

UNIT 2.A.: PURPOSE: CALLING & GIFTEDNESS

Objective: Though we don't always sense it, God has placed us in this time and place for a divinely appointed purpose. So often we seem to be tossed about by circumstances in life and we don't always realize God's hand moving us toward his mission for our lives. How can I discover why God has placed me here? How can I know what his purpose is for my life? How do I gain a better sense of my calling from God?

John 15:16:

Ye have not chosen me, but **I have chosen you**, and ordained you that ye should go and **bring forth fruit**; and that your fruit should remain . . .

2 Timothy 1:8-9:

. . . **be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel** according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and **called us with a 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.

Romans 8:28:

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.

D & C 24:1-4:

. . . I speak unto thee, Emma Smith . . . Behold, thy sins are forgiven thee, and **thou art an elect lady, whom I have called**. Murmur not . . . And **the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort** unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., thy husband in his afflictions, with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness. . . and be unto him for **a scribe** . . . And thou shalt be **ordained under his hand to expound Scriptures, and to exhort the church**, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit . . . and **thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much**. And thou needest not fear . . . thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and seek for the things of a better . . . **make a selection of sacred hymns** . . . Continue in the spirit of meekness . . .

Jeremiah 1:5:

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**.

Philippians 1:6:

. . . **he which hath begun a good work in you** will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:12-13:

That ye would walk worthy of **God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory**. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing . . .

At some point in their lives, those who have made a covenant with Christ look back and realize that they've actually been dependent on a power greater than themselves since birth. We each can look back and see that God has, to some degree, been nurturing, sustaining and guiding us through all the trials and hardships of this life.

Becoming a Disciple of Christ

This is the work of the Holy Spirit that is actively engaged in the hearts of every person born on this earth. This is God's grace. At birth, it was God's grace that drew us toward a sense of right and wrong. At our rebirth, it was God's grace drawing us and calling us toward salvation and eternal life. Now that we are reborn, we sense God's grace calling us to become true disciples of Christ. This urgency within each of us is God's Holy Spirit **calling** us to the next level in our lives.

A MORAL SENSE

In the soul of each person born on this earth there is a deeply embedded sense of morality, what is right and wrong. We call that a conscience. It was given to us by our Creator before we ever made a commitment to Christ. Arminian theologians sometimes describe this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work as "**prevenient grace.**"

John 1:9:

. . . the true light, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world.

2 Nephi 1:67:

And men are instructed sufficiently, that they know good from evil.

D & C 83:7c:

. . . and the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world . . .

Romans 2:14-15:

. . . the Gentiles which have *not* the law, do by nature the things contained in the law . . . which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their *conscience* also bearing witness . . .

GOD'S CALL TO SALVATION

Long before we ever made a commitment to Christ, God's grace was calling us to become a child of God and be reborn in him. We entered God's kingdom through the narrow gate of faith, repentance and baptisms by water and Spirit. In being reborn, we received an assurance of salvation, that we would live in God's presence in eternity. The scriptures call this **salvation or justification**. Theologians sometimes describe this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work as "**justifying grace.**"

D & C 17:6a-b (salvation or justification):

And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ and worship the Father in his name, and endure in faith on his name to the end, or they cannot be **saved** in the kingdom of God And we know that **justification** through the **grace** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true.

Mosiah 9:41-50 identifies **three purposes** for water baptism:

1. **covenant to obey** God's commandments - Mosiah 9:41 (also Acts 2:42)
2. **remission of sin** - Mosiah 9:40 & 44 (also Acts 2:38 & 22:16)
3. method of **entrance into Christ's Church** - Mosiah 9:50 (also Acts 2:41 & 47)

In **Mosiah 9:38-40**, at the Waters of Mormon, Alma 1 invited the people to make a covenant with God, and he identified **the duties of the believer**:

- Come into the fold of God & be called his people,
- Bear one another's burdens that they might be light,
- Mourn with those that mourn,

Becoming a Disciple of Christ

- Comfort those that stand in need of comfort,
- Stand as witnesses of God at all times until death,

“. . . that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life.”

In **Mosiah 9:41**, Alma 1 said:

If this be the desire of your hearts, **what have you against being baptized** in the name of the Lord, as **a witness before him** that ye have entered into **a covenant** with him that ye will **serve** him and **keep his commandments**, that **he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?**

In **Mosiah 9:42**, the people “clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed, This is the desire of our hearts.”

In **Mosiah 9:43-45**, Alma 1 took Helam:

. . . and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying, O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said, Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into **a covenant to serve him until you are dead**, as to the mortal body; and may **the Spirit of the Lord** be poured out upon you; and **may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ**, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.

In **Mosiah 9:46-50**, Alma 1 baptized all 204 souls in this manner, and they were:

. . . **filled with the grace of God**. And they were called the church of God, or **the church of Christ**, from that time forward . . . whosoever was **baptized** by the power and authority was **added to his church** . . .

Prior to Alma 1’s time, in **Mosiah 2:18-19**, King Benjamin described those who had been saved, or in other words justified, as having:

- “come to a knowledge of the glory of God”
- “known of his goodness”
- “tasted of his love”
- “received a remission of your sins,” and
- experienced “exceeding great joy in your souls.”

Mosiah 2:27-31:

And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, Have ye spiritually been **born** of God? Have ye received **his image** in your countenances? Have ye experienced this **mighty change** in your hearts? Do ye exercise **faith** in the redemption of him who created you?
[an assurance of salvation]