

CHAPTER SIX

Wherever it Takes You, Whenever it Takes You There

The Big Picture ...

So far, we've talked about finding, feeding, and fighting for our holy discontents. This week, we turn our attention to *following* that call. Sometimes, God's call changes our course when we least expect it.

Prepare

Read chapter six in *Holy Discontent*, Nehemiah 1 and 2, and look over the verses below.

Ice-Breaker

Who was the best boss you ever had? What made him or her so good? (If you haven't had a boss, talk about a teacher, mentor, or someone else in authority.)

God's Words

Read: Acts 10:9-33**Peter's Vision**

⁹ About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

¹⁴ "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to

heaven.

¹⁷ While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter at Cornelius' House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

²⁷ Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

Discuss

1. What encourages you in this passage?
2. What challenges you or raises questions in your mind? (Talk about them as a group)

3. What can you learn about God from this story?
4. What application points do you see for your life in this Scripture or from the discussion so far?

As a good Jew, Peter would have never eaten unclean animals - especially not with a Gentile! God's call changed Peter's expectations, and it interrupted Peter's plans. This new direction also caused turmoil. Imagine what the other Jews would think! Now, let's look at an excerpt from *Holy Discontent*, where another man also faced a life-changing call.

Hybels' Words

"Like Nehemiah, sometimes you'll get partway through your life believing that your purpose, your identity, and your mission are all tied up in one thing, only to realize that at some point along the way, that "one thing" morphed on you. Don't forget, Nehemiah had a great gig before his famed wall-building season. Nehemiah the Cupbearer - the most influential, noted, and prestigious servant of the king ... it's how everyone knew him. And he was going to throw it all away just because of a few loose bricks and a gate that was ajar?

God was calling Nehemiah to participate in a "new thing." Interestingly, it just so happened that this new thing would require solid leadership acumen, fantastic communication capability, and unflinching tenacity - all skills Nehemiah had honed during his palace days." - *Holy Discontent*, pp. 101-102

Discuss

1. Has God ever called you to change course mid-stream? What happened? How did it feel at first? How did it turn out?
2. Give examples of how God has called others to change locations or vocations as a part of his call.
3. How do you react to the idea that God might shake up your plans? Is it exciting? Frightening? Why?
4. Is the "holy discontent" God has given you for this season of life causing some changes in your life? How? Are more needed?
5. Is there anything else that stands out or is on your mind from today's reading and discussion?

Your Words

We pick one thing from *Holy Discontent* to talk about each week, but what stood out to you?

1. What did you like best?
2. What challenged you or did you disagree with?
3. What did you learn that opened your eyes to a new side of God?
4. What do you need to apply from the reading?

Close

Don't forget to take time to share prayer requests!