look at his children and realize he made a mistake by giving one this weakness or another that gift. We are each fearfully and wonderfully made.

### **Predestinate**

*G4309 to limit in advance, i.e (fig) predetermine.*

In KJV, translated predestinate (4x), determine before (1x), ordain (1x)

God determined beforehand (before your birth, before creation even) that you would be conformed to the image of Christ.

*[Eph 1:4 KJV] 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

*[Eph 1:11 KJV] 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

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This is grace. You aren't saved because of a preacher or being in the right place at the right time. God predestined your salvation. Jesus is the first fruits of the dead, in that he is the first to obtain to the resurrection. God has predestined you and I to follow after Christ as brothers and sisters in the resurrection.

### **Called**

Again, this is grace in that it is the work of God.

Paul was one of those who ordained (appointed) unto eternal life:

*[Act 13:48 KJV] 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

Yet God did not call him until the right time. God foreknew Paul and predestined him to be conformed to the image of His Son. When God was ready, God called, and God used Paul just as he was, bad past and everything for His (God's) glory.

Those who feel they "sought out God" are right in a sense, but that was only because God called them first. And if God called them, it means God foreknew them and predestined them, so they once again have nothing to boast in:

*[Jhn 6:44 KJV] 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

As we fully begin to grasp the working of God in our salvation, it should increase our appreciation for the Father's love for us and his great care for us. Life can be scary when we think our merit that determines if God has any interest in us, or when we think our salvation is a matter of chance.

### **3. Instances where "called" is used outside of the call to salvation:**

*[Rom 1:1 KJV] 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

In this instance, Paul had another calling within his larger calling. God can appoint us to do certain things. These are calls within a call.

*[1Co 7:20-24 KJV] 20 Let every man abide in the same **calling** wherein he was called. 21 Art thou called [being] a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use [it] rather. 22 For he that is called in the Lord, [being] a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, [being] free, is Christ's servant. 23 **Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.** 24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*

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When “same calling” is used in this verse, it is actually talking about the condition that person was in when called, servant or freeman. We read in another place that if one is called being a servant, use it, but it’s OK to seek freedom. James and John were called as fisherman, but left that vocation. What this scripture is saying, is that we should be content in whatever state we were in when God called us (military, in prison, in a communist country, etc) because God chose where and when to call us. It is not saying we should seek to better our situation, but we should recognize our condition when called, accept it, and use it for the glory of God.

*[Eph 4:1 KJV] 1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the **vocation** wherewith ye are called,*

The word vocation is translated as calling in all other instances in the KJV Bible. I think what Paul is trying to say here, is that they would walk worthy of God’s specific calling, not so much their worldly occupation such as fisherman or kickboxer (although it’s important to do that well to). Context determines that Paul is talking about being called into the body of Christ. Paul goes on to say:

*[Eph 4:4 KJV] 4 [There is] one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;*

### **4. One Body: Gifts determine place in the body**

Reminder:

- 1) We all have one calling into one body. It was God who called us due to no works of our own. Take assurance in that.
- 2) Our gifts determine our calling. God freely gave these gifts as He saw fit. Take comfort in that.

By “gifts” I mean the specific gifts spoken of in Romans 12. We will address this further next week.

Romans 12. We are going to be teaching from Romans 12 for the rest of the series. We will go into detail on each gift, and next week Pat will also give us a short introduction to the concept of spiritual gifts in the Bible. I’m primarily talking about our one calling, but in order to properly do that I need to speak on how we are called into one body, and how it is our gifts, not our current church position or title that determine our place in that body.

Again, I want to stress that we all have the same calling. You have the same calling as Peter, Paul, and James. You have been called into the same body, the same faith, under the same Lord. Jesus is the head of the body, and there is no other. Now, while calling you into the body, God has simultaneously given you at least one gift.

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*[1Pe 4:10-11 KJV] 10 As every man hath received the gift, [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 11 If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God; if any man minister, [let him do it] as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

Both your calling and your gifts are of grace. Can gifts be stirred up? Yes. Should the best gifts be sought after? Yes. But they are still given by God as He see fits. The above scripture (and the parable of the talents) show that God even gives us the ability to use the gifts. I hope the rest of this study shows that it is actually our gifts that determine our place in the body of Christ.

We maximize our effectiveness by serving with our gift(s). The body of Christ is spoken of primarily in two places, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. In both places, it connects gifts with the body. It would seem our gift(s) our meant to determine our place in the body.

Our part in the body does not necessarily define our vocation in the local church. We will operate in various avenues of ministry based on needs and desires, but we should be using our gift in whatever manner of ministry we serve in.

[Ex. Paul was called to be an Apostle. You could say he was “called” to go into Macedonia. This is a calling within a call. But we need to be careful about overusing the word call (talk about dating and engagement). When we look at people like Paul, we see him engaged in different areas of ministry during different seasons of his life: teaching, evangelizing, appointing church administration, carrying money from one church to the next, spending time alone being a student of Christ, writing letters, and working with his hands when the need arose. Paul was called once. He was given gifts (maybe teaching and/or exhortation), and God also used the manifestation gifts spoken of in 1 Cor 12, such as the gifts of healing and the word of wisdom. He used these fits to aid in and drive his ministry opportunities.

It’s similar for you and me, as this study will show. We have one calling. Everyone who has been called has at least one gift (1 Peter 4:10). To say “my calling is to mow lawns”, or “my calling is to pastor the same church for 40 years, collect a salary and retire” may be a bit of an assumption. God’s one calling is certain; that God has given each body member a gift is certain. How your area of ministry looks in the body should be fluid. We have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16), we have the ability to operate out of faith or fear, we have the ability to seek wise council. Trying to figure out if we are hands, eyes, or some other body part is not as important as simply choosing to operate in one of more of the specific gifts (prophecy, giving, mercy, etc) listed in scripture.

I’ve heard it said before that occasionally the hand would have to do the work of an elbow because there is a need. That’s understandable... but do you know what the

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best way to have no schisms in the body is? It is for each person to focus on their gift. That may seem selfish, but while they focus on that gift they will be using it to edify the body. One of the primary purposes of the gifts, for the edification of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:7 [1Co 12:7 KJV] 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to **profit withal**. *sympherō sūm-fe'-rō to bear (or lift up) together (contribute) i.e. (lit) to collect, or (fig) to conduce*).

Does it seem like there are always too many tasks to do in the church and not enough bodies, time or money? Maybe the answer isn't getting more people to serve, but allowing some of the people who are already serving to use the gift of government (administration) -1 Cor 12:28 or ruling (leading) –Rom 12:8.

*[Rom 12:1-2 KJV] 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service. 2 And **be not conformed to this world**: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

As we go into Romans 12, we see that we are to **present our bodies**, or members to Christ, Wholly yielded. This allows us to be used properly in the body. In fact, to not present our bodies to Christ is theft because our bodies have already been bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20). We are alive because are head, Jesus Christ operates the body. We therefore yield to him as “living sacrifices”, which is our service to God. The term “reasonable service” has a double meaning; it could also be interpreted as spiritual worship.

We don't **conform to the ways of the world** in how we serve in the body of Christ. God sets those in the body as it pleases Him, not according to how well educated, respected, or talented that person is. The body uses gifts; the world uses such things as programs, entertainments, persuasive arguments, and outward appearances. **When we don't realize our gifts are what determine our place in the body, we rely more and more on the world's methods.**

Because it's relevant to calling, I'd like to briefly talk about offices and gifts. The two established offices of the church (elders and deacons) are not body parts that someone either permanently is or permanently is not. We know this because each office has qualifications. This means that one can qualify or disqualify themselves from these offices based on their walk. Gifts are given outside of our performance. Gifts are given by God's grace and stirred up in us by faith. If I were qualified or had qualified to obtain a gift, it would not be a gift. Therefore if you are a teacher, teach in whatever position you are in: prison ministry, children's church, to your spouse, to your kids, as an elder, as a deacon, or any other ministry you may be fulfilling. Use your gift in faith for the edification of the body.

## **5. Any “divine calling” from God does not overrule the authority of scripture.**

Here is an example; sometimes a church leader can have this attitude to justify their position in the church. The saying “I’ve been called”, while it can be true, it often used to justify something when the word of God is what should be used to justify it. For example, man could have a position of senior leadership, maybe he even founded the church; but if that man cannot control his temper and is emotionally abusive, he is disqualified from the pastorate due to the qualifications of an overseer listed in 1 Timothy and Titus. So while this man will not hold the office due to the authority of scripture, this doesn’t mean he cannot operate in his gifts outside of the office, whether it be in teaching, exhorting, or even leading. Our gifts are assigned by God (1 Cor 12:18) and determine our place in the body.

Anytime we feel God has told us to do something it must be evaluated by scripture.  
[Use gambling example]

We’ve been called in to one body. And our gift or gifts comes right along with that calling. Neither the call to the body or the gift is an accident. Therefore to present your bodies a living sacrifice means to take what rightfully belongs to God, your very self, and serve him by stirring up your gift, by using your gift in faith, by using your gift to edify the body.

Recap:

- 1) We all have one calling into one body. It was God who called us due to no works of our own. Take assurance in that.
- 2) Our gifts determine our calling. God freely gave these gifts as He saw fit. Take comfort in that.