

Series: Romans
Title: The First Cause
Text: Romans 10: 14-15
Date: June 9, 2019
Place: SGBC, NJ

Romans 10: 13: For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That is a wide, wide statement—“*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord...*” That is a sure and blessed promise—“*...shall be saved.*” Will today be the day you call upon the name of the Lord to save you?

Sadly, this verse is one that will-worshippers think bolsters their claim that salvation begins with the sinners will. They read the verse—“*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*” Then they portray the Lord as a weary beggar who has done all he can to save you but who has reached a stone wall. Then they exalt sinners begging them to do the Lord a favor by calling on him so he can have his way and save you. But if we simply read the next few verses, Paul traces this call back to its first cause.

Proposition: “Whosoever” shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved but the first cause of every sinner who calls on the Lord is the Lord himself.

Divisions: 1) First, no sinner shall call upon the name of the Lord until they first believe—**Romans 10: 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?**

2) None shall believe except they first hear of the Lord—**Romans 10: 14:...and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?**

3) None can hear except by a preacher—**Romans 10: 14...and how shall they hear without a preacher?**

4) Then we come to the first cause—**Romans 10: 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent?**

Title: The First Cause

It is true that “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” But...

NONE CALL UNTIL THEY BELIEVE

Romans 10: 14: How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?

Last time, I ended by asking, “Have you ever called on the name of the Lord?” If you answer no then the Spirit of God tells you why right here, you have not believed on him—“*How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*”

A sinner only calls on the name of the Lord for salvation when he already believes the Lord.

One, he already believes the Lord concerning himself—that he is a sinner who cannot save himself. He believes God is holy and that his condition is so unholy/unrighteous that he can do nothing to save himself or even contribute to his salvation. No one truly calls on the Lord for salvation until he believes the Lord’s word against him that he needs salvation and that it is impossible for him to save himself.

Two, a sinner calls on the name of the Lord when he believes the Lord's word that the Lord alone is able to save him—that is why he calls upon the name of the Lord.

Consider the leper to see that this is so. Scripture says, *"It came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"* (Lu 5:12). The leper did not come to the Lord Jesus boasting of his own will. He did not come saying, "Lord, I WILL let you make you clean." No! The leper believed himself to be full of leprosy. He believed himself to be unable to make himself clean. The leper believed the Lord Jesus alone was able to make him clean. So he came calling on the Lord because he believed the Lord could make him whole. And what did the Lord Jesus do? *"And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him"* (Lu 5:13). Sinner, do you believe you are a sinner unable to make yourself clean? Do you believe the Lord Jesus alone can make you whole? If you do then you will call on the Lord and the Lord will immediately make know your sin is forgiven!

Faith believes the Lord's word against ourselves. Faith believes the Lord is able to save and will save according to his word. Therefore, the sinner who believes calls on the Lord Jesus to save him.

When my children were toddlers, they would stand on the stairs and I would say, "Fall back into my arms, I will catch you." They loved to fall back and have me catch them. Why? They believed me! They believed my ability and they believed my word that I would catch them. Sinner believe on the Lord Jesus and fall back in his arms. He will catch you and carry you to glory righteous and holy by his person and works.

Now, our subject is "The First Cause." So before we move on, who is the first cause of faith? Is the first cause the sinner or is the first cause God? Let's see what the word of God says.

Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Before making the world, God chose who he would save and ordained each one unto good works such as believing and calling on the name of the Lord. Therefore, in time, God creates each one anew in Christ Jesus, gives us life and faith so that we walk in those good works. Faith is the gift of God by his free grace, not of the sinner, lest we should boast. It is not of our works but of God's workmanship that we believe on Christ.

So a sinner must call on the Lord to be saved. But when we do, it is because we already believe the Lord. And the first cause of a believer's faith is God, not the sinner. But how does God give faith? How does the sinner come to believe the Lord?

FAITH COMES THROUGH HEARING

Romans 10: 14:...and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

It is impossible to believe on the Savior we do not know and impossible to know the Savior of whom we have not heard. This hearing includes the general call as the gospel goes out to everyone. But there is a spiritual hearing that is only by the effectual call, which is by God giving us spiritual ears to hear.

Most think that everyone who preaches is preaching the Christ of the Bible. That is not so! Most are not preaching the Christ of the Bible. The apostle Paul spoke of *"another Jesus, whom we have not preached"* and *"another spirit, which ye have not received"* and he spoke of *"another gospel, which is not another."* (2 Cor 11: 4; Gal 1: 6-7). He called it a perverted gospel. Speaking by God the Holy Spirit the apostle Paul

said *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”* (Gal 1: 8-9).

The true gospel is good news! It is good news because it is the hearing of Christ Jesus the GodMan Mediator, who is the successful Lord and Savior that God the Father sent to save his chosen people.

We hear we are sinners by hearing of Christ the Holy One. We are conceived in sin of our father Adam, Christ was holy from the womb; he is the eternal holy Son of God come in human flesh. We went astray as soon as we were born; Christ was obedient from his mother’s womb, even unto the death of the cross. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God; Christ is the righteous servant of God who is very glory of God. He said, *“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin”* (Jn 15: 22).

The gospel is hearing that the Man, Christ Jesus, is the one and only Mediator between God and men, the one and only Salvation of chosen sinners. In the gospel we hear that Christ is the Substitute who willingly took the place of his people on the cross. Through the preaching of the gospel, we hear that Christ made Propitiation for his people. Through the gospel, we hear that Christ satisfied justice for his people. We hear that Christ purged the sins of his people. The gospel we must hear declares that Christ brought in everlasting righteousness for his people. The good news we must hear is that Christ is seated at God’s right hand with his people in him ever living to make intercession for us.

In the gospel we hear Christ himself declare, *“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life and no man cometh to the Father but by me”* (Jn 14: 6). We hear Christ promise *“I am the door of the sheep. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”* (Jn 10:9) We hear Christ declare, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”* (Jn 10: 27-28).

What a precious promise it is to hear Christ declare *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I shall in no wise cast out”* (Jn 6: 37-38). Faith comes by hearing Christ promise, *“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”* (Jn 8:12) The Spirit enters giving life in regeneration as we hear Christ promise *“I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”* (Jn 6:35)

As the Spirit makes us behold our complete ruin in sin, we hear that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him (Heb 7:25). As the Holy Spirit teaches us that we are guilty under the curse and condemnation of the law, we hear that *“By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”* (Ac 13:39).

The way we are given willingness to call on the Lord is when we hear Christ effectually command us in our hearts, *“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink”* (Jn 7:39) We hear Christ effectually command, *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* (Mt 11: 28)

Be sure to get this: there are other gospels which are not the true gospel. Christ said, *“Take heed, HOW you hear!”* And he said, *“Take heed, WHAT ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.”* Make certain you are always hearing the truth according to the scriptures! That is how we know that we are hearing the true gospel, by looking to see if what they preach is according to the word of God in the Bible.

Then when we hear, Christ says we are to mete it with effort to hear and understand. Christ is our Solomon who says *“INCLINE thine ear unto wisdom, and APPLY thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou CRIEST*

after knowledge, and LIFTEST UP THY VOICE for understanding; If thou seekest her AS SILVER, and searchest for her AS FOR HID TREASURES; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God” (Pro 2: 2-5).

Where does the ability to hear spiritually come from? He said, “*Lift UP thy voice for understanding!*” The ability to hear comes from Christ! They brought a deaf man with a speech impediment, Christ “*looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, ...his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain...[they said] ...he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. (Mk 7: 33-37)* He does the same spiritually. Lift up your voice to him and cry for understanding. He alone can give it!

HEARING COMES BY A PREACHER

Romans 10: 14:...and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Paul takes us back one more step declaring that hearing is given through a preacher. But, again, it is not just any preacher. Christ is the Head of his church. He only uses his preacher. His preacher preaches him and his cross. Through his preacher, Christ gives spiritual ears and faith so a sinner can believe on him. Do you see how it is all of Christ, through Christ and to Christ. “

Romans 11: 36: For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

It insults the wise/prudent to be told that God saves using another sinner to preach the gospel to us. But by God’s grace, it humbles the elect to know that God saves using another sinner to preach the gospel. And that is God’s two-fold purpose in saving through a preacher. That two-fold purpose is declared by the apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit of God in 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

1 Corinthians 1: 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19: For it is written, I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND WILL BRING TO NOTHING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRUDENT. 20: Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21: For after that IN THE WISDOM OF GOD the world by wisdom knew not God, IT PLEASSED GOD BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING TO SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVE. 22: For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25: Because THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD IS WISER THAN MEN; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26: For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: 27: BUT GOD HATH CHOSEN the foolish things of the world TO CONFOUND THE WISE; and GOD HATH CHOSEN the weak things of the world TO CONFOUND THE THINGS WHICH ARE MIGHTY; 28: And base things of the world, and things which are despised, HATH GOD CHOSEN, *yea*, and things which are not, TO BRING TO NOTHING THINGS THAT ARE 29: That NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE. 30: But OF HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, WHO OF GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31: THAT, according as it is written, HE THAT GLORIETH LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD.

Men and women, in *their* wisdom, object to the truth that God saves through a preacher preaching Christ crucified saying that it gives glory to man rather than the Lord. If the truth was known, they object to this means because *they* want glory for *their* searching.

But God, in *his* wisdom, says the opposite. Using a preacher does not give man glory. Truth is, by using the foolishness of preaching, delivered through the weakest-basest preacher of God's choosing, God actually destroys the wisdom of the wise and prudent. You will not find the wise and prudent in God's church amongst those God has truly sanctified.

Through this means, God makes those who he calls by his grace to cease glorying in our flesh in his presence by making us glory only in the Lord. By using a preacher who preaches only Christ and him crucified, God makes his elect to know it is of God that we are in Christ—we had nothing to do with it. It is of God that we are made to know Christ. And when God makes us know Christ it makes Christ All unto us—Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption—so that we look not to ourselves, only to Christ!

Therefore, to us who are saved by God through this means, the preaching of the cross is the power of God unto salvation. God has made us to behold and experience Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God!

THE FIRST CAUSE

Romans 10: 15: And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

The Holy Spirit of God made Paul take us back step-by-step until we come here to the first cause of a sinner calling on the name of the Lord. Now, let's start here at the first cause and follow the links in this chain to the sinner who calls on the Lord.

The appointed time comes which God foreordained from eternity when Christ, the Head of the church, will call one of his lost sheep who he redeemed with his precious blood. Christ has already laid down his life for this elect child of God on the cross. Christ has already worked out a righteousness for this chosen child of God. Now the season of love has come when Christ make it known to this lost vessel of mercy.

So first, since Christ has chosen his preacher that he will use to preach the gospel to this lost sheep, Christ now sends him—for *how shall they preach, except they be sent?*

Then by Christ's sovereign hand he works all things in providence to make his preacher and this lost sheep cross paths—for *how shall they hear without a preacher?*

So Christ gives his preacher the message for the hour to preach which exalts Christ in his all his redemptive glory and Christ blesses his lost sheep to hear—for *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

As his lost sheep hears the good news of how Christ successfully accomplished the redemption of each of God's elect, Christ intercedes with the Father and they send the Holy Spirit who gives his lost child life and faith so that he believe on Christ—for *how shall they call on him whom they have not believed?*

Then the sinner calls on the Lord Jesus, begging for mercy and Christ gives him peace in believing—for *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

THE OUTCOME

Romans 10: 15:...as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

With those few words, way back in Isaiah's day, Christ foretold the outcome that he would produce in the heart of each of his saints by calling us through this means of preaching—how he would make us value the preaching of the gospel of Christ above all else. It is what Paul speaks of the church as the family of God in all his epistles. Let me see if I can sum it up in a few words in closing.

First, Christ said in that day when he has sent his preacher and called his lost sheep through the preaching of the gospel, *"My people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I."* (Isa 52:6) We truly hear Christ. It is not an audible voice of Christ. It is the voice of Christ in spirit and in truth. We know it is Christ speaking in that day. And we know him—we know his name—in that day.

Therefore, from that day forward, the sinner saved through this means loves the Lord Jesus, loves the Lord's preacher and loves the Lord's people because they sacrificed of themselves to send him the gospel through which he was saved.

Having experienced Christ's power through the preaching of the gospel that sinner esteems assembling with his brethren under the preaching of the gospel to be priceless. He never forsakes it.

Having experienced Christ's love, the sinner saved is constrained by the love of Christ. In the face of the shortcomings of his brethren, he forebears and forgives. He endeavors to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace because he values the preaching of Christ so much for himself and for his brethren.

Having experienced that the gospel is truly the power of God unto salvation, it makes him less selfish and more generous to cheerfully give because he knows the value of sending the gospel to other lost sheep.

Christ said all this through Isaiah—he said this would be the outcome he would produce through this means—he said he would knit the hearts of his people inseparably together with him by making us be in full agreement from the heart, *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publish peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"*

Oh, the wisdom of God to save using his preacher and his people to send the gospel forth! This is wisdom too amazing, too great for me to put into words!

Christ said, *"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when THE LORD SHALL BRING AGAIN ZION."* He was speaking not only of his preachers, but also of his preacher and his people in each local assembly. When he unites each of us together we are, together, his watchmen.

"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice"—we each lift up *the* voice; Christ has given us one accord, one mind, so that together we make one voice as we sing and preach the one gospel of our one Redeemer.

"With the voice together shall they sing"—when we are assembled we sing and preach with one voice; but even better, *with The Voice*—with Christ's Voice together with our voice we sing and preach; together we each sing and preach the gospel with one unified voice and we do so together with Christ, whose Voice makes the gospel go into the heart of those he calls in effectual, saving power.

"For they shall see eye to eye"—each of us are in full agreement; but each of us are also of one mind and one accord with Christ himself.

“When the LORD shall bring again Zion”—it is not us who makes the gospel effectual; it is the LORD who uses us who effectually brings again Zion his church.

This is the difference between those who have to have the preaching of the gospel and those who can take it or leave it! The sinner who vainly imagines he taught himself does not value the preaching of the gospel. He does not value Christ’s preacher and people. Therefore, he cannot commit himself to a local church to be used of Christ to love his brethren and send forth the gospel. But that sinner saved through this means esteems assembling with his brethren under the preaching of Christ to be more necessary than his temporal bread. He must have Christ! Therefore, he must have the preaching of Christ! He considers it the richest blessing and greatest privilege to be used of his Lord and Savior to provide the gospel for those he loves! May our glorious Redeemer call one of his lost sheep now and give you this same heart with us. And may Christ always keep us esteeming him and his gospel the only thing we truly need in this world!

Amen!