

VIII. The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Biblical Perspective

*The Majesty, Message and Ministry of the Gospel*

“The Gospel Ministry – Effectual Calling –  
From the Tomb of Sin to the Triumph of Christ”

Romans 8:28-39

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November 18, 2012 – Morning Sermon

We are in Romans 8. This is our home base in this last section of our study of twelve sermons on The Majesty, Message and Ministry of the Gospel. In this Advent Season we have several events that would be great opportunities for you to share the Gospel through these events. We return to our series on the study of the Gospel and this is our seventh study. Let's look at Romans 8:28-30 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. [29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. [31] What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. [35] Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? [36] As it is written,*

*“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

*[37] No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. [38] For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, [39] nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.*

I have to get through this study rather rapidly so that we can get to the Lord's Supper and lead us there through this study of effectual calling. Recently I did a study on the resurrection of Lazarus and I want to transport you in your mind back to that moment where Jesus has arrived to see Mary and Martha. The text said “Lazarus whom He loved” was now incarcerated in the tomb of sin, now dead. Everyone is watching Jesus, somewhat breathlessly I'm sure. Mary and Martha are weeping. The people are weeping. It is at that moment that the Bible says that Jesus is filled up, He is raised up and the King is seeing the enemy – Satan, sin and death. It says with a loud voice accompanied by startling onlookers He says “Lazarus come forth!” Nothing could hold Lazarus back. From the tomb of death he walked out into life.

For those of you who know Christ as your Savior, that physical picture was given to show you what the Lord has done for you. You were born, incased, imprisoned, and

incarcerated in the tomb of sin and death. We were dead in our trespasses and sins. The Lord called you just as personally as He did to Lazarus, from the tomb of sin and death to the triumph of Christ and life. He called you directly and brought you forth into everlasting life. The Bible identifies that as effectual calling. That's what we want to take a look at in our study of the Gospel.

I want to give you the statement we've used as to why we're looking at the Gospel. It is that the Gospel is the foundation, the formation and the motivation of the Christian life. The Gospel is the foundation, how you're saved, the foundation of every doctrine and every aspect of calling of the Lord in your Christian life. It's the formation – it molds you, guides you and directs you. It is the motivation, the Gospel love of Christ that compels you into life.

So we took a look at the majesty and the message and now we're at the ministry of the Gospel. The majesty of the Gospel is the announcement, the royal proclamation that the King has descended into the valley, has fought His enemies, won the victory and Good News can be published. He has defeated all of His enemies and He has saved His people from their sins. It is glorious, royal, regal Good News. The King has won. His people can be saved. Jesus the King has come into the world to save His people from their sins and the Gospel is the message that He has won the victory.

Then we begin to look at the Gospel as being the message of God where God has saved us. It's the message of sin where God has saved us from our sins. It is the message of Jesus Christ where God sent His Son, Jesus. The Son of God became the Son of Man where He was one hundred percent God and one hundred percent Man. He went to the cross, paid for our sins and He saved us from our sins. Why did He do that? He did it because it's also the message of grace. He did that out of grace, unmerited love, uncoerced, God in love sent His Son who saved us while we were still helpless, ungodly and enemies. Then it is a message that summons us to faith and repentance in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. That's the glorious Gospel message.

Who do we preach the Gospel to? We preach the Gospel to sinners. It's a trustworthy statement that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. How many people are sinners? Everyone. Here's the problem. Those sinners are dead. So here's the message. How can they come to Christ? What happens when you talk to a dead person? Nothing happens. So we're sowing the seed and the Lord gives Ezekiel a picture. I'm bringing the whole Israel but when you see My people they are a valley of dry bones. Can these bones live? Ezekiel says "Lord, You know." We are spiritually just as dead as Lazarus was physically in that tomb. We are dead in our sins and hopeless and helpless. How can we come to life?

The majesty of the Gospel is God the Father sent the King to save us and He has won the victory. The message of the Gospel declares and reveals what Jesus Christ did to save you. He brought a satisfactory Sacrifice. He paid an atoning death. He saved you from your sins but how can we who are dead sinners respond to this Good News? How can we who are dead hear that Gospel message and come to Him? That's why we're looking at the ministry of the Gospel. The ministry of the Gospel is declaring the work of the Holy Spirit with the Gospel to bring you from death to life, from the tomb of sin and death to the triumph of Christ and life. The very first thing the Holy Spirit does to get you to life with the Gospel message is what the Bible identifies as calling.

What did Romans 8 say? Romans 8:28 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose.* Those who love God are the called ones. Romans 8:29 says [29] *For those whom **he foreknew** he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* This isn't what He foresaw, it was those He foreknew. Know is the term of intimacy. Before we existed, in love God placed His saving love upon us, in eternity passed. Those whom He loved He predestined. He decreed all of those stands of life in a broken world to converge to bring us from death unto life just as His timing was perfect for Lazarus in that physical resurrection, His timing is perfect and all the things to bring us in a spiritual resurrection.

We who were dead in our sins He caused us to be born again to a living Hope. He has determined and decreed that to accomplish through your parents, your friends, your church, others to you and through the work of the Holy Spirit. Then He who foreknew and predestined you says He did it so that you might be conformed to the image of His Son. I've done this to save you to bring you to a personal relationship with My Son and life transforming power so that you'll become like Him. Jesus Christ came into this world, God's only Son and when He left this world He has purchased many sons and daughters for glory. He would be the firstborn among His brethren. Now we leave eternity and we walk into time.

Those whom He foreknew, He predestined and those whom He predestined He called. Those whom He called He justified. Then we step into eternity again. Romans 8:30 says [30] *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and **those whom he justified he also glorified.***

How did you get saved in time? The first thing was a process in your life that we're looking at in this study called (1)'calling.' That process culminated into an event. That event is called conversion. In your conversion you were (2) regenerated, (3) justified, and (4) adopted. That is past grace which is what God has done in your life. Now if you're a Christian today you're at point five which is present grace, (5) sanctification. You are headed to point six which is (6) glorification. Those who He foreknew, predestined, called, justified, He also regenerated and adopted them. He is sanctifying us and it's an unbreakable chain. Those whom He justified He will also glorify. He stands perfectly sufficient to accomplish all of those things in your life and my life. In this study we're going to look at those whom **He** called – Divine Calling.

When the Bible talks about calling, it talks about two kinds of calling. One is vocational calling – the callings of life and in life. I'm called to be a pastor. I'm called to be the husband of my wife, Cindy. I'm called to be a father. I'm called to be a grandfather. I'm called to be a Christian citizen. I'm called to preach this study today. I'm called to share the Gospel with people. I'm called to give worship and praise to God. All of life is a calling that I live to the glory of God. The word vocation comes from the concept of vocatio (Latin) which is calling, voice. God has called us into all of the affairs of life and opportunities of life. That is divine calling that is vocationally oriented.

We are looking at second calling which is salvation calling – how He calls us from sin and death to life in Jesus Christ with the ministry of the Holy Spirit taking the Gospel message about Christ to bring us to Christ. That is salvation calling. Salvation calling has two parts to it. The first part is external calling which we call evangelism. External calling is the Holy Spirit empowered with the bringing of the Gospel through

God's people to other people. Jesus said "Many are called but few are chosen." He is speaking of that external calling that goes out to everyone. The seed is sown across the world. The seed is sown across the entire field. It is the Holy Spirit empowered proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is another piece of this calling and that's where we want to give further focus. The second part of salvation calling is the internal calling. Effectual calling is the internal calling of the Holy Spirit to bring people to be the people of God. Internal calling is what the Lord does inside. External calling is what we bring from the outside to the heart. Internal calling is the work of the Holy Spirit to give a heart that's alive to receive it. It is what the Holy Spirit does to enlighten the mind, to move the will, to affect the emotions. It is that internal calling that we are looking at which is effectual calling.

So what does the Bible say about effectual calling? The Bible loves to use terms to talk about effectual calling. My favorite term is drawing. Effectual calling is not 'I'm a dead sinner. Oh my goodness, I'm alive, I'm coming to Jesus.' That's not what happens. It's not a robotic fate disposed upon someone. It is God personally working through people to bring the Gospel, then God personally going right to your heart to give you eyes to see and ears to hear. It is God giving you a new perspective. You may have heard that message many times but it's a new perspective.

This reminds me of when these people will come to me and say "Pastor I'm so glad I'm a Christian. Thank you for preaching the Gospel. I grew up in church but I never heard the Gospel." Many times that's true because that church had abandoned the Gospel but we have some kids here that are going to grow up and come to Christ and go to another church and say "I never heard the Gospel" from this pulpit. What they are saying is not that they didn't hear the Gospel, but that now they have heard the Gospel. It might have been said many times but they didn't have eyes to see and ears to hear. So whenever people say to me they didn't hear the Gospel until they came to my church I used to think 'man I have a great church' but now I realize they may have heard the Gospel but just didn't have eyes to see and ears to hear. It wasn't that there wasn't an external call in that church but they didn't have an internal call so it was just poppycock until one day God gave them a heart, mind and will for it and they responded to it. So it is when the Lord draws you.

John 3:16 says [16] *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* Jesus says that whosoever will may come to Me. What does that mean? That's the external call. It goes out to anybody and everybody. Jesus Christ on the cross has opened up the door of salvation to all of humanity. Whosoever will may come but the Bible also says in John 6:35-37 says [35] *Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; **whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.** [36] *But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. [37] All that the Father gives me **will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*** It is not all that comes to Me the Father gives Me but it is all that the Father gives Me will come to Me, now why is that true?*

John 6:44 says [44] *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.* When you're called to Me you will be justified, glorified and I will raise you up. I will not lose one that has come to Me, all that the Father has given to Me but you must be drawn to Me. No man can come to Me.

Whosoever will, may come (permission) but no man can come unless the Father draws him. There is no ability to come. There is permission but you're dead and dead men don't walk. Spiritually dead people don't believe. Something has to happen and it's the drawing of the Father.

I like to use this illustration to illustrate this from my second grade year. While in class one day I raised my hand and said "Teacher can I go to the bathroom?" The teacher said "Yes Ike, you can go." I got up to go and the teacher said "Sit down." I said "I asked if I can go and you said 'yes'?" I became her object lesson that morning. She said "You asked can you go and I said 'certainly I think you're perfectly capable of going to the bathroom but you're not leaving this room until you ask me 'may I go' which is called permission." You have to learn permission. So Jesus has opened up permissively the door for any and all to be saved but no man can come unless the Father draws him.

I go up to a well because I'm thirsty. I look down in the well and see the water in the well. I say to the well "Well you may come to me. I give you permission water. Come up out of the well to me, water." What is the water going to do? It will do nothing. Why? It is because of the law of gravity. I take the Gospel to the world and say "You may come to Christ" and what are they going to do? They will do nothing because they're dead. I go back to the well, drop a bucket down the well and I draw the water up to myself. Now I personally have that water. When we send the Gospel out externally, the Father sends the Holy Spirit and He will bring all of His people to Himself.

So He tells Paul who was ready to quit preaching in the city, "Paul keep preaching for I have many to be saved." People ask me why I do evangelism and I say because God has a people to be saved. If God didn't have a people to be saved I wouldn't do evangelism, I'd be talking to zombies. The reason I do evangelism is because God uses the external call to accomplish the internal call to bring a harvest to Himself. He brings it forth to Himself. So my job is the external call. God does the work of the internal call where He draws them to Himself.

When He draws someone how do you know it? There are two marks. One, the Gospel ministry of the Holy Spirit to "draw" God's people to Himself by convincing us of sin, it's sinfulness as well as our helplessness and hopelessness. My problem is not that I had a bad dad and mom or that I lived in a bad neighborhood. All of those things may have drawn out my problem but that's not my problem. My problem is not my genetic disposition. My problem is that with all of those things around me I have chosen to assassinate the glory of God and exalt myself in life. I am a sinner and the wages of sin is death. I have seen the sinfulness of sin. I realize I'm helpless and I can't save myself. Baptism can't save me. The Lord's Supper can't save me. There is nothing out there that can save me. I am helpless and hopeless.

Secondly, I am convinced that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior and He is sufficient to save me from all of my sins. In that Romans 8 text it said if God be for us who can be against us. Jesus Christ is sufficient to defeat all my adversaries, all of my enemies and who is it who will condemn me? Who will bring a charge against me? Jesus Christ is sufficient to erase all the charges against me because He paid for them on the cross. Jesus Christ has taken my guilt away because of His glorious triumph on the cross. Romans 8:34-35a says [34] *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* [35] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* Nothing can

separate me from the love of Christ. Christ holds His people to the end which is the beginning of everything.

Here is what Satan does. He loves to intimidate you but Christ is sufficient to defeat all your adversaries. He is the accuser of the brethren. He loves to bring accusations against you but remember He has thrown the accuser of the brethren down. He removes all charges against you. Satan loves to bring false guilt to your life and you can remind him that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Christ is sufficient to remove all of my guilt. Satan wants to isolate you and alienate you but you can rise up and say ‘though all else may fail me I have a Savior who will be with me to the end. He will never leave me nor forsake me. Nothing can separate me from the love of Christ.’

The Holy Spirit has gone to your heart. I’m not who I am because of my sexual choices or my job or the applause of people or the frowns of people but I am who I am because I’ve seen my sin. I have repented, turned and put my trust in Jesus Christ. For me to live is Christ. I have a Lord. I have a Savior who is sufficient. All the false identities and idols I would set aside and turn from them. I want to come to Jesus Christ. How do dead sinners do that? It is because God called you. Faithful is He who called you and He will bring it to pass.

I’d like to look at one more passage. This is a great passage to read as we approach the Thanksgiving Season. This is one of seventeen prayers from the Apostle Paul. This is a very distinct Thanksgiving prayer but when he’s giving thanks in this prayer notice what he says. I Corinthians 1:4-9 says *[4] I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, [5] that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—[6] even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—[7] so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ (glorification), [8] who will sustain you to the end (sanctification), guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (justification). [9] God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Somebody came and shared the Gospel with you and then God the Holy Spirit came and called you by name. You came from the tomb of death and sin to the triumph in Christ in life. Lazarus whom He loved, He has loved you before the foundation of the world. He has decreed all of those things to come to bring you from death unto life. Then when you came from death unto life it’s because He called you by name to Himself and He will surely bring it to pass. Ezekiel says there was a great rattling where we get the word seismic. God did an earthquake and blew open the tomb of sin and brought you from being a collection of dry bones spiritually to life in Jesus Christ and He will bring it to pass.

Here is the takeaway. What is effectual calling? Effectual calling is the process whereby the Holy Spirit persuades, enables, and propels a sinner to leave the tomb of sin and death to come to the triumph of Christ and life. He called you whom He loved from eternity to Himself. Praise His Name forever! I want to leave you with this illustration as we prepare to come to the Table.

A couple of years ago my dad and mom died in a space of a year apart and when I was there for my mom’s funeral I rode over to the area I lived when I was in High School. Across the street from the house I lived in was a park. When I would come

home from baseball, football or basketball practice I never had enough of it so I would go across the street to the park and play more. My friends and I would just play and play until the sun would go down, praying that it would take awhile for it to set. As twilight would come I knew what was coming next. It was time to go home to eat dinner. First would come my sisters, one after another, delighting in the moment when they were told to call me home, "Iky come home." I delighted in resistance. Then I would hear a very deep base voice, "Ike come home son, it's time for supper." That was my daddy. There was no resistance when I heard that voice. I came home and that's what happened to you.

You were dead and the Father by the Holy Spirit, breathed the breath of life and said "Come home" and home is not heaven. Home is Jesus. That's what makes heaven, heaven. Jesus says "Where I am you will be also" and you came home to Him. Now He says "Come to the Supper, let's eat together." Great is our salvation! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the cross of Christ whereby we are saved and brought to everlasting life as we take these moments at the conclusion of this study to sit with You. I can't think of a greater privilege, Jesus, than to eat with You, eating that by which we feast upon the benefits of your atoning death with Your body and the shedding of Your blood. Use these moments that Your people will look to Jesus, thanking You Father for calling us to Him. Now nourish us in Him, I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.