

The call of God

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[0 : 00] I'd like to turn with the United Kingdom to the words in the first epistle of Peter, chapter 2, reading at verse 9.

First Peter, chapter 2, verse 9. But we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation of peculiar people, who particularly the words that follow, that we should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

God willing, tomorrow morning we shall assemble here to remember the Lord's death till he comes.

And you know that at that service we speak of what has become commonly known as the, we speak of what has become commonly known, the action sermon.

Whatever it means I think that it brings before us that on that day the theme is Christ's worst, Christ's atoning worst and atoning death on behalf of his own people.

[1 : 53] Christ's action or activity in his death. Christ's action or activity in his death. At the same service people sit at the Lord's table and engage in an action themselves.

They, as the New Testament tells us, they are there to show forth the Lord's death till he comes.

Christ's action or activity in his death till he comes. Now you know that this showing force is just a witnessing on their part, a testifying of on their part, a declaration of, by the people at the table, of what the death of the Lord Jesus Christ means to them.

It's important to them. It's important to them in their lives. It's important to them in their lives. The place it has in their lives. What it has meant to them and done for them.

And its preciousness to them. And its preciousness to them. To this very time. But the witness, the ministry, the testifying of, by the Christians, of the importance of the death of Jesus Christ in his life.

[3 : 20] It's something that takes place just at the Lord's table. As you sum your way through the pages of the scriptures you discover that the death of Jesus Christ is something which governs regularly the way in which a Christian lives in this world.

And part of Peter's purpose in penning these words to the believers who were scattered throughout the various regions at the time in which this letter was written.

Part of his purpose is to remind them that they are living in a world in which they are to show forth, to testify of, to witness to the praises, the virtues, the things that are true concerning the one who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.

And the believer therefore is a person who, whether he is sitting at the Lord's table or living in whatever way he is, wherever he is in this world, is a person who has something to say to people by his light and by his witness about the God who has called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.

As you know in various parts of the Bible particularly from the Sermon on the Mount, a Christian is one who has been called by God out of darkness into light.

[5 : 18] And as we hold on to the Sermon on the Mount, a Christian is one who has called them out of darkness into light. And as we hold in on these words, we discover that this is one of the very important statements in the Bible about a Christian. So that when we ask as we tend to ask, and as people quite wisely tend to ask, who sits at the Lord's table?

Who should be there? What is the person who has called by God out of darkness into his marvelous light?

And for a little tonight, I would like to just concentrate with you on these words, the call that we have here spoken of, the call and what it is and its nature and what it does.

Just these two thoughts. Its nature, the call that comes from God to the sinner, called by God. And what this call does? And it does two things. It calls people out of one state or condition and it calls them into another. Called out of, into.

I think that it is accepted by most people that we live in a day in which the line of demarcation between what a being a Christian is and what a Christian isn't, is becoming almost obliterated.

[7 : 03] It seems to be noted that in the old days, when they, there's a case recorded, for example, of a young convert who went to his minister into the church session with a request to be admitted to membership of the congregation by profession of faith.

When he came into the church session, the minister who had, the minister who is in charge there, asked him this question. Now he said, what can you tell us about a change of heart? A change of heart.

And again, whatever else a Christian is, he is a person, surely, whose heart, whose life, whose outlook has been changed.

And changed, firstly because, as we see here, God has called him. Now, this is a very important word, most of you, not all of you will know, particularly in the New Testament.

I think it is used 35 times in the New Testament, of what is essentially the efficacious, what we call the efficacious call of God in the life of an individual.

[8 : 29] But just in the passing, we tend to speak of the call in another way, such as what we speak of as the general call. For example, everyone, when the gospel is preached, and let's say there's a congregation of a hundred, 50 of them are Christians and 50 are unconverted.

And the gospel is preached to that congregation of a hundred people. And the claims of Christ are brought home to all. Everyone in the congregation is called. Everyone hears the general call of God then in the gospel.

Remember, the Lord Jesus sent his disciples out to call people into his kingdom. And he commanded them to go into the highways and byways, and to bid them to come, bid them come.

God calls their men and women everywhere, son and daughter, give me thine heart. And it is our responsibility as minister of the gospel to present that call to all and son, to everyone who's heard.

And everyone is in a state of need, in a condition of need, in the presence of God. And to all who need, therefore, the call comes. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are highly laden.

[9 : 40] And the minister of the gospel is he lies. In addressing that call to any who will listen to it. That's his meat and his drink. He is never happier, maybe in this life, than when he is presenting the call of God to men that they might believe.

Some, of course, respond in different ways. Some don't hear a word that is said. They come into a church, they leave it. Not a syllable, do they take wisdom of what they've heard. Others come, and they might be impressed by the manner in which the call is presented.

They might not be. But they react. And in that way, they're impressed. Others, perhaps, may tremble in the call.

They may feel convicted, like Felix did in a grip. And like people in times of revival tell you that they have been. They feel something. But they don't respond in saying to the call.

But when God calls, it is so different. It is so different. Here is a call that comes in a way in which it cannot be with you.

[10 : 59] As someone has put it, it is a summons. When it comes to the individual, it is a summons to which he is constrained to respond.

He guarantees. He cannot refuse it. When it is used as it is used in this verse. It always refers to God's predestinating call unto salvation.

God speaks to the heart, to the conscience, to the mind, and to the will. And he summons that individual with an irresistible call.

In other words, the call comes to this person with the power that enables him to respond.

Called by God. As someone has put it, God calls this person so that he is delivered to the intended destination of the call.

[12 : 22] And the intended destination, of course, as we have seen a minute, is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the Christian, therefore, is a man who is called to respond.

And every man that's called does respond. And no one is a Christian unless and until he responds to that call.

Called by God out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now, there's one or two other things on this poor believer.

Every man that's someone to believe is a Christian or a saved person. What happens is that a work of God takes place in that person's mind, in his heart, in his will, in his understanding.

The call comes to him, direct to his heart, from God. There's a classic example of this in the New Testament, in the life of Lydia.

[13 : 39] You remember the story. Paul preached both of them from the word of God at the river side. And this is what we read.

As Paul's book, the Lord opened her heart. And this is always what happens in the call.

God calls so that a person responds to the call. And when he does call, there is nothing in the world more personal than this call.

Nothing. You may have been sitting for years under the gospel in our church. Becoming so used in perhaps dozing through our hair.

And then everything changes. When God calls. When God did. Like the young fellow who went to a meeting once and he heard a minister preaching on a text.

[14 : 55] The request of the Greeks who came up to the priest says, We would see Jesus. And the Lord blessed that sermon to his heart. And he left the meeting.

And shortly after, just having gone down the road away a bit, He met an old Christian who had also been to the meeting.

The old Christian asked the young fellow, I saw you said in a meeting, yes? He said, what do you think of that sermon? Well, you know, said the young fellow to him, I thought there was no one there but myself.

I thought there was no one in that church but myself. And the old Christian replied, Well, he said, that's the way I felt as well. And the young fellow couldn't understand How the old Christian could have felt that meeting.

You see, they both felt the power of God. And under the constraining influence of that power, The message was so personal to them both.

[15 : 58] It was just for them. When God speaks, when God calls, Is it not true that that becomes The most personal moment in your life?

Remember what Joseph did when he made himself known to his brethren? He caused all the Egyptians to go out to Rome. And he made himself known to them. What a personal moment that was.

For them. So it is for you. And for me. When God calls. By his birth. It comes from him.

To you. And to no one else. It's a person of God. The call of God. But then, secondly.

In this two-pronged view that we have of it here. It's a call that comes to us. To deliver us out of. And to call us into.

[16 : 58] He calls us out of darkness. Into. His marvelous light. In other words. This call comes with delivering power.

It comes that it may separate us from. Now I think. That everyone would agree with us. That the Bible never speaks.

Of a changed person. Spiritually. Who can continue. Living in the kind of life that he used to live. It never speaks. Of a changed man.

In that way. Never. Never. But it always speaks of a changed man. Who must. Because of the change.

Break. Towards the life. That he lived. And you know. We make it far too easy. I think when. We may.

[17 : 59] When we tend to give people the impression. That they can be Christians. They can consider themselves called by God. And. Continue.

To live the way the way. It just doesn't square. Darkness. The word that is. Associated with. Ungodliness. It speaks to us of.

The ungodliness of this life. In which you and I live. As unconverted sinners. The life of. Misery and evil. And filth. And ungodliness. That expresses itself.

In so many ways. That must. De-satisfaction. In so many animals. By indulging in so many practices. And cultivating.

So many habits. What do we have here? Here we have people. Who have been called. Out of. That kind. Of life. Called out.

[18 : 57] God calls us. That he may deliver us. From his life of sin. Calls him to a hatred of sin. To a renunciation of sin.

To a denial of sin. If any man. Says Jesus. Will be my disciple. If any man. Will be my disciple. Let him deny himself. Take up his cross.

And follow me. Or you say. It's difficult. Of course it's difficult. Every Christian knows. The difficulty. And maybe it's because. They're not prepared.

To accept the difficulty. That we tend to take. Of our life. In which a person. Can be a Christian. And remain what he wants. And there is no such.

Pect of giving. In the Bible. I must say. That. I am across this.

[19 : 55] Quite recently. With. A group of our own. Young. Christians. In Inmanis. Talking about the. Problems. That they have to.

Take. And that no doubt. That young Christians. In this part of the world. Have even greater. Problems. To face. Under. Speaking about.

They were speaking about. The. The. Some of the issues. That are. Seemingly becoming. Problems. For the young people today.

The question of the. What is permissible. For me to do. Where can I go. What practices. Can I. Engage in.

And indulge. Am I allowed to do this. And am I allowed to do that. When I couldn't help but think that. Twenty years ago. These issues. These wouldn't be issues at all.

[20 : 51] With young Christians. Certainly wouldn't have been. Thirty years ago. Now it's a reminder of. Something that I heard. An old minister once saying.

At communion. In Aberdeen. Putting it very strongly. He said that no Christian. No young Christian. Should think.

Like that. What can I do. Where can I go. What am I allowed to do. And I wonder why it is. That in our days.

Why it is that day. Things which weren't problems at all. And practices. Which a Christian. Had no doubt at all. Were taboo in his life. Because he was a Christian.

I wonder why. For us today. Yes. Some of these things. May become. Permissive. What. I wonder if it's because.

[21 : 48] We're not prepared to accept. The clear cut definition. The clear cut distinction. The Bible makes. Between. The life of a Christian. And the non-Christian. And are we becoming.

Are we too clever. And applying things. And allowing. Saying that. Yes. That's how I can. Next thing. So I can. Next thing. From this. Maybe it's the influence. And I hope I'm not. Setting any tools.

When I tell this. Maybe perhaps it's the influence. Without realising it. Over a period of time. Of the. What has become known. As the charismatic movement. When in certain circles.

You can be a Christian. And take your. Christianity with you. Anywhere. The trouble being. Of course. That there are some. That Christ. Won't go with it. That we. There are some things.

To which Christ. Will not go. With you. And we go to. We do these things.

[22 : 44] And go to such bridges. After our parents. If we have to leave them behind. After all. He has called us. Out of life.

I think it's true to say. That whenever he associated himself. With Christians. In his own day. Whenever he came to. To minister to them. And to commune with them. And to eat with them.

The parish. He found false with them. This man needs some strength. With sinners. Yes. He did. Not to condone the sin. But to deliver them. From sin.

Here we have it again. Called out of. Darkness. Into. This marvelous night. You've heard the story.

Of the lady in. Bygone age. Who. Advertised for a. Driver for a. Horse drawn chari. The horse drawn chari.

[23 : 40] Cari. And a. She had four applicants. Interviewed the first fellow. And asked him. How good a driver are you? Oh he said. I consider myself.

A good one. I would go within. A proof of a precipice. And I would guarantee. He said. I wouldn't overturn. Cari. So the next fellow.

Was called in. And asked how. How good a driver are you? And. He assured. That he could go even closer. To the precipice. And the third one came in. And he assured her.

That he could go within. An inch. Of the precipice. Without overturning the carriage. Then the fourth came. She asked him. How close to the precipice.

Can you go. Without overturning the carriage. Madame said. I wouldn't go near. The edge of the precipice. I will try to keep. The middle of the road.

[24 : 36] If I can at all. Horse said. You will be my driver. And it's not a bad practice. For us all. To adopt that. To remember that.

The Lord has called us. Out of sin. It is our. It is our privilege. It is our duty. To put as big a distance. Between ourselves.

And sin. As we possibly can. Look at the picture you have. In the chapter. Right in Romans chapter 8. There you have the picture. Of the Christian. Warring against sin. He's lost in deadly.

Conflict with his sins. And he's given the Holy Spirit. To help them. To lead them. And the leading of the Spirit. Is supremely. For this conflict. To help them.

Mortify. The flesh. And the dink of the flesh. Destroy. All that is evil. In his life. And that's why the Lord.

[25 : 34] The Lord saved us by his power. To deliver us. From sin. And from a sinful course. And in delivering us. Remembering at the same time.

The second thing that we have here. Called. Into. Or unto. His marvelous. Life. If on the one hand.

Is that call that delivers us from. It is also. On the other hand. A call that. Beckons us to. We are called. Into. Paul.

Speaking of the revival. That took place in Cessar and Anca. Has something very interesting. It is interesting to say. Of that revival. He said. It has. Lots of people.

He said. I saw you. Lots of people have heard. How you have. Turned. From idols. To God. To serve. The living God.

[26 : 29] There are some people. Who tend to think that conversion. When they. Think of conversion for themselves. I am talking about the unconversion. If it be that. They think of conversion as harm. They almost.

They find it difficult to understand. That. When God. Breaks you away. From a. Life of sin. He doesn't leave you in a vacuum. He delivers you into.

A life. That is full. And in a thing. Paul speaks of the life. That is left behind. That is. Not so much as. A loss. But as.

Something that. Wasn't worthy of being. Esteemed even. It was a loss. Yes. But he was further than that. I look and he says. A righteous. The life I live just.

Fit to be thrown away. In the interest of this life. Into which I have been called. Called. Into. As he puts it here.

[27 : 29] Into. Life. You see. The call of God comes with this effect. It delivers us into. A certain condition. Into a certain way of life.

It's called here life. It is called many things in the New Testament. Just to mention them in the passing. Before we talk to our clothes. We are called. For example.

To faith in the Lord. Jesus Christ. The power of God lays hold of us. As it were. And delivers us.

Into. The hands and into the arms of the Lord Jesus. It's a call that comes. Enabling us. To believe.

Some persons put it like this one. Speaking of it as conversion. Speaking of it as a way in which. He sat for a long time. Under the conviction of sin.

[28 : 25] Under the ministry of the gospel. And you know he said. I was always screaming. At the minister. Tell me. How I can believe.

How I can believe. And the call of God. Enabled him. To believe. It is the gift. Of God.

Called. That we might receive the Lord Jesus Christ. At our faith. Called him. Into pain. Called him.

Called him. Called him. To the exercise of pain. Called him. To the exercise of love. We read that again in Romans chapter 8. All things work together for good to them. Who love God.

Who are the call. According to his purpose. Called not only to faith. Called not only to believe. But called. That we might love.

[29 : 21] That we might love. That the soul might go out in delight in God. That the soul might express itself. In reverence for God.

That the soul might see that there's an interest in the things of God. In the law of God. That it might know that it can think no evil of God.

That is love. Just as the soul expresses itself in faith. So it expresses itself in love. It is called. And we are called.

To love. Called thoroughly. It says right in the Corinthians. Called into the fellowship. Of his son. The barrenness of our sinful life.

Is replaced now. By the fruitful. Life of fellowship. In the Lord Jesus. This is the condition. The state into which the soul is now called.

[30 : 18] Faithful is he that has called you. Into the fellowship of the son. And the faithfulness of God is seen in us. He delivers the soul into that condition. Into that state.

This is where his faithfulness is expressed. He has promised. He has decreed to call. Into fellowship. And he fulfills his purpose.

He calls his people into the experience of fellowship with the Lord. In which they delight in the Lord Jesus Christ. A life that used to delight in sin.

And in the practice of sin. The pursuit of sin is now replaced. By a life in which. There is delight. In his fellowship. Conduct.

Is made with the Lord Jesus Christ. And they find his fellowship and his truth sweet. Unto their taste. Called for praying to the suffering for Christ.

[31 : 16] Remember how Paul again puts the Philippians. It has been given to you. He said. As I did. Not only to believe in him. But also to suffer.

For his sake. Called. To suffering. As a Christian. Suffering for the sake of the Lord. Jesus Christ.

I wonder how many of us are prepared to consider it. A privilege. To suffer for the Lord Jesus. Called into life. And into what he put it here.

Into. Light. Everything is seen in a new light. God is seen in a new light.

Sin is seen in a new light. Self is seen in a new light. The world is seen in a new light. People are seen in a new light. Everything is seen.

[32 : 12] In a new light. Called into. The light. That is God himself. Called into the peace of God. Into an acceptance of the.

Grounds of reconciliation. Between God and man. Called an acceptance of the. Method by which this reconciliation was effective. We tend to.

Speak of. The peace of God. In a purely subjective way. We tend to think of us. Feeling good. Feeling great. And having no problems in life. There is no doubt that it is that.

And it is more enough. A person can know. The peace of God. That passes all understanding. And to confront it with. All for confidence.

In his life. What is it? What is the peace of God? God's way of reconciliation. And God's ground of acceptance. For someone.

[33 : 21] My acceptance before God. Is not ground in what I am myself. But in what God has done for me in Christ. And this is out peace in the presence of God.

And we are called. To an acceptance of it. Called unto holiness. It comes to us a high and a heavenly calling.

Calling that. Beckons us to God himself. Call that directs us. To holiness. Holiness. Not only in its origin.

But also. In its destiny. Because we are called to be conformed. To the image. Of its son. And called that this verse tells us.

Called. That we might witness. To the praise of his grace. That he should show forth. The praise of him.

[34 : 21] Who has called you out of darkness. Into his marvelous light. Surely it stands to reason. That if you and I. Were taken up more.

With the purpose. For which we have been called. Than many of the questions. And the issues. That pose so many problems for us.

Would seek to be issues at all. We are called. To witness. To tell. To declare.

What we think of him. Who has called us. Out of darkness. Into. His marvelous light. And that we cherish the hope tonight.

That his power has laid hold of our lives. That we cherish the hope. That he has called us. By his grace. Away from.

[35 : 25] The service of sin. And into. A life of service. To the Lord Jesus Christ. That is our hope.

And our confidence. That is remind ourselves. That he calls us to live. To the praise of his glory. And that part of that living. Is sitting with him at his table.

Showing forth. By that act. That he has called us. Out of darkness. Into. This marvelous light.

Let us pray. O Lord our God. We bless thee for thy word. And we. Thank thee that. Thou art able to bless it to us.

Forgive us those sins. In holy things. We thank thee that. There is forgiveness with thee.

[36 : 30] That thou mightest be feared. O Lord. Help us to fear thee. And help us to live to thy glory. Part us now with thy blessing.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.