

Title: **“THE CALLED”**

Text: Romans 1:6

Subject: *Effectual Calling*

Date: Sunday Evening — July 26, 2009

Tape # Z-67b

Readings: *1 Thessalonians 1:1-10*

Introduction:

(Romans 1:1-6) “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (2) (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) (3) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; (4) And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: (5) By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: (6) Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”

There are some people in this world described by the Holy Spirit as “*the called.*” Those who are the called of Jesus Christ are God’s elect, “*them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ*” (Jude 1:1), those sinners redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who have been saved by His almighty, irresistible grace. All the rest of the elect shall be called, but those who are saved are “*the called,*” **called from death to life, from unbelief to faith** in Christ.

The title of my message is “**THE CALLED.**” I pray that the Lord God will graciously enable me to show you something about the blessedness of this great blessing of grace spoken of in our text. Peter tells us to make our “*calling and election sure.*” But **the only way we can make our election sure is by making our calling sure.** We can know nothing about our election by God the Father and our redemption by Jesus Christ, until we have been called to life and faith in Christ by the effectual, irresistible grace and omnipotent mercy of God the Holy Spirit.

There is a general call that goes forth to all who hear the Gospel. All who are privileged to hear the Gospel preached are called externally by the preaching of the Gospel; but it takes more than the bare hearing of the Gospel for a sinner to be saved. If the only voice you hear in this hour is my voice, you will go home just like you came in, nothing bettered. But if God

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the Holy Spirit will speak to you by His Word through the stammering lips of this worthless messenger of God to your soul, you will go home singing like the psalmist of old, — *“Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto thee.”*

All who are saved, all *“the called”* have been called internally, effectually, and irresistibly by God the Holy Spirit. *“The called”* are like the Thessalonian saints. Their election, redemption and calling is made manifest by the fact that the Word of God has come to them, not in word only, but in the power of the Holy Ghost.

O Spirit of God, cause all here this hour to hear Your mighty voice. Call dead sinners to life. Call us all by Your Word and by Your power to the throne of grace. Teach us, comfort us, draw us to Christ and cause us to worship God our Savior.

I remind you once more, — **there is no effectual call of grace apart from the preaching of the Gospel. Yet, the preaching of the Gospel will never produce life and faith in Christ without the effectual call of God the Holy Spirit.**

Proposition: Salvation comes to chosen, redeemed sinners in the experience of grace by the almighty, irresistible, effectual call of God the Holy Spirit.

It is this call of which David sang, when he said, *“Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee.”* This is the call the Apostle Paul was talking about when he said, *“God separated me from my mother’s womb, called me by his grace, and revealed his Son in me.”* Paul was talking about this internal, effectual call when he wrote to Timothy, in **2 Timothy 1:9-11.**

(2 Timothy 1:9-11) *“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, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11) Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”*

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Notice how the Apostle Paul describes this call of God. When he speaks of it, he seems to be so overwhelmed by it, in such awe of it that he cannot find words sufficient to describe it. He calls it...

- “*An Holy Calling*” (2 Timothy 1:9).
- “*The High Calling of God*” (Philippians 3:14).
- “*The Calling of God*” (Romans 11:29).
- “*Your Calling*” (1 Corinthians 1:26; Ephesians 4:4).
- “*The Heavenly Calling*” (Hebrews 3:1).

What is this call of God by which we are saved? What is this heavenly calling of which we have been made partakers by the grace of God? It is described in many ways in doctrinal and theological works: The Internal Call — The Effectual Call — The Irresistible Call — The Call of Grace. All those terms are good and accurate.

I really like the way **John Gill** describes this effectual, irresistible call of grace, which comes to chosen, redeemed sinners by the sovereign power of God the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.

“Christ stands in the gospel-ministry, at the door of men’s hearts, and knocks and calls. Having the key of the house of David, He opens the heart by the power of His grace and lets Himself in. In this way, and by this means, the Spirit and His graces are received. Men are called both to grace and glory by the Gospel.”

But **I want us to see how this call is described and explained in Holy Scripture.** So I want us to simply read seven texts of Scripture. These seven texts will be my outline and my message.

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

1. **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.**”

This internal, effectual, saving call of grace is a call out of gross darkness into God’s marvelous light.

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As in **the creation of the world**, God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, so in the new creation of grace God the Holy Spirit shines in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

“When the apostle Paul was called by grace, a light surrounded him, as an emblem of that internal light which was sprung in him. After that, there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, as a token of the removal of his former darkness and ignorance.”

John Gill

Before God saved us, we were like all other men, engulfed in the gross darkness of our own depraved hearts and spiritual ignorance. God’s elect, in their state of nature, before they are converted, are just like all other men, totally ignorant of all things spiritual.

- Ignorant of God.
- Ignorant of Ourselves.
- Ignorant of Christ.
- Ignorant of Sin.
- Ignorant of Righteousness.
- Ignorant of Providence.
- Ignorant of Salvation.
- Ignorant of the Scriptures.
- Ignorant of the Gospel.

Now, by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit, the eyes of our understanding have been opened, we are now made to see light and walk in light, as the children of light. God’s people are children of light. We no longer grope about in darkness. We have the unction of the Spirit, causing us to know all things. Believers have the mind of Christ, enabling them to understand all things (Proverbs 28:5; 1 Corinthians 2:15-16; 1 John 20).

(Proverbs 28:5) “Evil men understand not judgment: but they that seek the LORD understand all *things*.”

(1 Corinthians 2:15-16) “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. (16) For who hath known the

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mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

(1 John 2:20) “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”

Believers understand the truth, believe the truth and receive the love of the truth.

- About God and His Ways.
- About Themselves and Sin.
- About Christ and His Atonement.
- About Grace and Salvation.

Being taught of God, regenerate, enlightened, saved sinners have the ability to distinguish things that differ. They know the difference between grace and works. They know the difference between free grace and free will. We have been called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light.

TO LIBERTY

2. 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.”

- We were by nature **children of wrath**, even as others; **but now**; but now, in Christ we are freed from all the curse and condemnation of God’s holy law.
- We lived all the days of our lives as **home born slaves**, under the dominion of sin; **but now**, in Christ we have become the servants of righteousness.
- We spent all our days **under the power and influence of Satan**; but we are now Christ’s free men.

How I thank God for the blessed liberation of grace! Satan, like a strong man armed, held me in a bondage worse than that of Egypt. Grace has set me free!

(Deuteronomy 6:20-23) “*And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? (21)*

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Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and **THE LORD BROUGHT US OUT OF EGYPT WITH A MIGHTY HAND:** (22) And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: (23) **AND HE BROUGHT US OUT FROM THENCE, THAT HE MIGHT BRING US IN, TO GIVE US THE LAND WHICH HE SWARE UNTO OUR FATHERS.**”

(Deuteronomy 4:31-39) “For the LORD thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them. 32 For **ASK NOW OF THE DAYS THAT ARE PAST,** which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? 33 **DID EVER PEOPLE** hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? 34 **OR HATH GOD ASSAYED** to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 **UNTO THEE IT WAS SHOWED, THAT THOU MIGHTEST KNOW THAT THE LORD HE IS GOD; THERE IS NONE ELSE BESIDE HIM.** 36 *Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice,* that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he **SHOWED THEE** his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And **BECAUSE HE LOVED THY FATHERS,** therefore **HE CHOSE** their seed after them, and **BROUGHT THEE OUT** in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; 38 To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, **TO BRING THEE IN, TO GIVE** thee their land for an inheritance, as it is this day. 39 **KNOW THEREFORE THIS DAY, AND CONSIDER IT IN THINE HEART, THAT THE LORD HE IS GOD IN HEAVEN ABOVE, AND UPON THE EARTH BENEATH: THERE IS NONE ELSE.**”

We have been called unto liberty, even “*the glorious liberty of the sons of God*”!

UNTO FELLOWSHIP

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3. 1 Corinthians 1:9 “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Not only have we been called out of bondage and into liberty, we have been called into the blessed liberty of intimate, sweet fellowship with the Triune God in our all glorious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!

God calls his people to abandon the world for Christ. Listen to me. — Those who are called of God are called to forsake family and friend, like Abram, and follow Christ. We have been, and are continually called by our God, to *“love not the world, neither the things that are in the world”*.

- The Riches of the World.
- The Recognition of the World.
- The Religion of the World.

(Deuteronomy 7:2-6, 25-26) “And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. 6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.....25 The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God. 26 Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.”

(2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that

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believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. **7:1** Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

(Revelation 18:4) “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Having said all that, let me hasten to say, all this is no great sacrifice. — “The heavenly calling” of which we are now partakers brings us into far better company than we ever knew before. We now have access to and communion with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and blessed fellowship with His saints on earth, and even with His saints in heaven (Hebrews 12:22-23).

- God’s house is open to us.
- The Lord’s Table is open to us.
- The very throne of God is open to us!

(Hebrews 12:22-23) “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, (23) To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

What a privilege! We have been called into fellowship with the eternal God!

TO PEACE

4. 1 Corinthians 7:15 “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but **God hath called us to peace.**”

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The call of God is a call to **internal peace**, peace of mind and peace of conscience, to which all men are utter strangers by nature. There is no peace to the wicked: but God has called us to peace. He has blessed us it; with a **peace which passes all understanding**; with **peace in the midst of the tribulations** of the world; with a **peace which the world can neither give nor take away**. Our peace is **a peace that arises from the blood and righteousness of Christ**, and is part of that kingdom of God which is within us, into which we are brought by our calling.

We have also been called to **peace among ourselves** and with all men. — *“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body”* (Colossians 3:15).

We have been called unto peace.

TO HOLINESS**5. 1 Thessalonians 4:7 “God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.”**

The call of God is an holy calling.

- It is a call arising from **A HOLY PURPOSE** — *The Purpose Of God!*
- It is a call based upon **A HOLY PRINCIPLE** — *Justice satisfied!*
- It is a call which has brought us into **A HOLY POSITION** — *Justified and Sanctified in Christ!*
- It is a call which makes us **A HOLY PEOPLE** — *“An Holy Nation!”* — *“A Peculiar People!”* — *“A Royal Priesthood!”* — *“A New Creature in Christ!”* — *“Partakers of the Divine Nature!”*

John Gill said, with regard to this call of God’s elect...

“They are called out of a state of unholiness and sinfulness, into a state of holiness and righteousness. For being created anew in righteousness and true holiness and created in Christ Jesus to good works, they are called to the exercise of them; to live holily, soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world. ‘*God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*’, (1 Thessalonians 4:7) and ‘*hath called us to glory and virtue*’ (2 Peter 1:3), to glorious acts of virtue and goodness, becoming the nature of their call, and of him that

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has called them; ‘As he which hath called you is holy’
(1Peter 1:15).”

We have been called unto holiness.

INTO GRACE

6. Galatians 1:6 “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from **him that called you into the grace of Christ** unto another gospel.”

- We have been called by the grace of Christ.
- We have been called by the instrumentality of the Gospel of the grace of Christ.
- We have been called into the blessed experience of the grace of Christ.
- We have been called to be partakers of and to enjoy all the blessings of the grace of Christ.

UNTO HIS KINGDOM

We have been called (1.) out of darkness into light, (2.) out of bondage into liberty, (3.) out of the world into fellowship with God, (4.) out of turmoil into peace, (5.) out of uncleanness into holiness, (6.) out from under the curse of God’s law into the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and (7.) out of the kingdoms of this world into God’s kingdom and glory in Christ.

7. 1 Thessalonians 2:12 “That ye would walk worthy of **God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.**”

God has called you, my brother, my sister, to a glory which is a kingdom. He has called you into the possession of the kingdom of grace here, a kingdom which can never be taken away from you. And he has called you to inherit a kingdom of glory hereafter. — “*The LORD will give grace and glory!*” This kingdom and glory to which he has called you is an everlasting kingdom.

Can you get hold of this? — We have been called by the grace of God “**to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ**” (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

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(Colossians 3:4) “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”

All who are called are “*called in one hope of their calling*” (Ephesians 4:4). — All who are called have **the same “promise of eternal inheritance”** (Hebrews 9:15).

(1 Peter 1:3-4) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”

All who are called are called to this kingdom and glory **have been given the same glory** for their eternal inheritance (John 17:5, 22)

(John 17:5) “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

(John 17:22) “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”

He has called us “**to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ**” (2 Thessalonians 2:14; John 17:22; Colossians 3:4) and to eternal glory by Christ Jesus (1 Peter 5:10). — Imagine that! We have been called by God to “*lay hold on eternal life*” (1 Timothy 6:12) and to an eternal inheritance. And “*they which are called, receive the promise of it*”.

What does all that mean? It means that we shall most assuredly enjoy eternal, heavenly glory, having a meetness for it through the grace of God and the blood and righteousness of His dear Son. Indeed, by Christ’s blood and righteousness, we have a right to it (1 Peter 1:3-4; Hebrews 9:15)

We are all “*called in one hope of our calling*” (Ephesians 4:4) to partake of the same inheritance with the saints in light; and to enjoy the same blessed hope laid up for them in heaven; and for which hope of righteousness we wait by faith, through the Holy Spirit, trusting Christ alone as our all-sufficient Savior. That inheritance of the saints for which we wait is the very glory of our Savior (John 17:22). The very glory given to Him as a man, as our God-man Mediator, shall be ours! **Can you grasp what I am**

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telling you? You and I who are called of God are “*heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ!*” — “*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.*”

APPLICATION

Turn to one more text of Scripture (Matthew 11:28-30). Here is a call which falls from the lips of the Son of God himself. I pray that God the Holy Spirit will make it irresistibly effectual to everyone one of you by his almighty grace. May God make you a partaker of it, for Christ’s sake.

(Matthew 11:28-30) “Come unto me, all ye that labour 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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

1. Come to Christ, and He will give you rest.
2. Take the yoke of Christ upon you, learn of Him, and you shall find rest for your soul.
3. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

If you come to Christ in faith, it is because He has called you by the effectual, irresistible power of His Holy Spirit. Your coming to Him, your believing on Him makes your calling and election sure. If right now you come to Him, you are numbered among those blessed ones who are “*The Called.*”

“Am I called? And can it be!
Has my Savior chosen me?
Guilty, wretched as I am,
Has He named my worthless name?
Vilest of the vile am I,
Dare I raise my hopes so high?

Am I called? I dare not stay,
May not, must not disobey;
Here I lay me at Thy feet,
Clinging to the mercy-seat:

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Thine I am, and Thine alone;
Lord with me Thy will be done.

Am I called? What shall I bring,
As an offering to my King?
Poor, and blind, and naked I,
Trembling at Thy footstool lie;
Nought but sin I call my own,
Nor for sin can sin atone.

Am I called? An heir of God!
Washed, redeemed by precious blood!
Father, lead me in Thy hand,
Guide me to that better land
Where my soul shall be at rest,
Pillowed on my Savior’s breast.”

Amen.