

The Call to Fruitfulness

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon emphasizes the unique call to fruitfulness that each believer has in God's kingdom, built upon the foundation of faith, following, and faithfulness.

Duration: 37:44

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Galatians 1:15-19

Topics: "Christian Discipleship", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the call of God as outlined in the book of Romans. Over the course of four weeks, the speaker covers four themes: the call to faith, the call to follow, the call to faithfulness, and the call to fruitfulness. The speaker expresses regret that the messages couldn't be delivered in a seminar or conference format for a more comprehensive understanding. The sermon emphasizes the importance of responding to the call to faith, following Jesus, being faithful in one's current circumstances, and ultimately experiencing the call to fruitfulness.

Transcript

Over the last four weeks, we've been doing a topical study suggested by some themes from the Book of Romans, which emphasizes in such a wonderful way the call of God. The outline of the last four weeks was really suggested to me by a man named Bob Shank. I modified it a bit and sort of made it my own, but I think this is a great pattern for us to focus on here.

We've talked over the last four weeks about those four things, the call to faith, the call to follow, the call to faithfulness, and now this morning, the call to fruitfulness. And as we look at these things together from Galatians chapter one, I have a little bit of regret. And that little bit of regret this morning is really based on that idea that it would have been most beneficial, I think, if we could have all done this together in sort of a seminar or a conference where we could have four messages, one right after another with lots of coffee and all of that, of course, to keep us going through it all.

Because I want you to grab ahold of very strongly of how each one of these four tied together. Our Christian life begins with the call to faith. It continues on then with the call that God gives us to follow him.

Then there's the call to faithfulness in every area of our life before him. But then there's the call to fruitfulness. And this morning, that's what we're going to take a look at again.

So I want to call your attention to Galatians chapter one, verses 15 through 24. And our subject this morning is the call to fruitfulness. And we're going to take a look at what Paul says about that call here in Galatians.

When we're talking about the call to fruitfulness from the scriptures, we have an embarrassment of riches. There's so many passages that we could turn to to focus in on this idea. And I've selected this passage from Galatians chapter one for this morning, starting at verse 15.

Paul writes. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his grace to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. But I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus.

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained with him 15 days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. Now, concerning the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.

Afterward, I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ. But they were hearing only he who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy. And they glorified God in me.

There was only one apostle Paul. Nobody has walked the earth since. With the kind of ministry and the kind of power and the kind of work of God done through him, there have been many marvelous men and women of God, but I think you'd have to be there's only one apostles, Paul.

By the same token, there's only one of you, you know, if you were to look at your hand right now and look at your fingerprints, that would tell you something right there. Your fingerprints are completely unique. They belong to you and you alone.

God hasn't made them after the pattern of anyone else's. And think about that for a moment. Why? Why did God do that? Surely it's more than just to give the FBI a way to identify people.

God did it because he wants you to know something. He wants you to know that he regards you as a unique individual, that you have a unique and special place in God's kingdom plan. The four aspects of calling that we've taken a look at over the last weeks, each one of the first three are common to all of us, the call to faith for you and for me is the same.

The call to follow Jesus Christ, have a personal relationship with him where we love him and relate to him and are really followers of Jesus. That's the same to you as it is to me. The call to faithfulness, it's the same.

Your call to be a husband that glorifies God isn't any different than my call or your call to be an employee or employer. It's just the same for all of us. The first three calls are general and come the same way to each one of us.

The fourth aspect of calling is different. The call to fruitfulness is unique for you. God has a special and unique role for you to play in his kingdom.

And in a sense, that's why the call to fruitfulness can't be taught from the pulpit. The call to faith can I can call you to faith because it's a common faith that the call to to follow Jesus, it's the same for us all the same with faithfulness. But the call to fruitfulness, that that special, unique place that you have in God's kingdom, I can't teach you that.

I can encourage you to seek it, I can teach you about it, but I can't teach it to you. That's between you and God alone. It really follows in the course of how God does ministry in the church, though.

Are you familiar with that great passage in Ephesians, chapter four, where Paul talks about how the Lord has given gifted offices to the church for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry? Well, the call to faith is when you first come into the Christian life. But the call to follow Jesus and the call to faithfulness, that's the equipping of the saints. Why? So that you can come into your call to fruitfulness.

That's the work of the ministry that God has called you to. And when I say work of the ministry, I don't mean standing behind a pulpit and preaching. Let's get that idea out of our mind completely.

Many sincere people have ventured forth into pastoral ministry who have no business being there, but they did it out of a good heart because they figured, well, if I want to serve the Lord, I guess I should be a pastor. No, no, not at all, not necessarily. Is that the place where God has called you? Maybe yes, maybe no.

But you see the point. God has a unique call for you. And my call isn't any better than your call.

It may be different, but it's no better. Friends, I don't want anybody to think for a moment that pastors are somehow closer to God than anybody else. I have my place and my call to fulfill in the work that God's given me, but so do you.

And as you fulfill your place and I fulfill my place, then the work of God is done gloriously. But I do need to emphasize that we've come to the call to fruitfulness fourth in the series, because even though I can't teach you it from the pulpit, the call to fruitfulness can only be lived out in the Christian life as your life is solidly built on the bedrock of the first three aspects of calling. I can't emphasize it enough.

You can't skip over the first three and rush right to the fourth. Sometimes you're tempted to do that. Because in a way, isn't there something more engaging about the thing that's individual to us and that's more exciting? Yeah, let's get right to that because there's no wait a minute.

First, you need to respond to the call to faith. Then you need to fulfill the call to follow Jesus and have a real relationship with him. And then you need to be faithful in the things where God has put you right now.

Then God opens up to you this glorious call to fruitfulness. It's a great example of this tendency to skip over things. It's really in the book of Philemon in the New Testament.

You ever seen that book Philemon? You wonder what's that book about one chapter long. It seems kind of obscure. Philemon sounds more like something you'd order at a seafood restaurant than a book of the Bible.

But the book of Philemon is absolutely fascinating. In Philemon, Philemon was a man who owned a slave and the slave's name was Anisimus. And Philemon was a believer who knew the apostle Paul.

And Anisimus, when Paul first met him, wasn't a believer. And then one day while Paul was imprisoned in Rome, Anisimus, the slave, escaped from Philemon, his master. And Anisimus, of course, took him all different places.

And he ended up in Rome and he bumped into the apostle Paul and Paul led him to faith in Jesus Christ. Now, Anisimus wanted to help Paul. He wanted to serve.

I said, I want to be in the ministry. I want that ministry of serving you, Paul. And instead of saying, well, that's great.

You don't forget about your master. Paul knew something. He said, no, Anisimus, you have to be faithful to this calling that God has put you.

I'm called as a slave. Paul would say, yes, you escape from your master. You're a runaway slave before you can fulfill this ministry of fruitfulness.

You need to go back and take care of your faithfulness and the calling that God puts you first. And so Anisimus did that. But fortunately, Paul wrote him a letter to take back.

And in the letter, Paul said, why don't you let Anisimus come back and help me? You see, it was important for Anisimus to be faithful in where God had called him. Then he could really move on to fruitfulness. Friends, you see your call to fruitfulness, though, it's so important for you to grab a hold of it, that that it's unique unto you.

You are no accident. Who you are by birth is no accident. You know, you were born a certain way, you're wired a certain way in your head.

Certain things appeal to you and certain things don't appeal to you. You have strengths and weaknesses. You're a certain size, you're a certain disposition mentally and physically and all the rest.

That's no accident. God knew what he was doing when he made you that way. It may be a source of irritation to others the way you were born, but but it's no accident before God, God knows how he made you in that secret place before him.

And friends, I want you to understand that who you are by birth is an important aspect to your fruitfulness before God. Who you are by your upbringing and environment, that's also important. Why did I have the childhood I had, why couldn't I have the childhood of this other person? They seem to have it a lot better.

Or maybe you had a great childhood. Well, why me? Why should I be privileged to have this great childhood? Other people I know had a terrible time. Why me? God uses it in your call to fruitfulness.

Who you are by training and experience all plays a role in it. God has brought you to who you are right now by birth, by upbringing, by environment, by training, by experience. And he's done it all because he has a place in his kingdom for you to fulfill.

And these are not accidents in your life. Now, let me say one other thing before we we take another look at Galatians chapter one, when I talk about your place in God's kingdom, I'm not necessarily talking about church work, your place in God's kingdom may come to its greatest fruitfulness at your job site. Where you regard your job is not just something that you need to work at and be faithful because that's your common call, but God gives you a unique role of influence and leadership there to be a shining light for God's

kingdom at your workplace.

Or perhaps it's in your home or perhaps it's another place. I just want to let you know that this call to fruitfulness oftentimes shows itself in church work, so to speak, but not necessarily. The important thing is for you to step up to the plate and answer the call to fruitfulness that God gives you.

Let's take a look at how this all worked in Paul's life. And as we talk about this, let's realize a few things that I'm going to talk about how the call to fruitfulness was shown in Paul's life. I'm going to talk about how it's evident and shown by the same analogy in my life, not because my life or my call is anything better or more interesting than anybody else's, but it's certainly one that I know firsthand and that I can talk about before you.

And then I'll talk about you and how it applies to your life. First of all, I want you to see that Paul's call to fruitfulness was evident to himself. It was evident.

He knew it. Paul didn't walk around wondering if he was really an apostle or not, if God had really called him to this place in his kingdom. Paul knew it.

And he says it time and time again. And I'm not trying to say that there might not have been moments that Paul didn't doubt this, or I'm not trying to say either that Paul came to this understanding immediately. But Paul came to the place where he knew it.

His call to fruitfulness was evident to himself. And what a liberating thing that is to know that God has a real place for you in his kingdom, in his plan, and that this is my place and I want to fulfill it for your glory, God. You may not be at that place yet.

It may not be evident to you. Maybe God's trying to make it evident and you're not listening. Maybe God will make it evident just in the course of things down the road.

But I think God wants every one of us at least eventually to come to the place where we have a real sense of where he wants us in his kingdom. I have to say that my place in his plan, at least in the broad outline, is evident to me. I know that God has called me to teach and to love and to lead his people.

I know that. I don't have any doubt about it. I know that I'll be doing that the rest of my life, whether or not it's my employment doesn't really matter whether it's in a small setting or a big setting.

It doesn't really matter. I know that this is what God has called me to do. It's what God has called me to be in the sense of fulfilling this call to fruitfulness.

But the other aspect about this or the next aspect, I should say, is also very important that, though it was evident to Paul, Paul's call to fruitfulness wasn't something that he took to himself. Did you notice that in verse 15? But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through his grace, it just wasn't Paul's idea. Paul didn't say, well, you know, they've got some openings for the position of apostle.

I think I'll apply. It wasn't at Paul's initiation. This was something that God was working in Paul even before he was ever born, even before Paul was ever aware of it.

God was working this in him. This wasn't something that Paul took to himself. You know, it's important that your call to fruitfulness be the same way, too, that it's not something that you manufacture for yourself, it's

something that God has appointed for you and your task and my task is to sort of discover it.

He has a place for you, you don't take it to yourself, he opens it up to you and then you need to walk into it. If there's anything I know about the calling that God has given me. That I haven't taken it to myself.

When I was saved as a young man, as 13 years old. And when I sat there at a in Riverside and listened to Greg Laurie week after week. And as I grew and developed depth in my walk in the Lord, in really a glorious first few years as a Christian, I never thought I'd be a pastor.

I didn't look at Pastor Greg and say, that's what I want to do. But I didn't just think that was there, just never even in my mind, I was just growing up and loving Jesus. But, you know, even before I ever started teaching at all, even before I ever taught a single Bible study, I believe.

I was at a retreat one time and and it wasn't a formal church retreat. It was really a time when a bunch of friends just got away and got away at a house to seek the Lord over a weekend. And on the last day of the retreat, we gathered together in the big room and and we did something that I think everybody should experience a lot in their life where we just prayed for each other.

The way that we would pray for each other is we'd we'd have a circle of chairs and we'd put one chair in the middle, the hot seat. And everybody took turns one by one in the hot seat and we just lay hands on and pray for them. It's glorious, isn't it? I mean, if you've never experienced something that simple, then then arrange it.

Invite people over to your house for dinner and make them do it before they leave that night, just pray for me. But in that time of prayer, his hands were laid on me, people were praying. It's just a nice, wonderful prayer.

It's God. God gave a word of prophecy to somebody there. And the details of that, I would feel too awkward to share with you, but but just to say that it was a clear calling.

A clear word from the Lord that he had a purpose and a direction for my life, something that I hadn't planned or anticipated, that this was just God's promise that he was going to do it was my calling. After that retreat and after that word. I think I did the right thing with it.

I pretty much forgot about it. Not that I forgot it happened, but for some reason. And it was really beyond my years and understanding of this.

I just knew that it wasn't up to me to make it happen. There were OK, well, God, I've got to go out and just make this happen. God gave me an attitude very early on in that that, well, you know, if this is God's word, then he'll fulfill it and I can just let him do this.

And then not very long after that. When I was 16 years old, the pastor of the small church that I was going to, a small Calvary Chapel in Ventura, he asked me if I wanted to start teaching a home Bible study. Well, sure, OK.

And I just started doing it. And pretty much week in, week out, I've been teaching the Bible ever since. I know from all of that that it's not something that I took to myself.

That it wasn't something I decided on on career day. But there was something that the Lord led me into. Let's think about the next point here.

It's that Paul's call to fruitfulness was both expected and unexpected. Both of those things were in there. In other words, if you took a look at Paul, you'd say, well, of course God would call him for such a place of leadership and apostleship.

The man's brilliant. He knows all these languages. He has this education.

He knows all these things. He'd say, of course he would. On the other hand, you would look at it and you would say, this is completely unexpected.

This man hates Christians. He hates Gentiles. And what did God call him to be and to do? Look at in verse 16, to reveal his son in me that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

That's crazy. So there's an aspect to us that's both expected and unexpected. And friends, this is how it'll work out in your call to fruitfulness.

There will be aspects of your call to fruitfulness as it develops and is evident in your life that you'll say, well, of course. I mean, this is me. This is what God has made me.

I could see how he prepared me for this before I was ever born. There'll be other aspects to your call to fruitfulness that no one could ever figure out ahead of time. You're like, wow, how would that happen? That's how it'll work in your life.

I know that's how it's worked in my life. I mean, you would expect that if God has called me to to teach and to love and to lead his people. Well, that's that's what he would be doing.

But, you know, pretty early on in ministry, God also sort of made it clear to my own heart, to my own mind that I would have a ministry of writing, that writing would just be part of my ministry. Well, and I thought I knew how that would happen. Well, I'd write books and publishers would publish them.

And so, you know, I would have a ministry writing. Well, praise the Lord. And so I prepared a book.

It was it was about grace. And I, you know, I was real happy, excited about it. And of course, you have people read it and review it.

And it's great. And so I sent it out to publishers all over the place. And they weren't as enthusiastic about it as I was.

And so, you know, I put it on the shelf for a couple of years and I said, well, no big deal. You know, and so I reworked it and I improved it a lot. And man, this is this is much, much better.

And so I sent it out to publishers again. I'd even had an editor, a famous editor in the Christian publishing. Well, he read and goes, this is great.

Man, this this is really good. And I'm going to recommend it to to the publisher that I work with most closely. I'm like, yes, thank you, Lord.

This is the end that I've been needing. And well, the publishers just weren't all that enthusiastic about it. And so I I kept a file of rejection letters for a long time just to just to have them there.

I think I threw them away not too long ago. And so, you know, no worry. I mean, if God has this ministry for me, then he has it for me.

And then the Lord knows how to bring these things about in a totally unexpected way. One year, I don't know, four or five, six years ago, I was at a Calvary Chapel pastors conference and there I was among three or four hundred pastors and a guy stood up and he said, you know, the Internet is going to be a happening thing. And so we want to get out Bible resources on the Internet.

And I'm I'm forming something called the Blue Letter Bible. And we like to put commentary on there from Calvary Chapel pastors. So, you know, give us your your Bible study notes or commentary, give it to us on disk and send it up to us and we'll look at it.

We may put it on the Blue Letter Bible. Well, I'm there among three or four hundred pastors and I say, well, you know, there's probably going to be 30, 40 or 50 guys who send in stuff. Look at all these guys here and they're sharp, so may as well add mine to it.

So it was easy. You just copy the files from your computer to a disk and send it up to them. And so that's what I did.

And so months later, when they got the thing all in production and all up and running, I went to the website and I was both surprised and very embarrassed. Because you could go to a passage and it says, click here for commentary on the passage, so I'd click and there you could get commentary on the passage from from John Calvin. From Matthew Henry.

From Chuck Smith. And from David Guzik. And it was like, Lord, they are going to see that the emperor has no clothes.

And this, you know, this will either be merely a curiosity or an embarrassment. And I'm like, you know, what can I do? It's too late now. The bell is already rung and you can't unring the bell.

Well, it was a blessing to find over the weeks and months and years. That the material on there was very helpful for many people. And that pastors and Sunday school teachers and just people who wanted to learn more about the scriptures just found for whatever reason, it just they were able to relate to the things that I had written.

And years since, you know, many, many thousands of people make regular use of that material all the time on the Internet, and that is something that was completely unexpected to me. Completely. But this is how God works out his calling to fruitfulness in our lives.

There's aspects of it that are expected and there are aspects that are unexpected, just like with Paul. Next thing, and we need to move a little more quickly now, I want you to see that that Paul's calling was through God's grace. Did you see that there in verse 15? He says and called me through his grace.

You know what that means? It means that it wasn't because Paul deserved it. It wasn't like Paul was chosen among all the people on the earth because he was the most holy or the most righteous or the most deserving. But God said, I'm going to pick that man and I'm going to pick him more because of what I can do with him than anything he is.

And that's how it is for you and that's how it is for me. That's why to be proud of your calling is utter blindness. You have nothing to do with it.

It's all out of God's grace. There's no place for one person to think that their calling lifts them up to a level above other people. My calling is not one bit more important than your calling.

And so if you think for a moment, well, you know that the pastor sure needs to take his calling seriously. After all, he's a pastor. But me, you know, I'm just an everyday Christian.

I don't need to take my calling to fruitfulness seriously. No, you do. My calling is not any more important than yours, nor is yours any more important than mine.

It's all of God's grace. And it has nothing to do with with God choosing people based on deserving, but it's out of the riches of his grace. Next, I want you to see that Paul's call to fruitfulness was independent of men.

At the end of verse 16, he says, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood. In other words, Paul didn't go and get his calling approved by other people. You know what? Well, please tell me I'm called or this or that.

No, it was independent of men. And friends, there's a very real sense that our calling is also independent of men. In other words, Paul didn't take it to himself, but it's also not a case of what people said, well, let's nominate Paul to be an apostle.

No, it's not done by nomination. It's not done by taking it upon yourself. Instead, it's done independently of men between an individual and God.

It's that way in your life. It's that way in mine. I know very well that my calling is not based on any person.

Something that God has put in my life and in my heart, it's not based on public opinion, it's not based on public acclamation. But at the same time, notice next that Paul's call to fruitfulness was in cooperation with men. How important that is.

It may be independent of men, but it's also in cooperation with men because Paul did go to Jerusalem and confer and speak with Peter and all the rest of them. In other words, your call will be in cooperation with other people because though God calls us independently, he doesn't call us to be independent. He calls us as members in the body of Christ and my calling has an effect on yours and yours on mine and everything works together in a glorious way.

So it's in cooperation with men. God forbid the person who says, well, I'm called of God, I have nothing to do with you. That's not the heart of God, that's not the heart of the apostle Paul.

Next, I want you to see that Paul's call to fruitfulness was evident to others, other people could see it, they knew that Paul was an apostle when he went before Peter and James and all the rest of the man, this man is an apostle, God has put his hand on this man. He's right on. When you're called by God.

Other people can see that the calling is there. You know, you can ask somebody, I believe that God has called me to this, do you see it? Well, maybe they don't see it yet, but if you're really called, they will see it at least eventually. You know, it's surprising sometimes, sometimes I meet folks who really believe that God has called them to be a teacher.

It's just funny, it doesn't seem like God's called anybody to listen to them. Well, if you're called to be a teacher, it's going to be evident because God will call people to listen to you. If you're called to be a leader,

it'll be evident because God will call people to follow you.

Your calling will be evident to other people, and even if you're not fulfilling your calling, people say, you know what, this is something that God could or should be doing through you. People will be able to see it. But by the same token, we should say that the next point here is that Paul's call to fruitfulness was not evident to everyone.

Oh, there were some people that thought that Paul had no business being an apostle, that his calling wasn't legitimate. And don't be surprised if whatever calling God has given you, that there would be some people that would say, well, you know, no way. I don't think so.

Don't let that overly discourage you. Now, virtually everybody's saying that then you need to pay attention. But if there's a few here and there, well, then you just say, listen, it's not going to be evident to everyone.

I have to say that in my own life, my own calling hasn't been evident to everyone. There are some people who say, well, you're not called at all. You have no business being a pastor.

It's just part of the territory. It may not necessarily be evident to everyone. Nevertheless, nevertheless, it should be evident to many.

The next point I want to make is very important, of course. It says that Paul's call to fruitfulness was long delayed in fulfillment. This is the part that oftentimes troubles us in the call to fruitfulness, isn't it? That God takes a long time to develop it.

But friends, let me say that it's worth it. You know, we see a glorious pattern in the life of the apostle Paul that is oftentimes like ours. Think about when Paul received his call to faith.

Where was that? On the Damascus Road, right? And then Paul says, and he says in our text right here, that then he went off to Antioch. I believe that that's where God educated Paul on how to be a follower of Jesus Christ. That's where he had his call to follow.

And then God called him after that to a church in a city of Antioch. And in Antioch, Paul fulfilled the call to faithfulness. He's just there serving the Lord in that church.

I mean, nothing spectacular, special, just serving God in a wonderful way. But none of those things fulfilled Paul's real call to fruitfulness. You know what God really called him to be? Was the apostle to the Gentiles, the one who would be the missionary to the entire Roman world at that time to fulfill his call to fruitfulness in his missionary journeys.

Now, you know how long it was from the time that Paul received his call to faith to his call to fruitfulness or fulfilled the call to fruitfulness? Oh, more than 20 years. Now, if it's that way in the life of the apostle Paul, should it surprise us that it's that much or longer in our own life? It's OK. It's OK if you don't enter into that place of true, great faithfulness that God has for you right away.

It may take a while. God may have things to develop in you or in circumstances or whatever. It may be long delayed in its fulfillment.

But I believe God will give you precursors of it all along the way. You know that in the 20 years before Paul ventured out as the missionary to the Gentiles, you know that he that he shared Jesus with Gentiles all along the way. Right.

I mean, there would always be echoes. There would be previews of it along the way. But the true fulfillment of it may be delayed in its fulfillment.

And, you know, in some ways it's the same way for me and my calling. I don't feel for a moment that I've really fulfilled. The calling to fruitfulness that God has given me.

I mean, I know this from what he's put on my heart, from what he's spoken in prophecy and all the rest of it. I believe that God has more fruitfulness ahead of me. And it's just up to him to show it as I'm faithful and seeking him and all these things.

And it may be long delayed in coming, but that's just up to the Lord. Finally, I want you to see that Paul's call to fruitfulness was something that brought glory to God. That's how he finishes in verse 24.

Did you notice that he says, and they glorified God in me, friends, that's where our hearts are really at. Right. To glorify God.

That's what we passionately want. You know, the call to fruitfulness, it isn't about us. It didn't originate with us and it's not about us.

It's about the glory and honor of Jesus Christ. Friends, that's my passion and my calling. Oh, that the name of Jesus Christ would be exalted and that the name of David Guzik would be obscure in relation to the name of Jesus Christ.

If you were to leave here this morning or week after week with only a vague memory of who I am and what I look like, well, that's fine. But as long as you keep Jesus preeminent in your heart and mind. We want him to be glorified and that's the heart of everybody in their call to fruitfulness.

It's not about them. It's about bringing glory to Jesus Christ. That's what God wants to work.

He worked it in Paul. I believe he is working it in me as much as I'll let him. And I know he is working it and wants to work it in you.

I leave this message this morning kind of awkwardly. Awkwardly, because I really don't know how to end it. I can't fulfill the call to fruitfulness.

I can't even tell you what your specific place is. Now it's up to you. Now it's up to you to seek God and say, Lord, where have you given me to be fruitful for your kingdom? How do you want me to fulfill the special uniqueness in who I am and where I've been and what I'm good at? What are all those things that you want to bring together in my life to be a glorious call to fruitfulness? And would you mind if I prayed? That God wouldn't really give you a sense of peace or rest until you understand that and know it.

That's kind of a mean prayer to pray, isn't it? But, you know, it's for the best, don't you? So wouldn't that be great? What the Lord could accomplish through a group of people, just the people in this room. If they all answered the call to faith, if they all followed Jesus beautifully and faithfully, if they fulfilled the call to faithfulness in the individual areas of their life, and then they were all fruitful unto the Lord, some 30, some 60, some 100 fold. What a glorious work for God's kingdom could be accomplished.

So, Father, that's my prayer this morning. You'd fulfill it in every one of us. It's a big prayer to pray, but we take refuge in the fact that you're a big God.

And I pray, Lord, that you would put a yearning, a restlessness in us that can only be answered by fulfilling every aspect of the call that you've given us. And, Lord, when I say fulfilling, I know very well that it's not going to be perfectly fulfilled until we're in glory. But, Lord, there's a sense of fulfillment that you can give to us right now in these things.

So, Father, work in me, work in each of us that we might answer the high call of God, the upward call of God in Jesus Christ for each one of our lives. We love you and praise you this morning. In Jesus name.

Amen.

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