

Subject: God's Work in Salvation: CALLING

Scripture: Romans 8:28-30

The magnificent truths in verses 29-30, are given in support of Paul's statement in verse 28, that "all things work together for good" to God's people. God has been working all things for our good from eternity past, and He will continue to work all things together for our eternal good in the future when we will be glorified.

In the very beginning of Romans Paul addressed the church as those who are "the called of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:6) and those who are "called to be saints" (1:7). In Romans 9:24, Paul reminds them that God called both Jews and Gentiles to salvation. To the Ephesians Paul wrote, "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*" (Eph. 4:4). Here is what Paul wrote to the believers at Thessalonica:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 ¹³ *But we are bound to give thanks 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:* ¹⁴ *Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* For Paul, the calling of God's people was not something to avoid or debate or make excuses for. God's calling is something to be grateful for. See **1 Corinthians 1:24-31**. God's calling takes place in our lifetime (unlike God's foreknowledge and His predestination).

1. The MEANING of God's calling

- A. **God's general call for all people** (an external call) – This call comes from God through preachers, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, and personal witnesses. This general call comes into a person's ears and his thoughts.

This is God's general call through the prophet Isaiah. Some heard the call and responded and some didn't.

Isaiah 1:18 *Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

God's general call came through John the Baptist. Some heard the call and responded and some didn't.

Matthew 3:1-3 ¹ *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,* ² *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* ³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

Christ gave a general call for people to be saved and find rest for their soul. Some heard His call and responded to it and some didn't.

Matthew 11:28-29 ²⁸ *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* ²⁹ *Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

Christ rebuked people because they rejected John's call and His own call.

Matthew 11:16-19 ¹⁶But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, ¹⁷And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. ¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. ¹⁹The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

They rejected the call of John because they said He was too strict, and they rejected the call of Jesus because they said He was too liberal.

- B. God's special call for His people (an internal call) – This is God's call to a person's heart and soul.

This is speaking of God's people, not everyone. There is a special sense in which God calls His people in a way that He does not call all people.

The NT word for church (*ekklesia*) means “the called-out ones.” Believers have been called by God to come out and be separate from the world.

1 Peter 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.*

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

2. The SOURCE of God's calling

- A. The Father calls us

1 Corinthians 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* It is God's call unto the fellowship of His Son.

John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*

- B. The Son calls us

Matthew 9:13 *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* It is God's call to repent.

- C. The Holy Spirit calls us

Revelation 22:17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

3. The NATURE of God's calling

- A. It is a definite calling

The Bible describes us as God's called or chosen or elect people. God's calling is one of five links in God's golden chain. Those whom God foreknew, He predestined to be like Christ, and He called, and He justified, and He also glorified.

B. It is normally a persistent calling

God usually deals with us and calls us over a period of time, unlike Paul who was called at one moment in time on the Damascus Road (Acts 9).

C. It is a holy calling

2 Timothy 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* As He who has called us is holy, so we must be holy.

D. It is a high calling

Philippians 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

E. It is a heavenly calling

Hebrews 3:1 *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.* It is a call from heaven and a call to heaven. Our calling means that our home is in heaven, and we are just pilgrims here.

F. It is an unchangeable calling

Romans 11:29 *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.*

G. It is an effective calling

It always results in conversion and the salvation of the soul. It must be a powerful to call us from darkness to light and from death to life. When Jesus called the paralyzed man it was an effective call (“Rise, take up your bed and walk”). When Jesus called Lazarus from the grave it was an effective call (“Lazarus, come forth”).

4. The RESULTS of God's calling

A. It is a call to fellowship with Christ

1 Corinthians 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

B. It is a call to holiness

1 Thessalonians 4:7 *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

C. It is a call to spiritual freedom

Galatians 5:13 *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

D. It is a call to glory and virtue

2 Peter 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.

E. It is a call to eternal life

1 Timothy 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

5. The RESPONSE to God's calling

A. Be humble and thankful for God's call

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

B. Walk worthy of God's call

Ephesians 4:1-2 ¹ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, ² With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.

C. Examine your own calling to make sure it is real

2 Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

How can you know if your calling from God is real? Do you repent of sin and are you sorry for it because it offends a holy God? Do you fully put your trust Christ as Lord and Savior, resting on Him as your only hope of salvation? Do you gladly obey the Lord's commands and seek to please Him in all ways?

D. Answer God's call and do not harden your heart

Jesus often warned people who heard Him: "He that has ears to hear, let him hear."

The Bible says: "Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart."

The story of Charles Spurgeon's salvation reveals how God calls a person to salvation. On a snowy morning the conditions got so bad that young Spurgeon turned into a small Primitive Methodist chapel. The crowd was small and the preacher was very simple and direct in his sermon. He preached from this text: ***Isaiah 45:22*** Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

Spurgeon said it was during that message that he looked and lived. That's what you need to do. God is calling you to turn from your sins and your self-righteousness, and to look to Christ as your only hope of salvation.