We are well over halfway in our Lenten journey towards Easter. In fact, we are nearing the end. Next Sunday, we start Holy Week celebrating Palm Sunday. This means that today is the last message of the series “Called,” where we have been learning how and why God gives us a calling.

We have been studying the calling stories of different Bible characters for the last four weeks. For example, from Abraham’s calling, we learned that God called him to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. From Moses’ calling, we learned that he was called as a response to the prayers of people asking God for deliverance from the suffering and oppression of the Egyptians. From Esther, we learned that we could also assume our calling when we become aware of a need or an injustice and step into it to make it right. And last week, we learned from the apostle Paul that acting on God’s love with gratitude leads us to find our calling too.

So, from all of these, we know that God’s calling is to be a blessing, an answer to people’s prayers, to do the right thing, and when we serve out of love and gratitude, we step into God’s plan for us.

Today’s message is about how God’s calling often includes not only individuals but whole families serving together: husbands and wives, parent(s) and children, single parents and children, or brothers and sisters. Whatever family combination might be the case.

For this message, we are learning the story of Priscilla and Aquila, a remarkable husband-and-wife team who played a vital role in the early Christian church. They are first mentioned in the Book of Acts 18:1-4, 18-19, 24-26,

“After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he found a Jew named Aquila from Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. Every Sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks… After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. When they reached Ephesus, he left them there… Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos from Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord, and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately.”

What do we know about Aquila and Priscilla? They were a dynamic husband and wife team that played a valuable role in Paul’s life and the early church’s ministry. Verse 2 of our text tells us they had been driven out of Rome by an edict of Emperor Claudius requiring all Jews to depart from Rome. So they settled in Corinth, a large commercial city, where they met the apostle Paul.

This text also tells us that Paul had recently arrived in Corinth after leaving Athens. He was struggling financially and alone. His co-workers had departed elsewhere, planning to join him in Corinth later. However, God then brought Aquila and Priscilla into Paul’s life through their shared profession—tent-making. After meeting them, Aquila and Priscilla opened their home to him, so he stayed with them and worked together in their trade. This hospitality and partnership allowed Paul to financially support himself and share the Gospel with others.

But this was just the beginning of Aquila’s and Priscilla’s lifelong journey serving God and partnering with Paul and others. For example, after Corinth, the couple’s ministry continued as they accompanied Paul to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19). There, they encountered a gifted preacher named Apollos, who had an incomplete understanding of the Gospel (Acts 18:24-26). Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos aside and “explained to him the way of God more accurately.” As a result, Apollos became a powerful and effective preacher of the Gospel of Jesus through the mentorship of Priscilla and Aquila.

What we see here is that Aquila and Priscilla shared a deep passion for spreading the Gospel. Their story exemplifies the importance of partnership and hospitality in ministry. And their willingness to invest time and energy into Apollos’ spiritual growth also shows their dedication to discipleship and mentorship within the church.

This was a power couple, if there ever was one. Their service fostered community and enabled many early Christians to grow in faith and unity.

As a side note, the story of Aquila and Priscilla also shines a spotlight on the powerful role women play in ministry. Priscilla was an equal partner with her husband. Her involvement in Apollos’ mentoring and dedication to serving the Christian community highlights women’s role as equal partners with men. This means that God calls both men and women in the same way.

So, what do we learn about God’s calling from Aquila and Priscilla? In this story, the Bible places a strong emphasis on the importance of families serving together and being a blessing to others. Through various examples and teachings, Scripture encourages us to work together as a family to fulfill God’s purpose and spread His love. In my case, it was my grandmother and my brother and I growing up in church.

Consider how God called Abraham and his family to be a source of blessing to other families (Genesis 12:1-3). Or Joshua’s commitment to serve God with his household “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). We also have the instructions in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, where we see these directives to parents emphasizing the importance of passing on faith and values from one generation to the next. This passage highlights the role of the family as a unit that learns and grows together in faith, serving God with purpose. And of course, we have many examples in the Book Acts as it tells us the story of the early church’s practice of family worship and service (Acts 2:46-47; Acts 16:14-15, 31-34), including Aquila and Priscilla’s partnership in ministry (Acts 18; Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 16).

What all these biblical teachings from the Old Testament and the New Testament have in common is the recurrent and explicit encouragement to families to be united and serve God together to make a positive and powerful impact in their communities through their faith, love, and service.

Now, what about my family? Can we also serve God together? What if we are far from perfect?

We all agree that life presents numerous challenges, and families are not exempted from struggling with them. All families share everyday struggles, such as work-life balance, financial, education, health, and wellness stress, in addition to communication challenges, social pressures, and emotional traumas. However, our struggles do not make us bad people; it means that despite them, we are still trying to do our best with our lives.

Still, the struggle is real, and each family is unique and made up in different ways, possessing strengths and weaknesses, so we all deal with life struggles differently. For this, one of the most common feelings across families is to feel broken, like we are failing in life, and we make it worse when we compare ourselves to others. When we bring this brokenness to our faith life and prayers—not to give it up to God but to justify our lack of encouragement and hope—we can’t help but feel unworthy or incapable of serving God, either as a family or an individual.

Has this happened to you? I know it does. In fact, I relate to it. If you think my family is perfect, you are mistaken. You are also mistaken if you think I come from a well-put-together family because I am a pastor. I have shared with you before that my mom was a single mother at the age of 18 years old when she had me. She was and continues to be a strong and kind woman, but she spent most of her life working to provide for my brothers and me. We were poor and had many lacking growing up and rarely went on vacations or had any significant quality time together. But we had faith in God. Now I know that was a much more precious gift than we could have asked. In our struggles and lacking, we were united by faith and our love for God.

So, my experience growing up tells me that when families believe and serve together, God can turn even the most struggling families and dysfunctional situations into powerful, nurturing, and inspiring testimonies that make a difference in the world. It is less about how well put together we are or the abilities and resources we may have but much more about our willingness to serve together and connect with others that God also wants to use.

My friends, our personal stories, alongside the stories from the Bible of how God called and used imperfect and struggling people for amazing purposes, serve as powerful reminders that God does not call the perfect; rather, God perfects those he calls. If anything, this shows us that God is not searching for individuals without flaws or families without issues but rather for those willing to trust him and accomplish his will. I know from personal experience that God delights in using the broken and the imperfect to accomplish his purposes, for it is in our weaknesses that his power shines brightest. And it is in our imperfections that we see the beauty of God’s grace.

So, if you find yourself doubting your worthiness or ability to serve God as an individual or family, take heart in knowing that God specializes in using the imperfect to achieve the extraordinary. Do not be held back by your perceived shortcomings; instead, offer yourself to God with humility and faith. And trust in God’s ability to transform your weaknesses into strengths and to guide you in fulfilling the unique purpose he has planned for you and your family.

Back to Priscilla and Aquila. Their story inspires us all, reminding us that God can use anyone, anywhere, and at any time to make a difference in the world. Their ministry, which included mentoring others, hosting a church in their home, and supporting the Apostle Paul, demonstrates how families can actively participate in God’s work and be a blessing to others.

How is God calling you to serve and share your calling as a family? Perhaps through participating in church activities, mentoring or teaching others, or simply being a good neighbor in your community by volunteering at a local organization.

The good news today is that when we involve our loved ones in our calling journey, we create opportunities for growth, bonding, and lasting memories. By doing so, we can leave a legacy of love and unity that will inspire generations to come, just like Priscilla and Aquila.

I invite you today to step out in faith, embrace your faith journey with your family, ask them to join you, and trust that God will lead you every step of the way.

May your family become a source of strength, encouragement, and inspiration to others too.