

“Them That Are Called ...”

“... We preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling block, and unto Gentiles foolishness, but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God ...” (1 Cor. 1:23ff). Despite the fact that *“Christ crucified”* is a *“stumbling block”* to unbelieving Jews, to those who are called, either Jew or Greek, Christ crucified is the power of God. In this passage them that are called signify those who have been obedient to the gospel of Christ. However, the word *“called”* does sometimes comprise a wider significance than this. Jesus said, *“Many are called but few are chosen”* (Matt. 22:14). This statement is an excerpt from the Parable of the *“Marriage of the king’s son.”* After those invited (Jews) rejected the invitation, the king commanded that *“as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast”* (Matt. 22:9). Among those who accepted was one who did not wear the wedding garment given him. He was cast out and the Lord’s commentary was that *“many are called, but few are chosen.”* God has issued a universal call to all sinners to find the blessedness of forgiveness in His son. In this sense God has offered pardon and forgiveness to all. He has thus *“called all.”* Still, all will not accept God’s invitation any more than that all the Jews embraced the gospel.

In the Corinthian text, *“those who are called”* signifies more than just those who are offered salvation. In its context it means those who have readily accepted the gospel. These were the chosen of whom Jesus spoke in Matthew 22. In 1 Corinthians 1:26 brethren were urged to *“behold your calling.”* Following are some noteworthy truths about our *“calling.”* Our call is from God, but His call to us is through the gospel (1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 2:14). The gospel was first preached to Jews, in Jerusalem; but Jesus clearly required apostles ten and disciples now to offer salvation to all. *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations”* (Matt. 28:18). It is to be proclaimed every creature, and all who believe and are baptized will be saved (Mk. 16:15).

We are chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4). God has not predestined some to be saved and others to be lost; save in the sense that He has placed salvation in Christ with eternal glory (2 Tim. 2:10). And, because none are in Christ who are not in His body, Paul told the Colossians they were *“called in one body”* (Col. 3:15). Because the body is the church, those who are called are in His church (Eph. 1:22f).

The calling of God is a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9), a high calling (Phil. 3:11), and a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). These truths should cause men to appreciate what kind of calling God has extended to us. Those who are the called must not forget we are *“called to be saints”* (Rom. 1:7). Since to

sanctify means to "set apart;" when we are called to be saints, we have been called to be "set apart ones." Of this truth Peter spoke, "*Like as he who called you is holy, be ye also holy in all manner of living*" (1 Pet. 1:15). We have been called into the fellowship of Christ (1 Cor. 1:8). To be in the fellowship of Christ is a profound blessing, indeed. We are called for freedom (liberty) and are not to be entangled in a yoke of bondage (Gal. 5:1). The "*freedom*" of Galatians 5:1 is the freedom from the law. We are called to peace (1 Cor. 7:11). We are called to inherit a blessing (1 Pet. 3:9).

Peter enjoined upon those who received his epistle that they "*make their calling and election sure*" (1 Pet. 1:10). This simply meant they were to add the seven Christian graces to their lives. Consider the words of Paul at this juncture: "*I beseech ye, that ye walk worthily of his calling in all lowliness, and meekness, and longsuffering, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4:5). Those who are the called recognize the worth of the cross, exult in its power to rid man of his sins, and glory in the cross as the power of God!

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