

## “Called, Cleansed, Commissioned”

We are in the season of Pentecost, often referred to as the season of the church. The church claims its birthday as Pentecost. And the emphasis of this season is the reminder that God has poured His Holy Spirit into each of us and that Spirit enables us to be what God calls us to be and to do what God calls us to do. The Spirit begins working in our hearts, transforming us. The Spirit then works through us to be in ministry to other people, helping them experience the love and grace of our Heavenly Father. **Each of us is Called, Cleansed and Commissioned for ministry in the Kingdom of God. – Rev. Tal Tittsworth**

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **“Called, Cleansed, Commissioned”**

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### **Prayer for the Week**

Lord Jesus, You have called each of us to be your followers. We seldom know the path that is ahead and You invite us to simply trust. We wonder at times how You can use us for Your Kingdom and you invite us to simply obey Your leading. We struggle with our own temptations; we struggle with our relationships with others; we want to make a difference but don't always know how. In the words of the song, help us to see You more clearly, love You more dearly and follow You more nearly, day by day. Thank you for Your constant love and presence! In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

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## Study Guide

### Monday 28 May, 2018 Matthew 3:1-17

The story of Jesus' ministry begins with this familiar encounter with John the Baptist at the Jordan. John has already caused quite a stir as he preached about repentance and baptized folks as renewal of their faith. As Jesus is ready to begin His ministry, He visits John the Baptist and requires John to baptize Him. John is reluctant, but does what is asked and as Jesus comes out of the water, the dove descends and God speaks: This is my beloved Son...". For all followers of Jesus, the same has happened, though perhaps not audibly. In baptism, God says, this is my beloved son/daughter whom I love and send now into ministry! *How has your baptism shaped your sense of calling as a follower of Jesus?*

### Tuesday 29 May 2018 Matthew 4:1-11

Following His baptism, Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Spirit, where He fasts for forty days and nights. We read about his familiar encounter with "the tempter," as he is called. The temptations are very real and must have been very difficult for Jesus. Jesus's entire ministry would have been compromised and undermined had He given in to the tempter's offers. The tempter always comes after us in our areas of deepest vulnerability and need and offers shortcuts that are actually detours from God's chosen path for us. Jesus didn't try to defeat the tempter with logic or in His own power. *Jesus quoted Scriptures that He had memorized from His youth. What temptations are you giving in to that hinder or compromise your ministry for Jesus? What Scriptures can help you defeat the tempter in those areas of your life?*

### Wednesday 30 May, 2018 Matthew 4:12-25

In His baptism and fasting experience, Jesus is *Called, Cleansed and Commissioned* for ministry. He begins by calling His first followers in these closing stories of chapter 4. First called were Peter and Andrew, then the brothers James and John. Later Jesus calls the others. Jesus then goes about preaching the Gospel, healing people and sharing the good news that the Kingdom of God is here. Each of Jesus' first followers were different, as each of us are unique and different still today. Peter could be loud and impulsive, Andrew was probably quiet and calm to be around. James and John were known as "the sons of thunder" as they could explode quickly. But Jesus called each one for the sake of His Kingdom and used them with each of their unique gifts and personalities. *How has Jesus called you to be in ministry for His Kingdom? With what gifts has He blessed you for the sake of His Kingdom?*

### Thursday 31 May, 2018 Romans 12:1-2

Having written in the first eleven chapters of Romans about what God has done for us in Jesus, Paul now turns to our response to God's work. The word "therefore" always means, in essence, 'based on all I have said to this point, this is now what you do.' Therefore, based on what God has done for you, this is now what you do in turn: present your bodies (all that you are) as a living sacrifice to God and allow God to change you from the inside out for the sake of your ministry for His Kingdom. This is your spiritual worship, Paul says. Worship isn't just about gathering on Sunday and joining in "the service." Our worship is what we do with our bodies each and every day. Worship involves our inward thoughts and those things on which we focus each day. Paul urges us to not let the world "squeeze us into its mold" (as J.B. Phillips paraphrases these words), but to let God continually transform us into His image of love, mercy and grace. *In what ways does your worship get lived out through your daily life? What areas of your life need transformed by the power of God's love?*

### Friday 1 June, 2018 Romans 12:3-21

Paul then talks about how our daily worship as living sacrifices is lived out in ministry. Not all have the same gifts or specific callings. Each of us have unique "gifts from the Spirit" that we have been commissioned to use in our ministry for God's Kingdom. Paul's companion passage to this is I Corinthians 12 where he uses the image of the church as a body with all its different, yet equal, parts working together. So it is with the church. As we each use our gifts in answering the call to follow Jesus, the Spirit of God enables and empowers us to do God's work in whatever we do day by day. No one is more important than any other. But as we work, worship and live together, the Kingdom of God, which is in our midst, grows and thrives. *What gift(s) has God given you for ministry and how are you using your gift(s)?*