

God's Personal Calling

Fred R. Coulter – March 24, 2004

Today we're living in a time when the ends of the world have come upon us, and we live in this generation. And we live in times where there are so many things going on and the prophecies that are being fulfilled are just actually being literally fulfilled before our eyes. And as I covered this morning, we don't know exactly when the time is. But, how are we to live our lives? That's the important and key thing—because we have to not be dragged down by the world. *We live in the world, but we're not part of the world.* And sometimes this is difficult. And since we still have human nature, and sin comes upon us and situations come upon us—and we tend to be overwhelmed, we're going to be confronted with problems in everything that we do going down the road. And so, we need to have the strength of Christ *in us*. Now, *Christ in us* is the "hope of glory." And that's what we need to focus on.

Let's come here to Colossians, the first chapter. Let's see how much God has done in dealing in our lives. And I think one of the most important things that we need to understand is: How is God dealing in our lives? Now, sometimes it's very easy to think of God being way out there—wherever His throne is—and we don't know how far that really is, actually.

Let's come to Colossians, the first chapter. With God's Spirit, and with God's Word, and with what God is doing, we need to understand something: *Every one of us is important to God.* We need to also understand something else: *God did not call us to a religion to be good people in the world.* Yeah, we are to be good people in the world, that's true. Yes, we are to let our lights shine. But He didn't call us for that alone. That's a by-product of what we do. He called us for the most important job that there is, that can be offered to any people, anywhere, at any time. The tremendous and profound and wonderful things that God is doing. Now, just to show you what God thinks of you, let's review just a couple of Scriptures before we get into Colossians one.

How do you come to God? John 6:44 says: "No one can come to Me [Christ] unless the Father...draws him..." Let's think on that for just a minute! Because I don't want you to feel that God is way out here and you're way down here. Now, how did you come to know what you know? How do you come to be here and part of the body of Christ? *Because God the Father drew you!* Now how important is that? That's fantastic, brethren! God has called you—and all that He has called—and He's given you of His Holy Spirit. And God the Father and Jesus Christ are involved directly in your life, every minute of the day, even though you may be working wherever you're working or doing whatever

you're doing in the daytime. God is involved in your life every day!

Now here, in Colossians 1:9: "For this cause we also, from the day that we heard of it... [that's a report that came back to Paul of the people in Colossi] ...do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [That's what God wants to be for you! Now, if you've had a difficult time studying the Bible or having Bible study, think about *God's goal for you* in that. Because you're being prepared for the greatest job that has ever been. You're being prepared for eternal life. You are being educated and taught so that you can be a very son or daughter of God.] (like it says here): ...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding... [but there's something that we need to do] ...That you may walk worthily of the Lord..." (vs 9-10).

Now, how do you 'walk worthy' to the Lord? Let's just summarize it this way:

- *you walk in faith*, because God has called us to a way of life;
- *you believe in hope*, because it's the hope of eternal life that you're here;
- *and you live in love*, as Christ said.

Those are the three things that give us the strength and the energy to do the things that are pleasing to God and walking 'worthy of the Lord.

Now, continuing: "...being fruitful in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God; Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy... [So, look at it this way: Regardless of what happens in your life—and there are going to be some tough things coming down the road as we get toward the end—that you continue with all endurance. And whatever you have to go through to suffer that's what 'long-suffering' is. And remember, since God is with you every minute of every day, He is there suffering with you when you have 'long suffering.' He is there enduring with you when you are 'enduring.' He is there helping you to give you joy and love and understanding. What God has called us to is a tremendous thing.] (v 12): ... Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified..." (vs 10-12).

We've heard in the past: 'Well, you better qualify for the Kingdom of God or you ain't gonna be there.' Well, that's true. But, who qualifies you? Yes, we have our work to do, that's true. We've got a lot of work to do. We've got to do it right. We have the things in our personal lives. We have the things in our families. We have the things with the brethren. We have our personal growing and overcoming. God has not called us to a stagnant life or a stagnant way

of life. He has called us to an exciting, powerful thing that He has called to do. Whether that is prayer—like we had here just before the services this afternoon—praying for those who are in trouble and difficulty and sickness. That is a sacrifice to God. That's important.

Now notice—He 'qualified' us for what?: "...for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light..." (v 12). Now, what is an 'inheritance'?

Come back here to Romans 8—hold your place, we'll come back to Colossians ^[transcriber's correction] 1. Now, in the course of everyone's life—because of the way that things are—our parents die, aunts and uncles die, and every once in a while you receive and inheritance. Now, that inheritance is real, isn't it? It is concrete, isn't it? What kind of inheritance are we going to have? We are going to receive a powerful inheritance, indeed! It's not going to come easy, we have things to do. We have things to go through. We have trials that we have to endure. We have things we have to overcome. We have sins we need to repent of. We've got laziness that we've got to get rid of. All of those things are true.

Let's pick it up here in Romans 8:14—here's how our lives are to be led: "For as many as are led by *the Spirit of God*... [Now, the Spirit of God isn't going to make you do it. It isn't going to pull you; it isn't going push you; it will lead you by your choices, by your desire, by your love for God—and *it will lead you*.] ...these are *the sons of God*. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the Spirit of sonship*, whereby we call out, 'Abba, Father'.... [That means that, just like I started out, it is the Father Who does the drawing. Now stop and think of it for just a minute. The great Sovereign God—God the Father—Who rules the vastness of the universe; Who sent His Son to die for you so that you so that you can live. *He Himself has called you!* You, individually! That's what's so important and profound for a great and tremendous calling. And we can call Him 'Abba, Father.' We've got children here. Your children come up, get on your knee and say, 'Daddy.' That's a good example of that.] ...The Spirit itself bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the children of God*. Now if *we are children*, *we are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*..." (vs 14-17). What did Christ inherit?

Hold your place, let's go to Hebrews, the first chapter. We'll come back to Romans 8—and I hope you don't run out of fingers here. So brethren, this is a joint project by God the Father and Jesus Christ to deal in your life directly. Maybe this will help get rid of some of the lacadasicalness, because what is true is this: No minister can beat sin out of anybody, or preach it out of anybody. But, through the sacrifice of Christ, the power of God's Holy Spirit and the vision—because it says: 'Where there is no vision the people perish'—and the vision not meaning that you see like a moving picture, but you have a focus on what God is doing in your life, and

why God is doing it.

Hebrews 1:1: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by *His Son*, Whom He has appointed heir of all things..." (vs 1-2). Now, what does 'all things' mean? *The universe!* God doesn't do things for nothing. He didn't create the universe out there that it isn't going to be used. No, *He created it to use it!* Now, let's just give another example. If you own a piece of property that's yours, isn't it? You put in your will: when I die I want to give it to so-and-so. When you die they inherit the property and it becomes theirs. Now, let's apply the same thing here. Jesus Christ is the Heir of ALL things. And we'll see where that puts us. Is the universe a physical thing out there that can be seen—just like if you own land, you can stand on it? *Yes!* That's what He's inherited. Now notice: "...by Whom also He made the worlds... [And He made it *for the very purpose of calling us*. Think on that!] ...Who, being *the brightness of His glory and the exact image of His person*, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the right hand of the Majesty on high*; Having been made so much greater than *any of the angels*, inasmuch as He has inherited a name exceedingly superior to them" (vs 2-4). Because He never called any of them His sons, or begotten by Him.

Now, let's come back to Romans 8, and let's complete part of the picture here. We just read it there, v 16: "...that we are *the children of God*. Now if *we are children*, *we are* also heirs—truly, heirs of God *and joint heirs with Christ*... [who what? *Who inherited 'all things*. You have a real, joint inheritance coming. That's why when He says, 'to those who overcome' and are 'into the joy of the Lord'...] (Now, notice there's another catch that comes with it): ...—if indeed we suffer together with Him... [So there are going to be times when we are going to suffer. But how do we get through these times of sufferings and difficulties. Now, I'm not going to ask anybody to raise their hands if you have never had a trial. Because I don't think anybody's hand would be raise—we all have them. I have mine, you have yours—and God gives that to us, because God wants to know what is in our hearts. Are we going to trust Him in everything? Or, are we going to be like the 'seed sown by the way' or 'sown into the thorns and thistles' that we give up. No!] (Now notice what happens here if we suffer together with Him, because there is a reward for that): ...so that we may also be glorified together with Him" (vs 16-17).

Now, let's just think about this for just a minute. We'll go one more verse here, v 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us." Now, they, just recently, perfected the technology where they can take almost 3-D pictures of babies in the womb. How many have

seen that on the news? Some of you did—fantastic, isn't it? And they found that at 12-weeks old, these babies are moving their arms or moving their legs or practicing walking; they're opening their mouths or opening their eyes; they're smiling; they're reacting if they hear noise because it comes right through the mother's abdomen and right into the embryonic fluid, which then transmits the sound to their ears. So they hear! So here's this new life. At eight weeks the baby is fully developed, but you see, we've never thought of it this way. After a life has been conceived, that life has its first existence in its mother's womb. And it grows to a certain point. In this life, in the womb, it's not able to see, it can hear a little bit, but it practices all the basic things it will need when it's born into the world—to begin to live—sucks its thumb and so forth, so it gets a little practice for nursing.

Now, when the baby is born it's quite an event, and here comes a brand new life, that it has to take its first breath. The first thing that it must do is breathe and it's never done it before. So likewise, when we are resurrected. Now the baby is born, it breathes, has to be fed—all the things that go along with living. And you can see how temporary human life is. And isn't it amazing how much vanity we all have in spite of the fact that we could die in just a snap of a finger. Then God calls us and opens up our mind, gives us His Spirit, puts the very seed of begetting in our minds, in the spirit of our minds, to become then the begotten children of God, yet to be born at the resurrection. And this is what it's talking about here, that we can be glorified together with Him. Now when we are born again at the resurrection, we are going to be different and we are going to do things for the first time that we have never done—just like when we were born from our mother's womb, *whala!* we did things we never did before.

So you might say that there are the three categories of your life:

1. In the womb,
2. in the world
3. and born again into the Kingdom of God.

Amazing thing, isn't it?

So we're going to have to suffer some things. As we look down the road and see how this world is really going, excuse the expression: "to hell in a hand-basket"—which it really is. There's going to be a lot of suffering, and there's going to come a time when we're going to be despised. And there's going to come a time when we won't have the time to study, to pray, to overcome like we do now—which gives it a far higher priority, when we understand it, than perhaps we've even thought of. "...[They] *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us." So you see, Paul is writing here *so that they will be inspired*:

- the *desire* to overcome;
- the *desire* to repent;
- the *desire* to love God;

- the *desire* to change;
- the *desire* to be in the Kingdom of God.

Now, if you have that then you won't ever have to worry about being zealous or not.

Let's come back to Colossians, the first chapter. So what I want you to do today, with what I'm going to bring this afternoon is: ***I want you stir up the Spirit of God in you for that desire.*** I want you to see, in your mind's eye, as it were, that

- God Himself is personally dealing with you;
- God is helping you;
- God has given His Spirit to you;
- God loves you;
- Christ loves you

and wants you to change and grow and overcome to receive the greatest blessings that you could possibly receive.

Now let's come back here to Colossians 1:13: "Who has personally rescued us... [Now, as I mentioned in the *All About the New Testament*, there is a special verb in the Greek which is called 'the middle voice verb.' And we're going to see this again in Ephesians, the first chapter. But this means that the subject *God* is also the final recipient of the action; so it could be translated *himself* or *personally*. So I translated it here]: "Who has personally rescued us from the power of darkness... [Have you ever thought of that? Why are you here and not there? *Because God Himself has 'personally rescued you from the power of darkness.'*] ...and has transferred *us* unto the kingdom of the Son of His love." in other words, we are all under the jurisdiction of Jesus Christ and subject to the Kingdom of God, though the Kingdom of God is not here because the Kingdom of God is not of this world. It is to come! But we're going to be a part of that.

Now, let's come down here to v 26: *Even* the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints; To whom ***God did will...*** [Anything that you understand is ***by the will of God.***] ...to make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory..." That's why Christ is in us. Not only are we going to share the inheritance with Him at the resurrection, but He is in us now. And we are, as Paul says in 1-Cor. 3, we are a temple of God. God wants to live and dwell in His people at this point right now. That's His whole purpose.

Now let's come to 2-Corinthians 6:14. Just like we covered this morning, we are not to love the world; we live in it, we're not of it, and so forth. "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.... [So there are things we have to watch out for; there are things we have to do: we have to live our lives correctly and so forth.] ...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ

have with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*... [And you could also say, ‘enjoy with them and suffer with them.’ And as it says a little later on, ‘and sup with them.’ God the Father has called us, through Jesus Christ, to a personal, fellowship relationship with Him: through study, through prayer, through living and walking in God’s way. That’s a tremendous thing! And in that, God is with us every minute of every day in everything that we do. Now that’s a tremendous thing when you understand that.] ...I will dwell in them and walk in *them* and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.... [So God says of the world]: ...Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord, ‘and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; And I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (vs 14-18).

That’s why God called you—God loves you; God desires you. He didn’t call the rich, didn’t call the mighty, didn’t call the great, didn’t call the famous—He called you and me for a great and tremendous purpose far and beyond anything that the world could ever think of. Because it hasn’t ever entered into their minds, or they have never even thought of it. But, it has to be through God’s Spirit that we understand it.

Now let’s come to Ephesians, the first chapter, and let’s see what we need to do here. If there’s any one thing I want you to remember from this message, which is this—because I know, as I’ve experienced in my life—many times you’re going to come to a trial where you’re walking through your “valley of death.” Whether it be because of sickness; whether it be because loss of a loved one; whether it be because of loss of job; whether it be... whatever the circumstances may be. And there are going to be times when you’re going to have to come to God and understand that without God there is nothing. And He’s going to bring each and every one of us to the point that we are going to totally trust in Him for everything. And if I could say, that’s a summary of every trial and difficulty that comes along—that’s the whole purpose in it. Because then, just like the little baby in the womb is practicing to walk and to suck its thumb, so likewise when we are living in this world and the trials and difficulties we go through, we are learning ***to walk with Christ, to trust in that faith, to believe in that hope and to live in love.*** That’s how we learn.

Now, let’s come to Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ...”

- Is it not a heavenly thing that God the Father has called each one of us?
- Is it not a heavenly thing to receive the Spirit of God?

- Is it not a heavenly thing to understand the Word of God?—which God gives us, because only He can give us the understanding? *Yes it is!*

Now notice v 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself... [That’s an awesome statement, isn’t it? So when you get down to the bottom of your ‘valley of death’ that you have to walk through, ask God for the strength and power and Spirit to help you. Because ***He has personally chosen you for Himself.*** I don’t know about you, but that overwhelms me! But that’s how great and fantastic and vast that the promises of God are.] ... before *the* foundation of *the* world... [That’s His plan that He had before the foundation of the world.] ...***in order that we might be holy***... [Now think about that! God is Holy, right? *Yes!* And like He says in Lev. and Peter wrote in 1-Peter 1, ‘be Holy because I am Holy.’] ...That we might be holy and blameless... [because you’re in a relationship of grace and mercy and kindness] ...and blameless before Him in love; Having predestinated us...” (vs 4-5). This is our predestination: this is why God has called us. Just like when a new life is conceived in the womb, it is predestined—that if everything goes the way it should—to be born in 9 months as a son or daughter of that mother and father.

Now when you’re waiting for the child to be born you’re all anxious, you’re all preparing, everything has to be just right. And when the time comes—I remember when Richelle was born, my mom and Delores and I and the three boys, we were down at Salt Shaker in South Pasadena and we’re sitting there eating, and Delores says, “Ut Oh, I’m going to have it.” And here we just got served. And we said, “Oh no, this can’t be.” So we all started eating like horses that never had had any hay. We got out of there and we had a mid-wife deliver the baby. We got home and the mid-wife got there and within two minutes Richelle was born. And my mom was right there and she said, “It’s a girl! It’s a girl!”

Now look, let’s understand something: don’t you think there’s going to be joy in heaven by God the Father and Jesus Christ and all the angels when the resurrection takes place?! *Yes, indeed, without a doubt!* “Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, ***according to the good pleasure of His own will.***... [That’s how much God is involved in our lives. I tell you what: I don’t think that you will—once you really grasp this—ever have an excuse for not praying or studying or trying and overcoming. God will bless you that much more.] (Now notice what this is do—v 6): ... *To the praise of the glory of His grace*... [that’s why we have the grace of God. That’s why we live under His grace.] ...wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence... [and furthermore, God has taken you into His confidence. And He has revealed to you

what the world does not know.] (It says right here): ...Having made known to us the mystery of His own will... [The Family of God.] ...according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself; That in *the divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; Yes, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestinated according to His purpose, Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will; That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ..." (vs 5-12). The purpose of God—when you understand it with His Spirit—

- is to *inspire* you to love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being.
- And to *inspire* to love your neighbor as yourself.
- and the brethren as Christ has loved us.
- And to *inspire* us to desire, with ever fiber in our being, *to be in His Kingdom*.

That's why God has called us. That's why we do the things that we do.

Now let's come to Ephesians 3—and this is my favorite part of the Bible. It has more to it; it tells more of the plan of God than anything else, right here. As we go through this, let's just let the words sink in. Verse 11: "According to *His* eternal purpose, which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, In Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith. So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for* your glory. For this cause... [This is how Paul looked at the problems and difficulties in his life. This is how we need to look at the problems and difficulties which are coming on the world—and we're going to be confronted with just like we have never, ever, ever expected. So keep this in mind.] ...For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named... [And you have a new name coming.] ...That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *And* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [That is of God's plan. And then after we're born into the Kingdom of God at the resurrection, to go on from there for all eternity!] ...And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**" (vs 11–19).

- That's your purpose.
- That's your calling.
- That's your inheritance.

- And may that inspire you
- and give you vision
- and hope
- and understanding
- so that you can **walk in faith, believe in hope and live in love.**

Now, we'll conclude here, v 20: ...Now to Him Who is able... [and that means *to have the power*] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 20-21).

Brethren, God is directly and personally involved with you and in you and loves you, has a purpose for you. And all that He called. Always keep that focus and vision in mind.

Scripture references:

- 1) John 6:44
- 2) Colossians 1:9-12
- 3) Romans 8:14-17
- 4) Hebrews 1:1-2
- 5) Romans 8:16-18
- 6) Colossians 1:13, 26
- 7) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 8) Ephesians 1:3-12
- 9) Ephesians 3:11-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 3
- Leviticus
- 1 Peter 1

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