You are Unique

In the first verse of our New Testament reading Paul gives us an amazing exhortation to lead a life worthy of the calling which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit with the bond of peace. And I want to focus for a moment on living a life worthy of the calling which you have been called.

For those not familiar with Paul, he was a walking persecutor of the church. In fact, the first time we meet Paul in the book of acts he is present at the stoning of Stephen receiving the coats of the men who are going to murder Stephen. When he is on the road to Damascus and encounters Jesus, he is on his way to persecute more Christians. In fact, listen to what the Bible says “Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2**and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

**3**As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. **4**Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?””

Could you imagine that experience, you are a fanatic for God believing you are doing the right thing and all of a sudden Jesus pops up right before you and confronts you. Wow.

Lets listen to the rest of the story.

And Paul said, “Who are You, Lord?”

Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

**6**So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?”

Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

And eventually he meets up with Annias who has a message from Jesus about the calling on Paul’s life. Because he is no longer going to be a persecutor of the church, he is going to be a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%209&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27232c)] of Israel. **16**For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” Says the Lord.

Paul receives a calling on his life. It is a calling that no other person can undertake because he has the experiences, knowledge, and abilities that make him the person for this job. And what might that be?

1) He was trained under **Gamaliel** who is recognized as a Pharisee doctor of Jewish Law. Gamaliel was a man held in great esteem by all Jews and as the Jewish law teacher of Paul.

2) Paul was not just a Jewish man, Paul was also a Roman citizen giving him insight into the world around Jerusalem that most of the other disciples would not have.

3) Paul was well educated while most of the disciples were not, this allows him to communicate in a way that is transferable. It allows him to go to places and understand their beliefs and then be able to tell them about the one true God.

4) If a persecutor of the church were to become an expander of the church, that would be a great witness.

These and many other things positioned Paul to be uniquely in his position and uniquely qualified for the ministry to the Gentiles. And Paul lived a life worthy of the Gospel by living into that calling. And just as Paul was unique, and had a specific calling on his life, so to God has created you and your experiences make you uniquely qualified for the calling on your life.

Just think about who you are. All of your experiences. All of your strengths. All of your growth edges. All of your ups. All of your downs. All of your successes. All of your struggles. All of your characteristics. All of your mannerisms. All of your likes and dislikes. They all make you uniquely you.

**Human beings - we’re made up of a lot of the same biological stuff but we don’t all look alike, do we?**

The same goes for two daisies growing side-by-side or apples growing from the same tree. They may look alike, but examine them more closely and they’re different, each with that little spark of individuality that God created us with.

We are like snowflakes. Snowflakes are renowned for their uniqueness. No matter how many billions of them fall from the sky, there are never two the same.

In my research this is what I learned. As each snowflake falls, it encounters water vapor in the atmosphere. This has a big effect on its shape and why each one is unique

* If humidity is low, there isn’t as much water vapor in the atmosphere so the snowflakes form something called 'plates', the flat hexagonal shapes you see if you look at them under a microscope.
* If humidity is high, with more water vapor in the atmosphere, something called branching happens. Here the molecules form straight lines (dendrites) which branch out in different directions, creating the star-like patterns we tend to see on Christmas decorations. High humidity also creates bigger flakes, as there’s more vapor for the flakes to fall through.

What this means is, a snowflake’s shape evolves as it journeys through the air, no two will ever be the same. Even two flakes floating side by side will each be blown through different levels of humidity and vapor to create a shape that is truly unique.

You see, its not only that God creates you unique in the womb, its not just your dna that makes you unique. It is everything. Everything that you encounter on your proverbial fall to the ground that creates you even more unique.

And then throw on top of that what Paul says in verse 7, that each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. We are also all given grace that is similar to everyone in that it comes from Christ, and it is also unique because we are all given our own serving of that grace.

Yes, as no humans are alike, even if you are an identical twin, the experiences in life will make us unique and the grace given to us by God will further to make us unique because we are all individual and God gives us a calling based on our uniqueness, based on our individuality.

The issue that we run up against in our daily lives is that the world does not always seem like it embraces our uniqueness and individuality. We are constantly told to conform to the dominant culture. Conform to democrat beliefs, conform to republican beliefs, conform to this wardrobe, conform to these kinds of haircuts, conform to this way of thinking, conform to these roles in society, conform to our denominational beliefs, conform to this team or that team, conform, conform, conform.

And it starts at a young age. It is instilled as we are children, anyone who looks different and does things differently get made fun of. Don’t like sports and are into arts, get made fun of. Have a disability, get made fun of. Don’t have the same outfit and shoes, get made fun of. And it just transforms over time. And yet the biblical response is to embrace who you are. Embrace who God has created you to be.

We don’t conform to the world, we conform to Christ who in turn sets us free from the burdens the world tries to place on us.

And so as we desire to live a life worthy of the Gospel and the grace that God has bestowed on us through Jesus, we are called to discover and live into our calling. And the only way to do this is to as Paul says, “no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.” When we remain children it is easier for us to fall for the tricks of the enemy and of this world. Because that is what Satan wants. The enemy wants us to never reach our potential and never fulfill our calling because when this happens we never lead people to the bread of life, Jesus the Christ. And when people are not led to Christ they are led to the enemy who is only here to steal, kill, and destroy.

When Jesus says that I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty, it is a declaration not just about who he is, its also about what he provides. The longing to fit in and feel special will never be fed and quenched outside of Jesus. It is in Jesus that we are fed with the bread of heaven, and drink from the well that never runs dry. And that heavenly food fills us up to satisfaction if we let it. And when we are full to satisfaction, we are able to then focus on our calling and lead people to Jesus to experience exactly what we have. To be able to embrace their uniqueness too.

This is why it is important to embrace our uniqueness, embrace our gifts, embrace what makes you, you, and lean into the calling that God has on your life by growing in the faith and learning about God and your identity in Christ. And as you dig deep into the faith you will uncover your calling to allow you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called and hear those beautiful words, well done good and faithful servant.

And so my message is to embrace your uniqueness, embrace your individuality, embrace who you are as God embraces you, and see where it takes you.