

# Calling, Loneliness, Love, and Freedom

by Rich Mullins

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*This sermon explores the concept of recognizing God's calling in our lives, often manifested through a sense of emptiness or pain that we try to fill with worldly distractions. It emphasizes the importance of embracing that emptiness as a pathway to God's purpose, rather than numbing it with destructive behaviors. True joy and freedom are found in connecting with God and accepting His love, freeing us from dependencies on temporary fixes and leading us to a life of moral purity and fulfillment.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23, Matthew 16:24, Galatians 5:1, 1 Peter 2:16, James 4:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:7, John 8:36, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Recognizing God's Calling", "Embracing Emptiness for Purpose"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Well, this may be cheap, but I'll do a misquote of Frederick Buechner, who says, Our calling is that place where the world's greatest need and our greatest joy intersect. That God has designed each of us with gifts, with personality, with character. We're each a unique person, and we meet the world where there's a variety of needs, a variety of problems, and there's a place where we intersect.

There's a place where my greatest joy and the world's greatest need meet. And that, Frederick Buechner would say, was your calling. And I think that's a pretty good definition of a calling.

How do you know when God is calling you? Well, I don't know. In my own life, I think that for years I tried to avoid loneliness because it hurts to feel lonely. Now I'm beginning to recognize that maybe that's what it feels like when God calls me.

Maybe when God is calling, it hurts. Maybe when God calls us, it feels like a pain. And for years in my own life, I tried to drown that pain.

I tried to avoid that pain. I tried to fill that ache with all kinds of what I can now look back on and see was a lot of stuff that was destroying me, corrupting me. And to listen to the call of God means to accept some of

the emptiness that we have in our own lives.

And rather than always trying to drown out that feeling of emptiness, instead of always trying to fill it with a lot of junk, to allow that to be a door through which we go to meet God. So I would say, and this is where I think moral purity begins to play in, that almost everything that corrupts us is something that we use to fill some kind of ache, some kind of emptiness. And moral purity might be nothing more than a call to accept the ache and to accept the emptiness and to allow ourselves to go through that to where God is calling us to go.

And that the joy of Christian life is that those aches, those needs, that emptiness, that we're going to encounter because we're human, is ultimately met in Christ. And that everything that we try to fill it with that is not Christ, we'll never really fill it. So that we're constantly connected to some kind of a lifeline that keeps us tied down.

When we finally cut that lifeline off, when we finally say, I will no longer fill my life with casual sexual encounters, I will no longer fill the holes in my life with some kind of manipulative behavior, when I will no longer fill that with drunkenness, or with being high, or with being constantly saturated with sensationalism. When we finally say no to those things, when we pull that lifeline, it's a very scary thing. And we go, wow, will I ever stop hurting? And my answer is, don't worry about hurting.

Realize that this is how badly God wants you. And that that hurt that you're feeling, that emptiness that you're feeling, maybe that's the way it feels when you're called by God. And so don't try to fill it.

Don't try to quiet it. But ask God to give you the courage to face that and to walk through that to Him. Because when we connect with God, I don't think that that means that the emptiness goes away and is always gone.

But it frees us from those kind of IV kinds of needles that keep us bound up in some kind of a hospital where we can't really live freely and wander wildly as we want. When we find God, we are freed. We are made.

It is for freedom that Christ has set you free. And it is a wonderful thing to not be dependent on alcohol, to not be dependent on people, to not be dependent on sensationalism, on all those kinds of things. It's a wonderful thing to be able to live in silence and to live in unpleasantness and to still have joy.

And joy doesn't come from substances. Joy doesn't come from worldly wealth. Joy comes from God, that we were created to love God.

And only when we experience that love are we really free. Anything that would impede that love, anything that would block our own awareness of our need for that, that binds us up. And that's why moral purity, I think, is an important thing.

You want to set yourself free from those things that would impede you from freedom. Did that answer your question? Did that make any sense?

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