

## “The Means and the Results of Calling”

Genesis 12:1-4

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: And Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.”

We have here the account of the call of Abraham. It is actually the first scriptural account of the call of a person to faith in Christ Jesus. I meant that exactly as I wrote it. Our Lord Jesus Christ said, He did not exaggerate, Christ said, “Abraham saw My day!” Not just a great day. Abraham saw MY DAY and WAS GLAD! The Old Testament saints were not as spiritually ignorant as many who profess to be Christians want to claim today. So we have in our text the account of Abraham’s call. Certainly men and women before this were called, who then believed God, but here we actually have “the call”. That is my subject: “The Means and the Results of Calling”.

Someone may ask, ‘But where in the text does it say Abraham was called?’ Here it is: “Now the LORD had SAID”. Do you see it? The Hebrew letter did: “By faith Abraham, WHEN HE WAS CALLED” (Heb 11:8). When God SAYS in this manner it will be so. “And God said, let there be light.” There was light! So again, the LORD had SAID unto Abram. This “said” is God’s absolute call to salvation by God-given faith, wrought by God-attended Gospel declaration. Someone may ask, ‘But where is any GOSPEL declaration in the text?’ Read what Paul, inspired of God, wrote about our text: “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, PREACHED BEFORE THE GOSPEL UNTO ABRAHAM saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal 3:8). That was and is the gospel! The gospel, in those words, may be but a spark of the total flame of the gospel, but

when applied by the Spirit of God in preaching, it is God's glorious spark! God may begin with you and me, He may call us with just one little tidbit, but bless God, if it is His tidbit then we begin on a journey that no man can hinder or stop! That is glorious!

See three things about the MEANS of this call:

1. God's call is never apart from Gospel declaration .....
2. God's call is for all who are ever saved .....
3. God's call always has Christ as its Gospel object .....

So then, #1 ....

In 2Thessalonians 2:13-14 Paul writes: "But we are BOUND to give thanks ...". God's truth chains us to thankfulness to Him. Paul continues: "... always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: WHEREUNTO HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL". There we have it; thus it is settled. Until one knows that call, they have no right to claim the calling!

Now see #2 ....

In Romans 8:28-30 Paul is absolute. All who are THE CALLED, were foreknown, predestinated, AND CALLED, and justified, and glorified. God's calling is for all who are ever saved and only for all who are ever saved. The called, all the called, have God's word that they are foreknown to be glorified as well!

Now see #3 ....

We are surrounded by much preaching but preaching alone is not Gospel preaching. Much is called gospel preaching which is no gospel at all (Gal 1:6-7). Remember our Lord, God in flesh, made clear that Abraham's gladness and rejoicing was in Himself and His day. Consider these following facts:

1. The message to Adam and Eve was Christ (Gen 3:15).
2. The message of Moses's writings is Christ (John 5:45-47).

3. The message of all the Old Testament is Christ (Luke 24:25-27).
4. The apostle Paul's message is Christ (1Cor 1:17).

There it stands! Christ is always the only object of God's one, absolute, irresistible Gospel call (Read again 2Thess 2:13-14).

In conclusion to the MEANS of calling, I give an experience of a young person many years ago. At the age of 5 years, a young child went forward in a religious meeting during what is called an "altar call" and prayed a repeated prayer and was informed he was then saved. This young child was very religious for a few years, but alas, as a young teenager he abandoned the profession and lived for self and flesh. As a young man, this person got a job driving a truck making deliveries all over southern West Virginia. This young man started seeing three "crosses" placed all over the roadsides and providential reckonings began to happen. Guilt for sin began to arise, conviction for a life wasted was experienced, and the young man returned to his religious profession with great zeal and dedication. Yet, even these were not the call of God. Providential reckonings meant by God, yes, but such as this is not God's call. While amidst the religious institution of this young man's childhood and later, God sent someone along with the testimony of what God had done for him and a handful of cassette tapes which contained the true, Gospel message of Christ Jesus the Lord. The Almighty God forced this young man to hear that Gospel and was graciously pleased to call him by that TRUTH! Then God forced both these people out of that religious institution unto the fellowship of others truly called to Christ by the Gospel! The point being this, providential reckonings ARE NOT the call nor salvation. Only the Gospel preached (Christ being the sum and substance), will ever call anyone to Christ. Moreover, providential reckonings alone will only add to the person's damnation apart from God's Gospel call (see Balaam). Men and women have many religious experiences, and sadly, they chalk it up to God's call - even salvation, but this is self-deception. What is the MEANS of God's call? The preaching of the truth of the person and work of Christ only!

So what about the RESULTS of calling?

First, a warning about a deceptive practice today. There are those who, sincere no doubt, give mental ascent to what is called "the doctrines of grace" but they have no concern for the preaching of the person and work of Christ. The

assembly, where CHRIST IS PREACHED is of no great importance, especially if they can find Calvinistic doctrine somewhere. The support of THE Gospel and giving of their heart in time and money does not matter. They “believe in grace” but they never confess, “I believe the Lord Jesus Christ”. Give a man or woman a religious profession, and make them feel at ease in their doctrinal correctness, and they may well perish in that forever. They will perish unless God intervenes, and brings them the TRUTH of the Gospel. 1. God must give life – God says, “Live”, God intervenes. 2. But the only thing that ever manifests that life is Gospel preaching.

Second, let’s consider, in detail, the RESULTS of calling. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, GET THEE OUT of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house” (Gen 12:1). There it is! Is this harsh? Would it not have been better for Abram to remain in Ur and give witness and testimony to God’s grace? NO! God does what is right and He calls His people OUT!

Consider two thoughts ....

1. God does not leave his choice jewels in the midst of their former idolatry. Remember, and consider Abram’s daddy died in Haran!
2. Here is the crux – God’s blessed Son, His Christ, He COMPETES with NOTHING else! Hear this I pray – God’s Son does not COMPETE!

Take a look at Matthew Chapter 10, there our Lord Himself taught these two great, profound glories, and I preface this with Paul’s words: “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3).

In Matthew 10:32-42 our Lord teaches the two afore-mentioned glories in three equal and related facets ...

1. The called reject family opposition.
2. The called reject personal opposition.
3. The called reject universalism.

The called are CALLED OUT OF and CALLED UNTO Christ alone!

1. The called reject family opposition (Matt 10:32).

The Results ...“Whosoever THEREFORE” is to be considered. Since God considers sparrows and the hairs of our heads (vv 29-30) how much more does He care about what Christ now starts to step into: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt 10:32). Why do so many professed Christians have no trouble with the world? They do not confess (stand up for) Christ as He is! And see the dangerous opposite of public confession of Christ (vs 33). Does this trouble you? It does me! How oft have I not CONFESSED! If not for God’s free, sovereign, redeeming grace, yea, even forgiving grace, I am gone! Christ then says: “THINK NOT” (vs 34). Christ did not say, “say not”. He even said “THINK NOT”. Think not what? “That I am come ... and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Read it please vv 34-37). This is like the pin being pulled on a grenade and the bang going off in the ears of the called! The sword is not an unfortunate consequence but Christ’s reason for coming! Why? God’s Son COMPETES with nothing. This is true even of the other God-ordained relationships of family!

Henry Mahan preached that anything in this life you hold on to, even kin, you best hold loosely because God will break your fingers to take them if they compete with Christ! Bury them all now and you will not be destroyed when God takes them.

2. The called reject personal opposition (Matt 10:38-39).

The Results ... My self is my greatest enemy. All the called know something about that. My self; my life; ME, ME, ME is my greatest idol! The called will be made willing to lose self “for Christ’s sake!” I write so little about this because it’s the most difficult for me to articulate. But see Paul’s words about self (Read Phil 3:4-14).

3. The called reject universalism (Matt 10:40-42)

The lie of antichrist religion is that God is trying to call and save, with no one left out. This is the biggest, and boldest, and most blatant lie of any generation, but especially this generation. From the first this was not so ...

- A. See Cain and Abel.
- B. See Noah and the world.
- C. See Abram and Terah.
- D. See Lot and Sodom.

Antichrist religion is bold enough to throw aspersion against God about this. See God's word on the matter (Rom 9:10-24). Let us consider our Lord's words about this matter from Matthew 10:40-42.

1. He that receiveth you receiveth me ... (vs 40). Do all receive you? If so you are in trouble (Luke 6:26)! But is it not amazing – the called receive the called, and thus receive Christ, and thus receive the Sender (vs 40).
2. He that receiveth a prophet ... (vs 41). We dare not receive all prophets for some are fake prophets (1John 4:1; 2John 6-11). When the called lay hold of someone in fellowship in Christ, they are laying hold of all fellowship with all that is prophetic – other believers, gospel pastors, THE GOSPEL HIMSELF (Christ) – and with all that are righteous – those with imputed righteousness, and Him (CHRIST), who is the Righteousness of God.
3. And whosoever shall give a drink ... (vs 42). In other words, those called by the Gospel are called to join unto others so called, even in the most basic of life's needs! There is much more to this than a drink of water, but this shows BASIC NEED = WATER = THE WATER = CHRIST. This is not a practice of all universally. In other words, I have this to give you – CHRIST – even when I have nothing else to give!

Christ is more to the called than all else ... NO COMPETITION:

1. From other men
2. From marital union
3. From blood kin
4. From difficult circumstances
5. From myself

But ... this call, because of its MEANS and RESULTS, it ...

1. Makes me to confess Christ.
2. Makes me see Christ as the priority.
3. Makes me to take the difficult circumstances from God.
4. Makes me to loathe self.
5. Makes me to love, and receive, and give to all OTHERS who are of this call.

May it so please God to work this call, with its MEANS and RESULTS, in you and me continually!