

WHEN YOU DESERVE TO BE CITED

17th in a Series on Ephesians called, "Messages to the Misfits"
Ephesians 4:1

Have you ever heard of a federal agency called the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps? It has 6500 employees, all of whom are uniformed, commissioned officers with equivalent rank, pay and benefits of commissioned officers in the military. It is not the same as the Public Health Service. It started out life as an agency whose task was to care for sailors in the merchant marine. It was originally called the Marine Hospital Service. But that role gradually began to disappear. So today its officers play a wide range of roles. They are charged with responding to epidemics and seeking to limit them, research in the medical field, guaranteeing the safety of drugs and medical devices, responding to natural disasters, providing medical care to underserved segments of the population and also providing service to branches of the military. They certainly perform some important functions and valuable service. But they do have a problem. They started out with a particular mission, but over the years have drifted from that mission. So now it is a bit difficult to understand why the agency needs to exist. Yes, they provide valuable services, but generally there are other agencies that provide those services. The FDA is specifically tasked with guaranteeing the safety of drugs and devices. The CDC has the job of responding to and limiting epidemics. The branches of the military each has its own medical corps that provides medical service. The National Institutes of Health was created to oversee research in the medical field. This agency might be an example of the fact that bureaucracies are harder to kill than cock roaches. But more pertinent today, it is an example of the fact that over time human endeavors have a natural tendency to drift away from their original intent and mission.

Today we are celebrating the anniversary of our church. It began 9 years ago in July of 2010. Sometimes it doesn't feel like it's been that long to me, but then I think about what has happened in our family since 2010. In that time both of our kids have gotten married, Toby and Anna had two kids, Michael and Carissa are expecting their first, Toby graduated from medical school and he and Anna moved to San Clemente, Michael got out of the Marines and he and Carissa moved back here to the San Diego area. And Laurie and I...well, we've gotten older!

That's a lot of water to flow under the bridge. It has been a long time, so long that it is difficult to remember it. We might lose track of what we were attempting when we all started this church. Any human endeavor will have a propensity for drifting away from its original purpose over time. It starts off in an intended direction, but all kinds of factors will act to move it in unintended directions. This is as true of a local church as any other endeavor. So over time we have to reset to our intended destination. Why do we exist, and what are we supposed to be doing? The last three chapters of the book of Ephesians are good reminders of what it is we are supposed to be doing. The beginning of Chapter 4 is a hinge point in this letter. From this point on the letter will be about practical matters. It is about what is involved in actually living as followers of Jesus Christ. There is a lot of "what to do" kind of instruction. But this only comes after three chapters full of discussion about what God has done for us. If we don't have a rock solid grip on the truths of Chapters 1-3 we inevitably will hit problems when we try to live by the instruction of Chapters 4-

6. So today we will look at just the first verse of Chapter 4, because in a brief way it sets us up to have the right approach to being what God wants us to be and doing what he wants us to do as described in chapters 4-6. It also reminds us of what we as a church are to be about.

WE MUST REMEMBER THAT WE WERE CALLED

Paul tells us to live a life that is worthy of our calling. Note that the key words are worthy and calling. We can easily read over those without recognizing the weighty significance of them. Start with the idea of “worthy.” The Greek word there actually has to do with weight. So our calling is on one side of the balance scale, and how we live our life should be on the other side of the balance scale, and it should be equal to the calling. They should balance. We who are followers of Jesus have received a calling. We will consider what that calling is in a bit, but we should start with understanding its value.

If we don’t think that our calling is all that valuable, we won’t think that living worthy of it is a big deal, either. At one time a relative gave me a couple of shirts as a gift. This relative is a wonderful person, but their approach to gifts is (at least in my estimation) unfortunate. They buy what they can get a bargain deal on, and give apparently little, if any, thought to whether the recipient would actually like the item. So I opened the gift and found two shirts that I would go out of my way to avoid wearing. I put them in my closet, not because I needed to have a place to keep them before using them, but because it seemed wrong to throw them away right away. If I value a shirt I will take care of it and wear it. With these I just stuck them out of sight. I kept them in my closet for a year or two, then gave them to Goodwill. I did not find them worthy of wearing. They had no value to me, so I merely let them take up a little space for a time before discarding them. That’s what happens when you think something is not worth much. If our calling isn’t worth much we will respond with a life that reflects that, meaning it will involve little thought or effort. So one important question here if we are going to live a life worthy of our calling is, how much is it worth?

This is a crucial matter because it has to do with our whole motivation for living. The usual religious approach is to tell you that knowing God is a great thing and includes the gift of eternal life, but you have earn it. So life is all about trying to be good enough to earn it. Yesterday Laurie and I were out for a walk and we noticed two young men who were doing their religious duty. I am familiar with their theology so I knew they were doing it because they think their eternal destiny depends on their effort. But the gospel of Christ stands this whole thing on its end. It says in Christ you have been given a gift from God, and now your whole motivation for living worthy of it is simply to be thankful for it. You want to live worthy because you are so happy about what you’ve been given. But if it’s not worth all that much to you, you won’t be especially thankful, and you won’t care all that much about expressing your gratitude by seeking to honor God. That only becomes a powerful motivation when we see how powerfully good the gift we have been given actually is, when we grasp its true worth.

So let’s think about what we’ve been given. Paul has made a major point in the first three chapters that we, who are Gentiles, had no claim on God’s promises, but that now through grace brought to

us by Jesus Christ, have been brought into his kingdom. Paul said God has chosen us to be his children, members of his kingdom. We have been called to something. He has called us into his kingdom, and as members of his kingdom we have been called to play a role in it. We have been chosen to have both a position and a task to accomplish.

The late Ray Stedman wrote, “I have come to learn that God is the most exciting Being there is. It is the world that is filled with boredom, loneliness and misery. All its offers of adventure and allure crumble to dust when you try to grasp them. But when you walk with God, every day is an adventure. He is innovative, imaginative, creative. That is the eternal life for which everyone longs deep in his heart.” That is what God has called us to. It is to life with Almighty God, knowing him, living in his love, experiencing his hope and his strength. This is what every human was created for, and will never be whole without it. To be fully human, fully alive, we must live in God’s presence, but that doesn’t happen without his calling of us.

It is crucial for us to remember how this calling came to us. How did we get into God’s kingdom? Vince Antonucci wrote a book that has a great title. *I Became A Christian And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt*. In the book he says that he grew up in a home where there was zero mention of Jesus. He knew absolutely nothing about the Gospel and as far as he knew, had never even met a Christian by the time he was well into his college years. But surprisingly, through some unusual avenues, he heard the gospel and became a Christian. But he had little idea how to live as a Christian and no idea that church might be involved until an acquaintance told him as a believer in Jesus he should go to church. This friend gave him the phone number of a pastor to call. So he called the number, which was the church phone number, and got a secretary. She informed him the pastor was out, but she encouraged him to come to church and meet the pastor there. Knowing nothing of church he said, “Uh, okay, but how will I get in?” The secretary was confused by this question and said, “How will you get in?” He repeated, “Yes, how will I get in?” She said, “Do you mean how will you get here? I can give you directions.” He said, “No, I can find it, but how will I get in?” She still didn’t understand. Starting to get irritated he said, “I don’t have an invitation. I haven’t signed up or anything.” There was silence for a bit until finally she said, “Well you just walk in. Just show up and walk in.” Vince wrote, “This didn’t make sense to me. You couldn’t just show up at a college and expect to participate in a class. A boy can’t just show up at Cub Scouts without taking a three finger pledge. He decided to speak slowly. “So, what you’re telling me is that I can just drive to your church, walk up to the door and...just walk in?” She said, “Yes, just show up and walk in.” He said, “But, that’s the strangest thing I’ve ever heard.” She answered, “And you are the strangest person I’ve ever talked to.”

It feels to us like the way we got into God’s kingdom was kind of like that. We decided we wanted to be part of it so we just chose to walk in. But in the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul went to some pains to make it clear that that is not how it happened at all. In a sense we needed much more than an invitation. Everyone has an invitation. We needed to be called and enabled. We needed to be chosen, because if we weren’t, we would never have gotten there. So it is important to remember how this happened.

WE MUST REMEMBER HOW WE WERE CALLED

1. We were called out of darkness

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:9, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” We were called out of darkness. But some might say it wasn’t all that dark. What darkness were we in? There was the darkness of fear. We all know that darkness makes things feel more ominous. I remember a time several years ago when Laurie was away for a night and I was alone in our house. In the middle of the night I woke up when I heard the door that leads from our garage into the house slam closed. It has a distinctive sound and I knew immediately what it was. But that door could only make that sound if someone had opened it and then let it close, and I should have been the only person in the house. The logical conclusion was someone was in the house that didn’t belong there. In the daytime that would have been curious and possibly a bit concerning, but not scary. But at night in a dark house it seemed ominous. The floor next to our bed has a creak in it, so I knew if I got out of bed it would warn the intruder downstairs that someone was awake. So I crawled to the other side of the bed and quietly got out, then tiptoed to my closet where I retrieved my home defense weapon, which is a hockey stick. I seriously hoped the intruder did not have a gun. They say it’s a bad idea to bring a knife to a gunfight, but bringing a hockey stick isn’t any better. Now I was faced with a dilemma. Should I try to surprise the intruder by sneaking up on him in the dark, or should I turn the lights on? I dithered for a bit, then decided light is better, so I turned on the lights to our hall and stair way. I could see nothing. I searched the upstairs thoroughly, turning on every light, then did the same downstairs. Once I had cleared the house I figured the intruder had to be in the garage. But I searched the garage and found no one. I have never been able to solve the mystery of that noise. I suspect as real as it seemed, I probably just dreamed that I heard the noise.

Darkness is fearful. And fear itself is darkness. We were in the darkness of fear. Fear is a huge factor in our lives. We fear the unknown, we fear rejection, we fear the opinions of others, we fear pain, we fear meaninglessness. We fear death. And we could not save ourselves from the presence of those fears.

Darkness also speaks to us of evil. And there is so much evil in this world. Why is it that human beings tend toward evil? Why is it when humans unlocked the power of the atom we used that to create fearsome weapons that now have the potential for wiping out life on this planet?

Sometimes people get frustrated with the inefficiency of our government system. It seems so cumbersome at times. Do you realize that those who created the system, those who wrote our Constitution, made it that way deliberately? They did so because they were trying to limit the ability of one person or even a group of people to have unchecked power. That’s because they know what happens when people get power. They use it to dominate and oppress people and enrich themselves.

Even more disheartening, we see that there is evil that resides in our own hearts. There are things that hide there, things that occasionally pop up that even surprise us with their ugliness.

There is the darkness of hopelessness. I see people in our world struggling mightily to try to establish and defend some sense of their own worth, only to never seem to arrive at peace. I see people crusading for all kinds of causes for things that will never bring them peace. We spent a lot of time visiting Carissa when she was in the hospital for two weeks last month. One evening I was walking through the lobby of the hospital and I noticed a message that was at that moment prominently displayed on a big flat screen TV that they use to communicate various messages. It proudly proclaimed that the hospital was a leader in health care equality for the LGBTQ community. It's funny, but my first thought when I saw that was, why so many letters? I thought maybe those groups need to ask the military for some help with their acronym, because the military does a way better job forming words from their letters. Obviously I'm not serious about that. But I see in those people a desperate, sometimes even militant, desire to be accepted and valued. Every person should be valued. Every person should have their rights respected and be treated with dignity and respect. Unfortunately, as people try to root their identity in their sexuality, they are on a hopeless quest for worth, and for peace that they will never find. That is one example, but everyone else in the world is on a similar quest to find those same things based on different identities and they are all just as hopeless.

People are in the darkness of being disconnected from God. We have an inherent, built-in need for God, and as long as we are without that connection we will find ourselves groping in the dark for some way to fill that need. And of course I see people hopeless in the face of our greatest enemy, death. God has called us out of darkness. He has enabled us to find forgiveness and worth, to be at peace with him and with ourselves. He has given us the hope of eternal life. He has shown us we don't need to fear the evil of this world and he is healing our own hearts, removing the evil from them.

2. We were raised from the dead.

Remember that, as Paul made clear in Chapter 2, we were dead in our sins. We could not help ourselves and we certainly could not save ourselves. We were powerless to change our situation. As Paul said in 2:5, God "Made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions."

Whether they admit it or not, everyone knows there is something wrong with us. That's why there are so many religions, so many counselors, so many self-help books and programs out there. All of them at some level contain an element of thinking that there is something we need to do to fix ourselves. How much can a dead person do to fix himself or herself? I still find it humorous that Laurie and I will celebrate 40 years of terrific marriage next month, but it never would have happened if not for a car battery. It was because my car wouldn't start due to a dead battery on the day that we got engaged that we were together at all. It's a long story, but I needed help from Laurie because of the failure of my car to start that morning. The battery in my car was dead, but it was brand new. I'd only bought it a few days before, but it turned out to be a defective battery. The thing with a dead battery is it can't do anything. It has no power at all. It was so dead it could not

be recharged. It couldn't give itself the power to come back to life and it certainly couldn't give power to ignite anything else and start the car. Dead means it has no power, it can't do anything. And that is the human race. Oh we can do many things, but we can't do anything to fix the fundamental problem that is the root of all of our troubles. The only way that can change is if God makes us alive. He does that through Christ. But remember what it took to accomplish that.

3. We Were Saved By a Death

In 1:7 Paul said that in Christ “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Blood is a gruesome image that we don't like to think about. Micah Vandover told me about one of those moments in his family's life that are terrifying for parents. Their little girl took a bad tumble and slammed her face onto the ledge of a table. Micah said it cut her open right down to the bone and the blood gushed out of the wound. He said there was a frightening amount of blood. She's fine. They rushed her to the hospital where she was stitched up and she'll fully recover. But that was a reminder that blood flowing generally means something really bad has happened.

When Jesus shed his blood it wasn't just a gash on the face. It was his very life flowing out. What is the deal with blood? Numbers 28:3 says that Hebrew priests were to sacrifice two lambs every day, one in the morning and one in the evening. Numbers 28:11 says on the first of every month the priests were to sacrifice two young bulls, one ram and 7 male lambs. There were lots of other sacrifices. For instance, in one week during one of the feasts the priests were to sacrifice 70 bulls, 14 rams and 98 lambs. That's 182 animals in one week, in addition to the normal sacrifices. PETA would have, if you will excuse the expression, had a cow.

We live in a rather antiseptic suburban society separated from the brutality of nature. We are a society that freaks out because the Padres had a man kill some bees at a baseball game. All that blood, all that death from those constant sacrifices would have been horrifying for us. The ancient Hebrews were more used to seeing that much blood and death, but it still would have been a graphic picture for them. But remember what it means when you see blood flowing. Something bad has happened.

What bad thing had happened that led to the deaths of all those animals? Back at the very beginning of the human race God told the first humans that the result of disobeying him would be death. That's because disobeying him was evil and would always cause grievous harm to the person doing it and to others. To eradicate evil, death must come. So all these animals being sacrificed should have told the people that some horrible, massive evil had occurred. And it had. The evil is in us, and it is going on all the time. We are the cause of the deaths of all those animals.

But wait, that doesn't make any sense. I do evil and some animals have to die? How does that work? Imagine that our justice system was like that. Suppose there is a man who has an investment firm that seems to be booming. He is getting tremendous yields on investments and people are flocking to him, especially retirees hoping to increase their income. And then it is discovered that his whole thing is one big Ponzi scheme. It is learned that he has essentially stolen millions of dollars from people who have now lost everything because of him. He is indicted, tried and

convicted in court. Now comes his sentence. His penalty is to go buy a lamb and a bull and sacrifice them both. How is that supposed to make up for what he did?

What possible connection could there be between the wrongs of human beings and the deaths of animals? People back then should have seen that this whole system was intended to be a graphic, vivid, rather horrifying picture of something. It depicted in technicolor that death is the penalty for our wrong. But it also said that somehow God was going to provide someone or something else to die the death so we don't have to, to receive the punishment that we have earned. The animals pictured God substituting something else in our place and dying when it is we who should have died.

Eventually the great truth would be revealed. It was God's infinite, perfect Son who would be the one sacrificed. Jesus' blood, the blood of an infinite person, was enough to pay for the infinity of human evil. So do the math. The penalty of our wrong is death. Jesus took our place and died, shedding his blood for us. So what is left to pay? Nothing. The penalty was death. The death has happened. The penalty has been paid in full. There is no punishment left.

We are called into life, into relationship with God, into his eternal kingdom, by God through what Jesus did for us. We don't deserve it. We never have and never will. Last Saturday we were coming home from the birthday party for our granddaughter, Cara. While driving, I made a mistake. I won't bore you with the details, except to say I unintentionally broke a traffic law, and did it right in front of a police car. I had that awful, sinking feeling in my stomach when I saw those bright flashing lights in my mirror. There was that brief hope they were for someone else, but as I pulled over they followed right behind me, and I knew they were for me. It humiliating to be pulled over like that. I think the police ought to have some less conspicuous way for citing drivers than flashing all those lights to draw everyone's attention to the fact that you are a miscreant. Anyway, I resigned myself to the fact that I was about to receive a ticket. I wondered how much it would cost. The officer was a woman. I gave her my license and registration as she explained what I had done wrong. She then asked where we were going. We told her we were on our way home. She asked where we were coming from and we told her, "a birthday party for our 2-year-old granddaughter." Then she said, "You need to be more careful sir. You need to pay more attention." I thought, "Great, not only do I get a ticket, but I'm going to have to be preached at, too." I suppose some might see that as poetic justice for a guy whose job involves preaching to people. Anyway, she finished her sermon, handed my license and registration back, went back to her car and drove away! She didn't give me a ticket!

I deserved to be cited. I had no excuse, no argument to make, I was in the wrong and she had me dead to rights. I was guilty. The fact that I did not get a citation is due to nothing but pure grace. I deserved the penalty. That I didn't get it was nothing but unmerited kindness. I cannot even begin to explain how relieved, how humbled, but how free and happy I felt when I drove away. I had been given a big gift, and I was really thankful to that police officer, and going forward, seriously determined to be more careful. And that is a bit like how we have received our calling. It is pure grace. The analogy would be closer if the officer had said, "I'm going to write a ticket, and give it

to myself. It will go on my record, I'll pay the fine and I'll have to go to traffic school, but I'll do that all for you because I don't want you to experience it." I do not expect something like that to ever happen in my life, but it already has. That was what God has done for us in Christ. We deserve judgment and death, every single one of us. But in Christ we have been forgiven and set free through a sacrifice that was unimaginable.

Do you see the value of your calling? Nothing compares to how valuable it is, because nothing compares to how costly it was. *If our penalty was death, what could we ever do to cover the cost of our wrong that is equivalent to death? Nothing! There is no achievement, no sacrifice, no amount of money that could ever be equal to dying. So having our calling as a result of the blood of Jesus being shed in our place is the most valuable thing we will ever possess.* So when Paul says we should live in a way that is worthy of that immeasurably valuable gift, it means it is something that ought to demand all our attention.

WE MUST REMEMBER TO WHAT WE WERE CALLED

Remember that 1 Peter 2:9 says we are now a "royal priesthood" and that we should "declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." We have been called into the kingdom of light and to a role in this world. It is the role of being God's priests.

Somehow it is common for believers in Jesus to forget those two things. We get caught up in the activities of this world and they somehow consume us. We forget our situation. We forget that we have been called out of darkness into light through God's grace and given the task of declaring his praise. We get confused by events in our lives, by our own feelings and desires. We get target lock on wanting to avoid pain and be happy. We forget that what should drive everything we do is bringing praise to God, no matter what the circumstance.

All of us need our lives to mean something. We need a mission, because we are desperate for significance, and our significance is directly tied to our mission. We have a calling, and that calling includes a mission that is more important than anything else we can do.

I thought about several people as I mulled this over. I have a friend who played Major League Baseball for 14 years. He wasn't the biggest name in baseball, but he had a successful career, and in the eyes of the world he was "somebody." It was common when we went out to eat with him and his wife that someone would briefly interrupt our meal to ask him for his autograph. Do you know how often someone asks me for my autograph when we are eating at a restaurant? You might be surprised to learn it happens every time we eat out. Our server will ask for my autograph on the credit card charge. Those are the only times I ever get asked for my autograph because I'm nobody. But my friend retired from baseball by the time he was 35. He had most of his adult life ahead of him, and his life's work that he had aimed for, worked for and dreamed of since he was little, was done. It was not long before people stopped asking for his autograph. He faded from the spotlight. So the question is, what was the point of his life after that? In what way did he matter? He still mattered to his family, of course. But he also still mattered, as much as ever, because he is

here to declare the praises of God, and he can do that no matter where he is in life. He can do it the rest of his life.

I thought about Laurie's dad. He lives in a retirement community up in the Seattle area. He has his own apartment in a very nice community. But he doesn't have a lot to do. They have bingo games once a week and he calls the numbers for that, but that's not much of a calling. He told Laurie about the fact that the community he lives in has an assisted living facility up the hill from where he lives. When the residents become too ill or frail to live independently any more they move "up the hill" to that facility. He said it is hard to make really good friends in his community because you just start getting to know someone well, and then they have to move "up the hill" and you don't see them much anymore. Pretty soon it dawns on you that you are kind of biding your time until you also have to move up the hill. Everyone there is waiting to move up the hill. And the people in the assisted living facility up the hill are kind of waiting to make another move, this time up a much bigger hill to a permanent location, if you know what I mean. So in that context, what is his calling? What is his life about? Where does his significance and meaning come from? Some people conclude they have no calling, no real point to their lives. When that happens they may continue to exist, but their souls shrivel up and die. Often they become bitter and lonely. But he can choose to remember his calling, as a priest of Jesus Christ to declare our Lord's praises, and he can do that to the end of his days. His life will mean something as long as he draws breath when he remembers his true calling.

I recently got to visit with some old friends who have three kids. I asked how their kids were doing. Their oldest son is 27, and the wife described him as trying to find his way in this world. He's trying to figure out what his life and career will be about. That's a hard thing these days for young men. I thought about several of the young guys I know and see a number of them scuffling through that process. They will have to figure out what they are going to do to earn a living, but a key freeing factor for them can be remembering what their true calling is. If they see that their calling is to be a priest of Jesus Christ, to declare his praise, they will know that whatever they do for a job, they can do that. Their significance will not hang on whatever their job is or how much money they make or status in the world they have. It will derive from living to declare his praise, and that's something they can do no matter where they are in life or what they do, for as long as they live.

APPLICATION

As we remember the beginning of our church these ideas speak directly to what we are supposed to do, why we exist, and how we see ourselves.

1. NEVER FORGET THE VALUE OF OUR CALLING

If we ever lose sight of how valuable it is to be called out of darkness into the kingdom of light, we will lose motivation to be what God wants us to be and do what he wants us to do. This is because the primary motivation is to give thanks to God for the priceless gift that he has given to us at infinite cost to himself.

2. NEVER FORGET THE MANNER OF OUR CALLING

God has made us alive when we were dead. It took the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us from darkness, but he made that sacrifice for us even though we are utterly undeserving. He did it as an act of pure grace and mercy. If we forget this, we will fall into the trap of thinking we have to somehow make ourselves worthy or deserving of it. We will think it is by our own religious efforts that God accepts us and loves us. We will think we have to earn the right to stay in his kingdom.

When that happens it causes a cascade of deadly things. We will necessarily start focusing on trying to look deserving. We will become either proud and judgmental or totally defeated. We will distance ourselves from a true relationship with God. To have real life we must always remember that God has called us by his grace and nothing else. When we do that we will be filled with humility, gratitude, joy and freedom, and this will be a gracious, joyous place to be.

3. NEVER FORGET THE MISSION OF OUR CALLING

God has given us a mission in his kingdom. When we lose sight of that mission we lose situational awareness, and when that happens, a crash is going to occur. We will lose our way. We will bicker with each other. We will strive for the illusions of this world, and once again our souls will wither.

A long time ago the movie *Blues Brothers* featured Dan Akroyd and John Belushi as two men who were caught up in the effort to raise money for the orphanage they grew up in. Repeatedly they would say, “We’re on a mission from God.” Years ago Laurie and I took some psychological tests and one of them asked the question, “Do you believe you are on a mission from God?” I hated that question because it left me with the choice between lying, saying no so people would think I’m sane, and being honest, saying yes even though I knew someone would think my train had run off the tracks. But the truth is, I’m on a mission from God, and so are you. That mission actually is what keeps us on track, and is the source of meaning, significance, hope and strength. It is what will keep our church on track. We are on a mission from God. Never forget it.