

5/10/26

Called to Relationships

Called: Answering God's Invitation

John 4:5-42

1. Read John 4:5-9 aloud as a group. What stands out to you about the *setting* of this encounter — a Jewish rabbi, a Samaritan woman, a well at noon? What barriers to relationship is Jesus crossing simply by being there?
2. John pauses in verse 9 to tell his readers, "Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans." Where do you see comparable divisions today — places where it would be culturally surprising for two people to sit down together? What makes those divisions feel so durable?
3. The sermons noted that Jesus and the woman speak in layers: physical water, then living water; her husbands, then her deeper thirst. Read John 4:10-19. Where do you see Jesus moving the conversation deeper without shaming her? What does that pattern teach us about how to be in conversation with others?
4. Pastor Roger said, "*Real relationships aren't built on pretending — they're built on truth covered in grace.*" Where in your own relationships have you experienced truth without grace, or grace without truth? What did Jesus model that holds those two together? How might we concretely imitate him in this?
5. Pastor Nick observed that while Jesus sees this woman's broken relational history as "both in need of healing and in no way excluding her" from God's love and call, we Christians have been slow — sometimes by centuries — to learn the same. Have you ever been on the receiving end of condemnation? How can you apply Jesus' words of welcome and actions of embrace to your own life?

6. Pastor Nick named some of the world's hardest, oldest divisions, as well as some more ordinary stuck conflicts in our lives, then argued that the Jew/Samaritan and male/female divides Jesus steps into are older than all of them. What “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18) is Jesus calling you into? How will you respond to God’s call to relationship in your own relationships and in the larger world?
7. Pastor Roger named three groups likely in the room any given Sunday: those who feel unseen or unworthy, those who have experienced Jesus but stayed silent, and those God is calling to cross a relational barrier. Which group do you find yourself in this week? What is Jesus' call to you right where you are?
8. Both sermons emphasized that the woman's witness is simply, "Come and see." She doesn't have all the answers — she has a story. What gets in the way of us inviting people in that same simple way? What would it look like to share *your* story this week? Who will you invite to “come and see?” When will you make that invitation?

5/3/26

“Called to Follow”

Called: Answering God’s Invitation

Acts 9: 1-19

1. Have you ever had a moment that completely changed the direction of your life? (Describe)
2. What motivates Saul at the beginning of this passage?
3. How does Jesus interrupt Saul’s journey?
4. What stands out to you about Jesus’ words: “Why do you persecute me?”
5. What is Saul’s physical and spiritual condition after the encounter?
6. What role does Ananias play in Saul’s story?
7. What does Saul’s blindness symbolize spiritually?
8. Why would God choose someone like Saul - an enemy of the church - for such a significant mission? Wouldn’t he choose someone more church friendly?
9. In what ways might we resist God like Saul did - perhaps not outwardly, but inwardly?
10. Have you ever experienced a “Damascus Road: moment where God got your attention? What changed for you?
11. How does this story challenge our understanding of who is beyond God’s reach?
12. Who can you share your testimony with this week, just as Saul eventually did?

4/26/26

“Called and Equipped”

Called: Answering God’s Invitation

Exodus 4:1-17

1. Moses was told from childhood that God had saved him for something big — and yet by the time God speaks to him from the burning bush, he is 80 years old and living far from where he started. Have you ever carried a sense of calling that seemed to stall or get buried under the ordinary accumulation of life? How did that make you feel? Is it time to check in with God about it?
2. God seems to “de-equip” Moses before equipping him: sandals off, staff dropped, hand diseased, blood ready to spill. Pastor Nick pointed out the parallel to Phil. 2:5-8, in which the Son of God takes the form of a slave. Why do you think God works this disarming, downward way? Have you ever experienced a de-equipping phase in life through which you learned to trust God more?
3. Moses offers five separate objections to God across Exodus 3–4. Pastor Roger pointed to parallels in Jeremiah (Jer. 4:1-10), Gideon (Judges 6:11-24, 36-40), and Isaiah (Isa. 6:1-8). Why do you think objection and reluctance appear so consistently in the stories of people God calls? How do they appear in your call story?
4. God responds to Moses' "I am not good with words" not by correcting Moses' self-assessment, but by asking, "Who makes a person's mouth?" What is the difference between God saying "you're more capable than you think" and God saying "I am the one who equips"?

5. Pastor Nick noted that the signs God gives Moses — snake on the ground, disease on the skin, blood which flows in our veins — move from external and distant to increasingly internal and personal. Have you ever experienced God's call getting closer "to the bone" in your life? How do you respond?
6. Both preachers this week pointed to a God who doesn't wait for readiness. Pastor Roger posed the question: are leaders born or made? When have you been placed in a role or responsibility you didn't feel ready for? What happened?
7. The Exodus text ends not with Moses convinced ("Send someone else!"), but with God still persisting. What has surrender to God's call looked like in your experience? Is it sudden, gradual, or something else?
8. The confirmation students who joined the church this week were asked to name their spiritual gifts and how they use them. How would you answer that question? If you're unsure of your gifts, who in your life might help you name them?
9. The question of this Called series is not just "are you called?" but "what is God calling you to *right now*?" What is one specific step you could take this week — however small — in the direction of that calling? Share your answer with a Christian friend.

4/19/26

Called: Answering God's Invitation

Called to Trust

Genesis 22: 1-14

1. Where do you find it most challenging to trust God?
2. This is a difficult story. Abraham is asked to do the unthinkable: offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Is God being cruel here?
3. What can we learn about trust from the way Abraham responds?
4. Why is trust so difficult?
5. Abraham was prepared to follow through on the sacrifice of Isaac, but thankfully God stopped him before he carried it out. God, then, provided a ram caught in a thicket to be the sacrifice. How has God surprised you by providing for your needs when you wondered where the provision would come from?
6. Can God always be trusted? Can we grow in trust? How do we develop trust in God?
7. What kind of conversation do you think ensued between Abraham and Isaac? Did this develop their trust in one another? In Isaac's trust in his Father? In Isaac's trust in God?
8. If Abraham had failed to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, would God have chosen someone else to be the patriarch of promise?
9. Does God "test" us to see if we can be trusted?

4/12/26

We Are All Called

Called: Answering God's Invitation

1 Samuel 3:1-15

1. The story opens with a striking line: "The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread." Have you experienced seasons in your own life when God seemed silent or distant? What was that like, and what did you do during that time?
2. Samuel has been ministering in God's presence his whole life, yet the text says he "did not yet know the Lord." How is it possible to be active in the life of faith and still not yet know God personally? Have you experienced a difference between religious activity and genuine encounter with God?
3. Samuel mistakes God's voice for Eli's three times. Pastor Roger suggested that God speaks through the created order, through other people, through Scripture, through gentle nudges, convictions, and persistent thoughts. Which of these has been the most common way you've sensed God's direction in your life? Which feels least familiar?
4. Pastor Nick emphasized that no special calling is needed for us to love God and neighbor — we already know that command. Where in your daily life right now do you have a neighbor you already know you need to love better, without waiting for some dramatic word from God?
5. Eli eventually recognizes that God is calling Samuel and tells him how to respond. Pastor Roger noted that "nobody learns to hear God in isolation." Who has been an Eli figure in your life — someone who helped you recognize what God was doing or saying? How did their guidance shape you?

6. When Samuel finally listens, the message God gives him is hard: he must confront his own mentor. God's call, as Pastor Roger put it, "is not always comfortable, but it is always purposeful." Can you recall a time when you sensed God leading you toward something difficult — forgiving someone, speaking a hard truth, stepping into the unknown?
7. Have you ever been more in the place of Eli, the recipient of a challenging and true word? How did you feel when you came to recognize it as the word of God to you? How did you come to feel toward the messenger?
8. After receiving God's word, Samuel "lay there until morning" and "was afraid to tell the vision to Eli." What do you do with the gap between hearing something from God and acting on it? How do you handle fear or reluctance when what God seems to be asking feels costly?
9. Pastor Nick walked through a rhythm for listening to God: love God and neighbor now, listen with openness, talk back to God, listen again, begin again. Which step in that rhythm comes most naturally to you? Which one do you most need to develop?
10. This new series begins with the Easter declaration that the resurrection is not just something that happened to Jesus — it is for us. How does believing that God has defeated death change the way you hear and respond to God's call on your life? What would you risk if you truly believed it?
11. Pastor Roger closed with a prayer invitation: instead of just praying for guidance, pray "Speak, Lord. Your servant is listening." Are you willing to pray that this week? When? With whom?