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THE EFFECTUAL CALL

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SALVATION

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"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." II Peter 1:10.

This text introduces two doctrines that are vitally related to human salvation, namely, "Calling" and "Election." He who masters the Bible on these two doctrines will have made great advance into the realm of divine truth. They are among the most neglected truths of the Bible, in spite of the fact that Peter exhorts us to make our calling and election sure. The verb "call" has a twofold meaning. It may express the act of naming, as in Matt. 1:21 **And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.** It also means to invite or to summon, as in Mark 2:17 **When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**

Now, when the word "call" is used to express an invitation or command, a further distinction must be made. In salvation there is a general and a special call; an outward and an inward call; a call that is resisted, and a call that is effectual. The general or outward call is in the nature of an invitation or command; the special or inward call overcomes resistance to, and causes acceptance of, the invitation or command. The one is objective, the other is subjective.

Men come into a saved state by a divine call. We are saints by calling. Rom. 1:7 **To all that b in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.** I Peter 2:9 **But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.** II Thes. 2:13 **But we are bound to give thanks alway 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.** We have a physical illustration of the effectual call in the call that raised Lazarus from the dead. The effectual call is a word that is attended with an omnipotent arm. Observe,

I. THE NATURE OF THIS CALL

1. It is a miraculous call. (1) It is a call that gives life to the dead sinner. John 5:25 **Verily, verily, I say unto you,The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.** (2) It gives sight to the blind. II Cor. 4:3-6 **But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of**

Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus'sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (3) It opens the heart as in the case of Lydia. Acts 16:14 **And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.**

2. It is irresistable. It has behind it the power of God. To resist this call would be for the sinner to overcome the Creator. It would mean the breaking of Scripture. Rom. 8:30 **Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**

II. THE NECESSITY OF THIS CALL

1. Because the word only is not sufficient. I Thes. 1:5 **For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.** Does this imply a fault or imperfection in the Gospel? Before we make reply, let us ask another question. Why is it that man cannot be saved by the law? Is it because of imperfection in the law? By no means, but because of moral inability in the sinner. So it is with the word of the Gospel; there is no fault in the Gospel, but human depravity makes something more necessary for salvation than a mere objective invitation. The Gospel of Christ is scorned and rejected by the natural man. I Cor. 1:23 **But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.** 2:14 **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** The carnal or fleshly mind is as much an enemy to grace as to law, for it is enmity against God, and God is the author of both law and grace. Left to himself man will no sooner trust Christ than he will keep the law. Remember it is not a natural, but a moral and spiritual inability. Man could trust Christ if he wanted to. It is the inability of the will. Cross reference John 5:40 **And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.** with John 6:44 **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.** John 6: 65 **And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.** I know this is a terrible reflection on human nature, but it is the truth, and there is nothing to be gained by dodging the truth for the sake of human pride. Too much of it has already been done, and this explains why there is so little real humility before God.

The hope of our success in saving souls is wrapped up in this call. I Thes. 1:5 **For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.** I Cor. 1:24 **But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.** I Cor 2:4-5 **And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith sould not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.** I Cor. 3:5-7 **Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.**

III. THE ASSURANCE OF THIS CALL

How may one know whether he has received this call? There will be certain marks on those who have received it.

1. He will have spiritual discernment. The Gospel will no longer be hid to him. Cross reference I Cor. 1:2 **Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.** I Cor. 1:14 **I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.** with II Cor. 4:3-6 **But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

2. He will have new desires. It is a holy calling and there will be longing for holiness. II Tim. 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. Matt. 5:6 **Blesed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.** TheSpirit is especially called "The Holy Spirit," because it is His proper and peculiar work to sanctify and make us holy, just as Christ is called Jesus (Saviour), because it is His proper and peculiar work to redeem us. Where the effectual call has been experienced there will be desires after God. Psalms 27:4 **One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.** Psm. 42:1 **As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.**

3. There will be growth in grace. Peter tells us that the way to make our calling and election sure is to build upon our God given faith the following virtues, namely, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. II Peter 1:5-10 **And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that laketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.**

IV. THE GUARANTEE OF THIS CALL

1. It guarantees that every future experience in this life will be for the believers good. Rom. 8:28 **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.**

2. It guarantees future glorification. Rom. 8:30 **Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.** The man who has been called will be glorified.

V. **THE WHY OF THIS CALL**

It is pursuant to a divine purpose. Rom. 8:28; II Tim. 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.** God calls effectually because He has purposed to do so. Everything He does is according to His eternal purpose. It is to bring the foreknown into a saved state. Election does not make a sinner holy, but is the marking out of those who are to be made holy. Eph. 1:4-5 **According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.**

VI. **THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THIS DOCTRINE**

1. It honors the Holy Spirit by ascribing to Him a place in our salvation. The Holy Spirit gets little honor from the average Christian. He thinks the Holy Spirit regenerates him in response to his faith. He thinks the Holy Spirit did something because he had already done his part. Might as well talk about doing our part to get Christ to redeem us, as to talk about doing our part to get the Holy Spirit to quicken us into life. Eph. 2:1-10 gives us the truth on this point. **Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in**

heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

2. It humbles us by showing us that we are made to differ from the lost around us by a work of grace in us, and not by our own will and self-effort. John 1:12-13 **But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.** I Cor. 4:7 **For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?** I Cor. 15:10 **But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.**

3. It robs us of any ground for boasting. I Cor 1:31 **That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.**

Isaac Watts, Spurgeon's favorite hymn writer, has put the truth in verse:

"Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room;
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?"
"Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste
And perished in our sin."