

**Introduction:**

- I don't want us to lose track of or forget what we set out to do this year at Freedom. What we set out to do was to become a church that reaches souls. There are two things that stand out to me that we must have. Two things I want us to see this morning that empower the local church to reach souls.
- One is knowing we are called to it and the calling gives us purpose and authority to go. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to go and power to do the supernatural. *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”* (John 14:12, ESV) Because Jesus went to the Father, the Holy Spirit came to us! Two things I want to focus on this morning: God calling us. And the Holy Spirit empowering us.

**I. God Called Israel**

- A. The NT Pattern of calling rests on the OT picture of calling. Israel was called to be a light to the gentiles. They were to be a kingdom of priests that would reveal to the world the ways and heart of God. Israel existed for Him. That's it. He did not exist for Israel! (Caleb's message last week)
1. *“and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”* (Exodus 19:6, ESV) Israel was to live and speak His word to the nations.
  2. *“For you are a people holy (set apart) to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”* (Deuteronomy 7:6, ESV) because God chose her she would be referred to as ‘the congregation of Israel’; the people of Israel; the gathering of Israel.
- B. Israel is referred to as the ‘congregation of Israel’ throughout the OT. Especially in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
1. The Hebrew word is ‘yā’ad’ meaning to appoint, appointed meeting; designate, agreed. By choosing them, God appointed them...to be his voice to all peoples.
  2. ‘ēdâ is a feminine noun from yā’ad “to appoint,” hence Israel is an assembly by appointment and is rendered most frequently as “congregation.” Lewis, J. P. (1999). 878 טַף. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed., p. 388). Moody Press.
    - a) eda - congregation, assembly, gathering; are all English words used to translate eda.
    - b) Israel was to gather, assemble at the sounding of the trumpets. She was appointed to do this. It was a response of faith and obedience.

**II. God Called His Church, God Called Us**

- A. In the NT God calls his church to be a light to the nations, the salt of the earth. Kingdom influence. We are to be a kingdom of priests to a lost and dying world living in darkness, without hope.

1. God called Israel. It began with Abraham and the promise of a son. Abraham would be the father of many nations. But God would be interested in one nation Israel that would come from Isaac the son of promise.
  2. In the NT. God call people out of darkness into his wonderful light that we might be ambassadors to the lost.
- B. What does it mean to be called? We saw in the OT 'eda' meant to call out, and to appoint. Israel was called out from the nations. "*Come out from among them.*" Is 52:11 and Jer. chapters 42-43; Paul 2 Cor 6:17.
1. Calling gives us purpose. We now have a divine purpose in life. A divine mission to fulfill.
  2. God takes the initiative to reach us! And He appoints us to a specific purpose! We are gathered together in this calling and by gathering we build mass. Momentum is forward motion with mass. The bigger the mass the more powerful the impact.
  3. I will build my church! "*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Matthew 16:18, ESV)
    - a) 'Church' comes from a Greek word, ekklesia. Today's preachers among those that are strong in prayer, apostolic grace and prophetic grace define ekklesia as the legislative body of the Kingdom. Or the church is to legislate Kingdom in the earth. I do not disagree with that. But the word ekklesia is so much richer in application! For example in Acts 19, and 25 it was the assembly (ekklesia) that was opposing Paul. That was not a legislative body it was a bunch of rioters! An assembly of rioters.
    - b) Ekklesia comes from the verb word 'kaleo' which means to call or 'called out of'. It appears all through the NT but especially in Luke and Acts. It often carries the understanding of divine calling, vocation or influence. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 394). W.B. Eerdmans. Let me show you how rich this word is: IE.
      - (1) Out of Egypt I called my son. Mt 2:15 Jesus was called out Egypt and back into Israel. ekales
      - (2) "*mending their nets, and he called them.*" (Mt 4:21,22). He called them out of what they were doing and to join Him. You do not just get saved. You get saved to something!
      - (3) "*I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.*" Jesus calls sinner out of their sin. Mt 9:13
      - (4) In Romans 8:30 "*God calls us to Himself.*"
      - (5) Called out of darkness and into the fellowship of His Son. "*God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*" (1 Corinthians 1:9, ESV) eklethete - to be summoned. To summon - is to call, to give notice, to command. If you are summoned you have step out of where you are and answer to the one calling.
      - (6) 1 Cor 7:15 called to peace;
      - (7) called in grace Gal.1:6;
      - (8) In Gal 5:13 called to freedom; called to holiness in 1 Thes 4:7; 1 Tim 6:12 called to eternal life; called to the Light 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Peter 2:21 called to suffer.

- (9) Abraham was called to go out “*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.*” (Hebrews 11:8, ESV) We are like Abraham we have been called out... we go...not knowing where we are going or what is in store for us. “*...those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*” (Heb 9:15).
- (10) “*And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited (called) to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”*” (Revelation 19:9, ESV) Kaleo - invited. summoned.
- (11) In 1 Cor. 1:26 the Corinthians are to consider their call; God “chose” the foolish and weak etc. (v. 27). In 1 Cor. 7:20 they are to remain in the state of their calling. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 395). W.B. Eerdmans.
- C. Church is the made up of the called out ones. “Assembly,” then, is perhaps the best single term, particularly as it has both a concrete and an abstract sense, i.e., for the assembling as well as the assembly. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 397). W.B. Eerdmans.
1. It can be ekklesia meaning the whole body of Christ.
  2. It can speak of local congregations.
  3. It can speak of house churches.
  4. If you are born again you are a member of the ekklesia, His body!
  5. The called out ones are the ‘called to’ ones. You do not get fire insurance you are saved to a much higher purpose. Jesus loves His church! He will not tolerate our petty divisions, offenses, anger, bitterness etc. because it is not allowed in His ekklesia! Those things are ‘the wrong clothes.’
  6. Jesus is the head of the body, the church! “*And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*” (Colossians 1:18, ESV)
- D. Because the ekklesia is what it is we are not allowed to forsake it. Do not forsake the assembling together. “*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*” (Hebrews 10:25, ESV) vs. 24 provoking one another to love and good works. If we are doing this we are stirring one another to get into the fields white unto harvest.

### III. A Word To The Called

- A. The Holy Spirit is only given to the ekklesia.
1. Poured out on the whole world. Everyone has access.
  2. But He is given to those who believe.
- B. Acts 1:4. This a word to the called. “*And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*” (Acts 1:4–5, ESV)

- C. The Holy Spirit is the Gift from the Father to the called ones so that they will be successful in their mission: Make disciples of all nations...:
1. Receiving the Holy Spirit was priority to the early church!
  2. Receiving Holy Spirit was necessary to be equipped to go into the fields white for harvest.
- D. He has to be received! Welcomed! Accepted!
1. Jesus tells His disciples. “Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:39, ESV)
  2. Jesus again exhorts His disciples: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”” (Acts 1:8, ESV) You will receive power and you will be witnesses.
  3. Acts 2:38 Peters message: repent and you will receive the Holy Spirit.
  4. Acts 8:14-17 The apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria so that they would receive the Holy Spirit.
  5. Paul finds some disciples in Ephesus. Acts 19:2 He asks right away: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”
  6. God desires all of us to receive His Spirit.

**Conclusion:**

- Enter the fields empowered for souls
- Know that you have been called. The calling gives us authority to go.
- Desire to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to go.