

The Effectual Calling Of God In Salvation
Romans 8:28-30

Context Of Romans 8:28-30

In Romans 8 Paul has finished wrapping up his discourse on progressive sanctification (Rom 6:1-8:30) which is the fruit of justification (Rom 3:21-5:21). He has pointed out that though we are now free from the dominion & bondage of sin (chapter 6), we struggle against that sin which remains (chapter 7). All who are His, painfully await the coming redemption and glory (chapter 8). As we wait for that glory, Paul encourages us that God sovereignly works in our lives to bring about good (Rom 8:28). In order to bolster this in our minds, he bids us to step back and look at life from an eternal perspective. He gives us *mighty* affirmations which are closely knit together and stretch from **eternity -- through time -- to eternity**. Before the foundation of the world God fixed His purpose to save us. He brought this to realization in the world when He **called** and justified us. And He will bring it to consummation in eternity, when He glorifies us. Paul would thus show how everything -- from the eternal election to the final glory -- is utterly in God's hand. There is place for neither chance nor arbitrariness. Thus the foundation of Paul's encouragement (that God will cause all things to work together for our good) is rooted in the fact that His purposes are certain from eternity to eternity. Nothing can stop God's plan for us is eternal salvation!

1. But the text tells us that all whom He called He justified.
 - ◆ If every person whom God calls is justified (saved) how come everyone isn't saved?
 - ◆ Doesn't God call all people to salvation?
2. The answer lies in the Biblical understanding of the word "call."

The Outward & the Inward Call of God

1. The outward call of God:

This call is *external* to people. The outward call is God's summons to all unbelievers to come to Christ. It's authorized by God, verbally given thru believers, & directed to all non-Christians. Its what Jesus had in mind when He said, "*Many are called*" (Mt 22:14a). In his preaching at Mars Hill, Paul gave just such an outward call, "*Therefore...God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent*" (Acts 17:30). This outward call can be rejected. In fact, it often is rejected. At Mars Hill, many *sneered* while others procrastinated (17:32).

2. The inward call of God:

This call is *internal* to people. It describes the actual inward drawing of some unbelievers to Christ. It's authorized by God, effectually carried out by the Spirit, and directed only to some non-Christians. It's what Jesus had in mind in the other half of the Mt 22 passage cited above when He says, "*But few are chosen*" (Vs 14b). Paul testifies that he experienced this inward call. In Gal 1:15,16 he writes, "*But when He who set me apart even from my mothers womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me.*" When Paul came to salvation, he was not searching for it. Indeed, he was seeking to destroy the early Church. Nevertheless God inwardly called Paul to Himself. Someone might suggest that since God orally spoke to Paul, perhaps that is all that Paul had in mind by "call." It's true that Christ Himself gave an external call to Paul. However, Paul explains that God "**called**" him by revealing His Son "*in*" him. Paul was inwardly called. In II Tim 1:9 he says, "*God has saved us (the "us" unites his salvation experience on the Damascus Road with the salvation experience of other Christians), and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.*" Every person who is saved has experienced this inward holy calling. Jude writes, "*To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ*" (Jude 1).

3. The external call is *verbal*. It's given whenever the Gospel's preached. It goes out to all. Some accept it, some don't. The other call is *spiritual*. It's the Spirit's work in people's hearts. It goes to some & they come to Christ. Rom 1:6,7; 8:30; 9:23,24; Eph 4:4; Heb 9:15; I Pet 1:15; 2:9.

The Inward call is God's irresistible drawing of a lost person to Christ

- When the Spirit works to bring a lost person to salvation, that person always comes. The Spirit "always gets His man." Not one is lost. Jesus testified to this in Jn 6:44. He said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."
 - When Jesus says, "No one can come..." He universally denies that anyone has the ability to come to Him. One's conversion unto Christ does not lie within his own abilities. Jesus testified that those who come do so because the Lord draws (or drags) them!
 - Jesus leaves no doubt to this meaning in Jn 6:44, "And I will raise him up on the last day." Who is the "him" that's *raised up* unto eternal life? The same "him" who is drawn.
 - In vs. 45, Jesus points to the Lord's internal work in the unbeliever's heart whereby he is enabled to understand and come, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me." Everyone who has heard (in this internal way) will come to Christ. None will fail to come.
- This is why Paul says in Romans that those "whom He called, these He also justified" (Rom 8:30). Everyone predestined by God is called and comes to Jesus & is justified. To Paul the "gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom 11:29). God's call cannot be resisted.
 - Is it possible for someone to want to come but can't because he has not been drawn? No! We've already seen "there is no one that seeks after God" (Rom 3:11). Every one who perishes does so with a heart at enmity with God. Is the converse true? Are certain people "forced" to come to Christ kicking and screaming? No. When the Spirit works in a person's heart, He opens the heart so that the person *naturally* wants to come. Lydia in Acts 16:14, is a good example. She had not yet come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. She was not *forced* to believe against her will when the Lord "opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). Rather the Lord freed her from her bondage to sin so that she would believe. Her response was a work of God. The word *opened* "dianoigo" (διανοιγω) is used of divine activity such as when Jesus opened the ears of a deaf man (Mk 7:34-35. Cf. Lk 24:16,31,45). Prior to God's work in her, Lydia's heart was closed to the Gospel. God's work resulted in her exercising faith. Had He not worked she would not have believed, because He did work she believed. She didn't resist, she didn't *want to* resist. She did what her heart desired. She saw her sin & just condemnation & she saw the glories of Christ, crucified and risen. She wanted to believe. She had to believe, because she saw the truthfulness of the God in Christ!
 - When someone doesn't believe, he does what he wants to do, according to his fallen nature. When someone believes, he does what he wants to do, according to the new work of the Spirit w/in him. Cf. Mt 11:25-27; 13:10f; 16:15-17; Lk 8:10; Rom 11:5-7, 29; I Cor 1:9,23-31; 2:19.

Because The Spirit Effectually Calls, God Attributes Your Faith & Repentance To Himself

- New Birth precedes and produces faith.
Jn 3:3-8; 1:12,13; Ezek 36:25-27; Jn 6:63;
- Faith is from the Lord.
Phil 1:29; Eph 2:1f; Acts 13:48; Lk 17:5; Jn 1:12,13; 6:29,37,44,64-66; Acts 18:27; Rom 9:15-16; II Pet 1:1.
- Repentance is from the Lord.
Acts 11:18; II Tim 2:24,25; Zech 12:10; Acts 5:31; Rom 2:4; II Cor 3:4-5.

Application.

- This doctrine encourages us to humility.
- This doctrine encourages us to do the work of evangelism.
- This doctrine encourages us to teach God's Word.
- This doctrine helps produce faith in Christian living.
- This doctrine helps produce joy & worship.