

# The effectual calling of the gospel (Quality: Average)

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[ 0 : 00 ] In the help of God, I will direct you to the chapter we read, the first chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, and verses 22 and 23 and 24.

The first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 1, verses 22, 23, and 24.

For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, that we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, and unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

What a divine mercy it is, if by the blessed operation and work of God the Holy Spirit, we are neither a Jew nor a Greek, but among those whom he has called.

For there cannot be anything more disputed than the cross of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[ 1 : 48 ] Now we read in the 18th verse, for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness. And it surely is to the old nature of man, that the preaching of Jesus Christ as he was crucified on a tree, as he died on that tree, as he was laid in the grave, as he rose from the dead to the un-converted, to the un-converted, to the ungracious, to the natural man, is foolishness.

But then the preaching itself is foolishness, according to the natural man, for that in the wisdom of God, for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God.

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. I did have many years ago in my teens a godly pastor who said that only a servant of God will know what it means to call the preaching foolishness.

But we might also add that the preaching of the cross is therefore foolishness. The words of the preaching of it is foolishness to the world.

That a body of people should come Sunday and weeknight to hear the gospel preached, when there's far more worldly things to do.

[ 3 : 36 ] My friends, it is to the world foolishness. May I read this word. 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.

But what are they to you? And what are they to me? Not that you may be in possession of the blessings that you so long for.

The truth remains. What is the preaching of the cross? It will determine, dear friends, your standing at this time for eternity.

Not that you have what you want. I wrote to somebody recently and I had to say this. You are not what you used to be.

And you are not what you would want to be. But somewhere there in the middle, dear friends, is the people of God. They haven't laid claim.

[ 4 : 55 ] They haven't received some into their very soul by experience the mercies and blessings of the cross. That isn't the question.

The question is, what is the preaching of the cross to you? For the answer surely determines the state of your soul.

Now, it meant nothing to the Jews. I meant to look and perhaps I can find it if it drops in the right order.

But the word which the Lord Jesus Christ so spoke to the Jews of old.

Verse 38 of chapter 12 of Matthew's Gospel. Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

[ 5 : 53 ] But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

That will be the sign. Now, I thought too, in my momentary meditation, of that number of people that stood round the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I suppose it would be true to say that the majority knew not what was happening.

They were those who would crucify the Lord of life and glory. They would delight in his death. They would rejoice in his sufferings.

[ 7 : 03 ] And they would be satisfied when his agonies were finished. And then I thought of a few poor souls who would see him on the cross, would mourn over him as that one mourns over his only Son, would, as the Scriptures tell us in the prophecy of Zechariah, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.

There would be a few believers that would be found at his cross. The Jews require a sign. And the Greeks seek after wisdom.

And the word Greek is often representative of the Gentiles. Those two names are often drawn together.

But we might also assume the Greek or the Gentile to be the natural man. Now, the natural man is satisfied only with the wisdom of this world.

And the more he can gain by it, the more he will. The more that he can store up those benefits of the wisdom of this world, then the more satisfied he is with time and life and the world itself.

[ 8 : 38 ] But here is a sign and here is a wisdom that is God-given. I said this morning, I would say it again, the Lord grants you the token that you need.

The token of his special love. That's a sign. It may be you have a matter which is in all important. And you watch to see whether it is of the Lord or not.

The Lord grants you the token. We read very recently the 24th or some verses of the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis.

Genesis, where Abraham's servant went to obtain a wife for Isaac. And he was a praying man.

And we read in verse 21, The man wondering at her, that is Rebecca, held his peace to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.

[ 9 : 47 ] Well, if he watched to see whether it was prosperous or not, so will every living soul. The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom.

And those that seek after Christ, those who are quickened by his spirit, that live a life of faith and prayer, these are the characters who seek this sign, this wisdom, which shall be found in the revealing of the Lord Jesus.

But we preach Christ crucified. Unto the Jews a stumbling block. And unto the Greeks foolishness. Unto all believers a stumbling block.

All unbelievers a stumbling block. Unto all unbelievers foolishness. Dear friends, you must needs know what it is to be lost.

To see any interest or blessedness or comfort or indeed deliverance. In this blessed subject, Christ crucified.

[ 11 : 02 ] We preach Christ crucified. Here we are in the year 2001. And all those years have gone by and still it is preached.

And it will continue to be preached while there is a vessel of mercy that rests his hope for eternity upon this blessed person.

We preach Christ crucified. We would preach Christ crucified to needy sinners. Oh may the Holy Spirit reveal the crucified one to you who are needy and poor in your soul.

I read sometimes, and it is words which I can't lay claim to, we read of these characters in evangelical circles who have the privilege of leading sinners to Christ.

I can't walk with them. But I believe in the Holy Ghost completely and absolutely. And he is the glorious person that shall lead sinners to Christ.

[ 12 : 24 ] Not a poor man. We preach Christ crucified. The sufficiency to poor sinners. The suitability to poor sinners is Jesus Christ.

That he might be the comfort of your poor souls. Oh my friends, you must surely be lost before you know this Christ crucified.

He who will teach you the burden of indwelling sin will point out this way of escape, this blessed method of deliverance, this way of comfort and assurance.

He who was nailed to the tree is the way, the truth and the life. He is the one and the only one that could and did offer himself as a sacrifice for sin.

Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain could give the guilty conscience ease nor wash away one stain.

[ 13 : 40 ] And whilst those believe in, while these Jews and Greeks seek a sign, require a sign, and seek for wisdom and look to the sacrifice in the covenant of works, they will never know forgiveness.

For those who look to the crucified one, see, as we said this morning, the love that is in his heart to his people, we'll see that the sacrifice God accepts for his people's sins.

See, his offering is a holy offering for the sins of his people. See, too, in that precious blood that flowed from the wounds of Jesus, that healing balm.

Oh, my friends, I keep on saying this because I keep on needing this. The Lord make us conscious of the need of his precious blood.

I believe every believer you know will rejoice in the truth of Jesus Christ and him crucified for their heaven is secured through him and through his offering.

[ 15 : 02 ] That precious blood, then, that flowed from the tree at Calvary, we spoke of it very briefly, is what you and I will be brought to need if we are lost.

And again, my friends, how often do we have to plead for this precious blood? How often do we have to beg that whatever is done, whatever we may put our hand to in the name of the Lord may be surely washed.

We need our sins washed away, but we need our, what we do to be washed also. But we preach, Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

But then, my friends, have you ever come to this conclusion? As I said, you may be in possession, and not be in possession, of what you desire at this time.

But, oh, just consider, meditate as the Lord will help you. What made it to be so with you that you see some blessed mercy in this person, crucified?

[ 16 : 29 ] Why was it that he, the Holy Ghost, he that is the third person in the Trinity, so worked in your soul this glorious work, so put a desire there after Christ?

Why was it amongst the millions of the human race that you have in your heart a desire for this blessed person? It isn't hereditary.

I'm sure godly parents have prayed for it to be given to their children, but it's not hereditary. It's all of God's grace if you need Christ Jesus.

And it's all of God's grace if you can see such a beauty in the person of Christ that you seek after him. We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness.

It's also a stumbling block to Pharisees. What makes it a stumbling block? What makes it foolishness to them? Well, you always find Pharisees about and they would obtain salvation.

[ 17 : 47 ] They go after it and they would judge that they are merited, they have merited salvation by their upright walk and conversation.

This is not the letter that we preach. It is, as we said this morning, the experience. It is the knowledge that we preach, not the letter of it.

we would not try to preach the letter and leave you and others who hear to be void of the blessing.

My friends, experience will bring the truth of this glorious person to you. Now, those who would see a foolishness in this and a stumbling block to their feet, do so because they have no hand in this great work and neither of you and I.

This is the wonder of wonders, my friends, not only who it's for, for it is for sinners, but this blessed truth, my friends, it is done for them and not done by them.

[ 19 : 05 ] I thought of that word that the Catholics use when I was coming into chapel. They speak of absolution, the absolving of a person's sin, the putting away of sin, the deliverance from the power of sin, and they contribute towards this absolution.

My friends, that wouldn't do my soul any good and it wouldn't do yours. Nothing but his precious blood will bring absolution, will bring forgiveness.

I believe in the apostles' writing to the Hebrews when he said, without shedding of blood, there's no remission. That's where I stand.

My friends, not to be conducted into the realms of fancy by a priest, but rather the great high priest of my profession.

It is his blood. It is his offering. It is his love to his people. It is that willingness of Jesus Christ to suffer and die in their place.

[ 20 : 28 ] It is that glorious work that removes forever the sin of the people of God from the church of Christ and personally as it is made over to them.

and it is removed forever because it can never be seen again by God. We preach Christ crucified.

the blessed spirit will teach you the necessity of this cross. The necessity of it.

I do love the hymns that are written on this blessed subject. Oh, my friends, the Lord draw us closer to Christ.

The Lord draw us closer to the crucified one. Oh, I can walk with that despised disciple of Jesus Christ.

[ 21 : 27 ] You know, in a measure I can walk with him. I walked in my early days discontent in anything and everything but Christ being revealed.

It is said of Thomas, it was said by Thomas, except I see in his hands the print of the nails and thrust my finger into the print of the nails and my hands into his side.

I will not believe. You can't countenance unbelief, my friends, not for a second. It's too much of a trouble to us. But, oh, what determination lay in those words.

What he could not, though he should believe, as we would put it, the disciples had seen Christ, so should he believe that they had seen him.

But there seems to be a little more in Thomas there that perhaps we must not overlook. He wasn't content to say, except I see him.

[ 22 : 38 ] He wanted to see the cause of his suffering. He wanted to see the evidence of his offering. He wanted to see what was done on Calvary's tree.

Dear friends, believing is seeing, and seeing is believing. We preach Christ crucified. May he be revealed to those who seek to see him, and he will surely be so.

Unto the Jews a stumbling block. And unto the Greeks, foolishness. Now, there is two people in this world, whether you call them Jews and Greeks, or what you call them, believers and unbelievers.

The righteous and the ungodly, the sheep and the goats. Whatever terminology you use, there is only two people, north, south, east, or west.

They come under that head in an example. Because in verse 24, we find the other side, the believers of Jesus Christ, but unto them which are called.

[ 23 : 55 ] That's the blessed people of God. That's the church of Christ. That's the poor, needy sinner that weeps over sin. That's the one who gets on their knees and begs for mercy at the footstool of mercy.

These are those who bow their head because of the burden of sin on their soul. These are those who go up to the house of God to hear what the Lord will speak, whether he will speak peace and pardon and comfort to their soul.

These are the souls who are ready to perish because they would say he hides his face, he withdraws his presence and he is silent to their very soul, but they are under this blessed description called.

Called what? And to what? My friends, called by invincible grace. If you read these epistles of Paul, and indeed in this one, called to be saints.

That is what these souls are. Is that a bit, is that too high a word? Is that so strong a description of the poor and needy of the people of God?

[ 25 : 18 ] Oh, you can look to the apostle and say, well, that's true of him. Called to be saints. Every vessel of mercy is a saint in God's eyes.

He's not so necessarily in his own, and he certainly won't be in the sight of natural man. But unto them which are called, what a vital difference do these words make.

As vital as this, for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us, us. But unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.

Dear apostle doesn't ride roughshod over the foolish people who shut their eyes to Christ and his gospel. He speaks of the effect of grace in his soul and in the people of God, and as it were, draws a blessing line.

Oh, this is the measuring stick of real religion, my friends. But unto us which are saved, it is the power of God, but unto them which are called, whether they be Jews or Greeks, whether they be bond or free, whether they shall be in whatever nation, kindred, or tongue they may come from, but unto them which are called.

[ 26 : 50 ] Oh, the blessed characters they are, called out and called in, called out of nature's darkness.

You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. This is what it is to be called. It isn't an inclining of the mind.

There were those, there are always those preachers that go about that would emotionally move the mind to take up with Jesus Christ.

These are the ones that would bend the natural will of man to be religious. I wonder, dear friends, I say it very solemnly, a ministry that does without the Holy Ghost is an abhorrence in God's eyes.

But I wonder too how many there shall be found in the day of judgment who have been deceived. But those that are called will never be deceived because they are called out by invincible grace.

[ 28 : 10 ] They are the subjects of the divine sovereignty of God. They are those who are elect according to the foreknowledge of God.

They shall enter into this world but they shall never leave this world until they are the subjects of this blessed calling. And dear friends, hear this word also, it's a calling without repentance.

Oh, it most surely is. God can never change his mind but unto them which are called. And such is the calling, my friends, it overcomes the depths of sin of the person who is called.

He might be a respectable chapel goer or church goer. He might be someone like Saul of Tarsus, ever so religious but ever so dead.

And somewhere in the extremities of whether Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, or the jailer, that hard character lies.

[ 29 : 31 ] My friends, somewhere between those two characters, the church of Christ lies. But unto them which are called.

And my friends, who can hinder this call? On the other hand, who can overthrow this call? my friends, that is the blessing of this calling.

This is the work of the Holy Ghost, which the dear apostle, which is, this is the work of the Holy Ghost, of which the apostle wishes to draw the attention of the church at Corinth.

That there is a calling, and it's invincible grace. grace. There is one blessing that I may have overlooked, and yet it really covers all things.

My friends, and that is the mercy of these things. The mercy. The mercy is that these that are called, to these whom Christ crucified, is the foundation of their eternal comfort, and of every blessing in their soul.

[ 30 : 53 ] My friends, it is the mercy of a triune Jehovah. We preach Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks.

Now, that makes the difference, but that's an eternal difference. you find the religious people that don't understand the doctrine of sovereign grace, rejects out of hand the doctrine of election, rather would lean towards man doing something towards his own salvation, and argue against any that would stand upon that one ground of God's work.

work. My friends, they are indeed unable to receive the truth as it is in Jesus, and unable to understand the truth that it is in the Trinity that this work was ever found.

In the councils of Jehovah, there was decreed and purposed a people that shall be called. God's love. Though they might live a long time in this world, they may not live a long time.

My friends, they shall all be the subjects of this calling, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks.

[ 32 : 29 ] Oh, how we truly should be thankful for the word of God, but also for the work of God, because it brings to complete emptiness the work of man.

There's no power in man to ever put into the soul of a dead sinner, this glorious work, this calling. What do we read further down?

May the Lord so touch our hearts this night as we read it. May he blessedly grant to us an assurance of the truth of it, if you need that assurance, for ye see your calling.

Do you? Blessed is the day, my friends, when you do, when you give him the honor and the glory, for not leaving you to perish in your sins, but through his mercy and goodness, called you invincible, sovereign, merciful grace.

For ye see your calling, brethren, held at not many wise men after the flesh. Not many mighty, not many noble are called, 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, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.

[ 34 : 21 ] Well, in those few verses, surely you can see the blessedness of this calling. Well, perhaps you've lost sight of your calling.

Perhaps sinners covered it over, perhaps doubts and fears have increased, perhaps unbelieving rise high, perhaps Satan questions, or puts a question into your soul over your calling, and you'd have to say, Paul, I can't see my calling, for you see your calling, but then do you see the effect of the calling?

That is, my friends, the evidence of it. You and I are born in England, and the evidence said, that is that we're English, and we speak English.

But if you and I are under this blessed calling, there will be the evidence of it, and it will be seen. You won't hide this under a bushel.

This won't be kept from your fellow men. Surely the calling of grace, and it will bring forth fruit, and it will be evident to the unbeliever as to the believer.

[ 35 : 45 ] It was evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ met with Saul of Tarsus, because that remarkable conversion, that plucking a brand out of the fire, the evidence of it was, Behold, he prayeth.

My friends, there is evidence of a calling. but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, called out from that lost and ruined state by nature, called into the fellowship of the people of God, numbered with them, may I be.

Dear friends, there is something here which is ever so simple, you may lose sight of your calling, you may wonder whether you have ever been called, you may wonder whether you have inherited a religion from your parents, or that you have known the language of Zion from them.

The answer to that is will determine the calling, and I come back to that word of Jesus Christ, what think ye of Christ, whose son is he, my friends, it will determine the calling, and then this will determine the calling, when he puts a cry in your heart, when you may perhaps have prayed much and many times along the journey of life, but when he teaches you to pray, as a poor sinner will be taught, to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, oh what a blessed change does this calling make.

You will find too, in the calling, that you'll have a different view of this world, and its prospects. you will look at vain man, in his attempts to gain as much as he can, and as high as he can obtain, in the ladder of success, you will have a different view of that, and you will see death stamped upon it all, and you will see that whatever man may gain, by right means or wrong means, he shall leave it behind at the day of his death, but unto them which are called.

[ 38 : 39 ] You will find too, that your affection, and your very soul is set on Christ and his kingdom, you will find too, that in that calling, it brings a union between you and God's dear people.

We know that we are passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. Saul loved the brethren after he was called by grace, not before they were to be persecuted, set at naught, even put to death, but not afterwards.

He was one with them, but unto them which are called. God, oh, may you know your spiritual birthday. May you know what it is to look back and bless God, that he began to deal with you and not leave you to perish in your sins.

It is invincible, this calling. It can never be overthrown. It will never come to naught. It will never be unfruitful.

It will be the means in the Holy Ghost's teaching to bring you to see a need of this blessed crucified one.

[ 40 : 06 ] But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks Christ. Christ. That is the evidence of the calling.

Christ is all and in all. He is all and in all in desire. He is all and in all in need.

Though you possess not the blessing that you would possess, you would possess the blessing. I hope you understand that simplicity, my friends.

It's an evidence of the calling. There's a longing after Jesus Christ. There's a desire to walk in holiness and righteousness.

But it also, there is another side of this calling, my friends, and that is you will find the old man to be your oppressor and distressor.

[ 41 : 05 ] But unto them which are called, those that are called are those whose souls are quicker than life. And the quickened soul is the ransomed soul.

And the ransomed soul will go to heaven. The old man who would distress you along with the power of the tempter will be found in hell at last.

The old man. Or rather it will be found in the grave. It must die and be laid in the grave. And it must perish and come to the dust from whence it came.

But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. The apostle writes somewhere, set your affections on things above, not on things of this world or this earth.

Well, my friends, that's not an impossible thing. If you and I are among the called according to his purpose, we shall find a principle within that would deal with heaven.

[ 42 : 20 ] We would find a principle within that cannot but deal with heaven. Whereas old nature has nothing more than this earth to deal with or to contend with either, the ways of the new nature of grace is to do business with heaven.

And to see those blessed mercies and favours that are laid up in glory for such people. And to them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, and you will see in him all your salvation.

It will be by desire that you seek for it. It will be a longing exercised soul that sees in Christ the power of God.



When he was here on earth, he demonstrated deity. And he did so in many ways. He did so when he quietened the storm on the lake.

In the closing words of the Lord Jesus Christ, as he ascended to glory, he said this, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

[ 43 : 51 ] Christ, the power of God. My friends, you would see it in his dealings with sinners, here in their afflictions, their troubles, and in their distress.

stress. But you will see it another way. I don't wish, my friends, to be anything but reverent when we speak of the things of Christ.

There were those in the days of Christ who were beneficiaries of his mercy, of his power, of his deity. Their eyes were open, they could see, their ears were unstopped, they could hear, they received their dead, raised to life again, they were delivered from the palsy, and such things as this, and other afflictions which only the Lord Jesus Christ could deal with.

What power, what authority is with Christ? But, my friends, there's another power that we must not lose sight of.

But unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Oh, may I remind you of the day of resurrection.

[ 45 : 14 ] In this first epistle, we have that chapter 15 which was written on the subjects of the resurrection.

We read these words, So when this corrupt of all shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on all immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as surely death could not hold him, just as death could not hold him, and the grave could not hold him, the designs of evil men could not hold him.

the word of God through the apostle is this, the wages of sin is death, and that's why we all die.

[ 46 : 27 ] But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

And what blessed power then is to be known by believers. That power over sin, that power over death, that power over Satan and his agents.

But then he was then we read, and the wisdom of God. My friend, there is no blessed wisdom, there is no more blessed knowledge, and that is the fruit of wisdom then, than the knowledge of this blessed person.

For the Jews require a sin, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach, Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Amen. God will end the prayer meeting Wednesday, and I hope to be here next Lord's Day. The Lord help us to conclude with hymn 439.

[ 48 : 14 ] why is Jesus is the When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of Glory died  
My richest gain I count but loss And pour contempt on all my pride See from his head, his  
hands, his feet Sorrow and love flow mingled down Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
O'er thorns compose so rich a crown?

Hymn 439 Hymn 439 When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of Glory  
died My richest gain I count but loss And for contempt on all my pride

All in the heart that I should pass The sacred land of God God, my son, my God God, my son, my son My son, my son, my son My son, my son, my son My son, my son, my son  
My son, my son, my son Say your heart His head His heart His heart His heart His heart  
His heart His heart His heart His heart His heart His heart His heart His heart His heart His  
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Lord, we would have to say with one of old, the half hasn't been told.

[ 52 : 52 ] Lord, we pray that thou would teach thy children, reveal to them the person and the beauty of Jesus Christ.

Oh, make them to feel an interest in that precious work. All for sinners, Lord, all for those whom thou hast called to pardon, forgive and put away all that's been wrong.

Lord, forgive the sins of this day, accept of our thanks for the mercies of this day. Now take us home in peace and remain with us.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit remain with us both now and forever.

Amen.