

When It Pleased God

Today's message entitled, "When It Pleased God."

Our text verse comes from Paul's letter to the Galatian church when he states in chapter 1, verses 15 and 16:

Galatians 1:15-16 (KJV)

¹⁵ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace, ¹⁶ To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

There're several different ways of attaching meaning or understanding these verses. Today I'd like to share my understanding according to sentence structure, word definitions, and (most importantly) context.

We have five individual thoughts sown together in a somewhat scattered way. So let me itemize each of them; separate them, to make them more easily seen, and in order of occurrence in the life of Paul:

1. "...God, Who separated me from my mother's womb..."
2. "...and called *me* by His grace..."
3. "But when it pleased God to reveal His Son in me..."
4. "...that I might preach Him (and that pronoun "Him" is Jesus, the Son) that I might preach Him among the heathen..."
5. "...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:"

Paul is sharing a series of events in his life; a series of events that were in step with the will and plan of God.

- Firstly, Paul makes the statement that from the time of his birth, he began a journey in accordance with the joyful intention of God, without even having a clear understanding of the goal.
- Secondly, Paul acknowledges his calling into the "faith" by the grace of God; this event taking place on the road to Damascus and in line with Eph 2:8 that

reads: “⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:”

- Thirdly, he draws attention to the point in time when God was “pleased” to begin to reveal to Paul the reality and truth of being immersed into Jesus, His Son, which took place at the time of Paul’s “new birth.”
- Fourthly, Paul addresses the fact of being sent to preach Jesus to the Gentiles
- And fifthly, Paul identifies the source of this revelation process as being from the Spirit of God when he states that he did not immediately seek guidance or instruction from any man.

Now let’s look at this: “...when it pleased God...” is a phrase that needs some understanding. The placement of the phrase in the beginning of the text verses renders the understanding such that there was a particular time in which God was “pleased” to reveal to Paul the full meaning of His Son (Jesus) residing within him. In this case it not only indicates a specific time, but indicates that after a certain event, it was God's pleasure to begin revealing what the indwelling of Jesus the Christ actually meant in the life of Paul; and therefore, subsequently in the life of anyone who believes.

The unspoken, but assumed point in which God was pleased to reveal His Son in Paul was after Paul's acknowledgement of Jesus as savior and Christ, beginning with his experience on the road to Damascus, and culminating when Ananias came and prayed with him. This was the point at which God was pleased and in complete approval of pouring Himself into Paul and commissioning Paul to preach to the Gentiles.

Now let me bring this reality into the present. Yes Paul was separated from birth to fulfill this call of God, just as in the same way God has a blue print for each person born into the world today. The good news of God states in 2 Peter 3:9

“⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering (or patient) toward us, not willing (“not willing” I repeat with emphasis) that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Then we read in Col 1:27 the secret that Paul has been commissioned by God to make known to the world: "...Christ in you, the hope of glory;" which he further explains in Gal 2:20 when he writes:

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Let me give you a paraphrased version of this truth:

"I have been, and remain crucified with the Messiah even though I still live; but now it is not I who lives, but the Messiah Himself lives within me. Not only does He live within me, but now I am living as a human being by the very faith of the Son of God, who loves me and surrendered Himself to the demands of the Law for me and for my justification."

The bible states in the book of Hebrews that "Without faith it's impossible to please God." Well I have good news. If you are a believer today, born from above, then you please God. You are not only immersed into the Son, but you are also immersed into His faith. It's the whole, complete, and perfect faith of Jesus that holds the new covenant together. Therefore it is by HIS faith that we are able to live in and be part of the life that's provided by grace, and through HIS faith, when we believe.

Our place in the kingdom of God is secure. Our call to extend the kingdom to the world is reserved and upheld by His faith. Allow the revelation of His goodness to flow and watch as His faith expands and extends His kingdom. The time is now and He is pleased to continuously reveal His Son in and through you. Have a blessed day!