

PM Genesis 12:1-5 The Resistible and Irresistible Call

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Date: 02 January 2022

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[0 : 00] I hope to get them over fairly sharp, but they're pretty short readings. The first one is in Genesis chapter 12.

Genesis chapter 12, and we'll read from verses 1 to 5 of this chapter. Genesis chapter 12. The call of Abram.

Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go from your country, your kindred, and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse.

And in you shall all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So Abraham went as the Lord had told him, and Lot went with him.

[1 : 11] Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. And Abraham took Sarah his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired to Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan.

When they came to the land of Canaan, Abraham passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the Och of Morach. At that time, the Canaanites were in the land.

And there then the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, To your offspring I will give this land. So he built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

Then we'll turn over to Mark's Gospel, chapter 1. Mark's Gospel, chapter 1. And we'll read from verse 16 of that chapter to verse 20.

Mark's Gospel, chapter 1, verses 16 to 20. And immediately, they left their nets and followed him.

[2 : 54] And going on a little further, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in the boat, mending their nets.

And immediately he called them. And they left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Then further, in our third reading, we turn to St. Luke's Gospel, chapter 18. And we'll read from verse 18 of that chapter to 23.

Luke, chapter 18, verse 18 to 23. And the ruler asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments.

[4 : 02] Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.

And he said, All these things I have kept from my youth. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, One thing you still lack.

Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come and follow me. But when he heard these things, he became very sad for he was extremely rich.

Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Those who heard it said, Then who can be saved? And our last reading is from St. John's Gospel. John 11, chapter 11, verse 18 to 29.

[5 : 32] John 11, verses 18 to 29. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off.

And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him.

But Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatsoever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, Your brother will rise again.

Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

[6 : 41] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.

Do you believe this? She said to him, Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.

May God his blessing to these readings of his most precious and holy word. You might excuse me for sounding a bit hoarse because I've been suffering a bit from this since the attack of COVID. and quite a few people have been affected by it as a result of the terrible cough it inflicted with those of us who suffer from it.

I still like to hear the call of the curlew. Warps, as we call them here in Scotland. Warps.

[8 : 03] And it's eerie, mournful, it's a call from the wilderness, from the moorland wastes, a call of the wild, a call of nature.

But nature has a call. Nature has many calls. And if we listen to God's word in Romans 1, verse 19 and 20, what does it say here?

It says here that God has used nature as a call to call men and women to the attention that there is a God, that there is creator of what we see here around us.

And Romans 1, 19 and 20 reminds us, but that which may be known of God is manifested in them. For God has showed it unto them.

For the invisible of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even the eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

[9 : 33] That is outside the gospel. Speaking of nature, God has used nature as a means of speaking to mankind that there is a creator and an almighty creator whose hand has formed this universe and all that is seen and contained within it.

So, that man is without excuse. Man has no excuse as regards a creator who has created this world of ours.

And so God has called us to another another year. Another year as Christians as we look forward to what the future of this year holds.

So, these things in nature, the call of nature is the call to a supreme and creative being. and God has used this as a powerful means and call.

Men will say to you, oh, there must be a creative hand behind all this magnificent creation which we see.

[11 : 05] And above all that creation is mankind himself created in the very image of God himself. so they are without excuse.

And above and beyond that, the Bible teaches us that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

And we are reminded too that as we read there in Genesis 1, that man has a choice as regards such a call. Man has a chance to resist or accept the call of God.

He was given such in the perfection of Eden when man created God and set him in Eden's garden. Man had been given a call such as this to be utter stewards of such a perfection and a creation. The call of God was to Adam to look after this perfect creation that God had made.

[12 : 29] And what an inheritance man was given at the very outset of his life in that perfect setting of Eden.

And yet we see that this call was resisted by Eve who resisted the command of God and we know the outcome of such a resistance that what God had instituted.

It led to from there to a permanent resistance of man to any such call to repentance and righteousness or godliness whatever.

Can you just imagine ourselves for a moment being put in such a position and ask ourselves how would we have responded in such surroundings perfection and beauty such a walk in holiness with

God.

It's a little wonder then that we need the righteousness of Christ and I wonder at times if you and I played enough of it when we approach our God in praise and in worship of his holy name.

[14 : 04] Here was a perfect situation that no other soul or man has ever inherited or perhaps will inherit until we inherit it in the new Jerusalem.

I'm sure we too would have failed and of course each one of us has failed and guilty of such resistance as Eve.

God has used many resources to his call to men. God has given many signs in his words many prophets and men as means to reveal himself and his will power to humankind over the centuries and over since time began and this entirely through his eternal and everlasting word.

Where do we find all this? We find it in the word of God. It's all there for each and every one and there again man is left entirely without excuse.

All in his divine and authoritative word. These calls that God has made and is making and will be all these calls are of his divine authority and it calls for a response.

[15 : 54] Behind all of this resistance of course of God's calls is Satan himself. He was there in the midst of all that perfection.

He is the prime mover behind it all. We read of him in Zechariah which Norman has been exposing to us recently in the Wednesday night meetings.

We meet him in Zechariah 3 verse 1 where we read there and he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.

So there he is the master of resistance standing at the right hand of Joseph in Zechariah but there also in the garden is that creeping serpent he whispered into the ear of Eve the word of resistance to God's will and command.

But further than that we find him is there at the Lord's Supper when Jesus called his disciples to the feast of the Last Supper to remember his death until he comes again.

[17 : 31] We find Satan there in the midst of the Last Supper it says then entered Satan into Judas Iscariot the Passover at the Lord's Supper when he dipped that soap into the soap with Jesus it was in his heart to betray his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and Satan it says entered into the heart of Judas.

The tempter is a personal tempter as well is very personal when he enters into the hearts of those he seeks to divert from the truth and from God.

And so there's no greater example in this than our Lord's temptations when he sought to tempt our Lord Jesus Christ and turn him from the truth and from the purpose in which he came.

Then entered Satan into Judas heart. And back in Joshua the people were given this choice to resist or to accept God's way.

Joshua said to the people choose you this day whom you will serve. Either the Lord or God of the Amorites or the true God and his truth.

[19 : 13] Choose you this day whom you will serve. That was the challenge given by Joshua to the people of Israel.

At the trial and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ comes again the opportunity to resist the truth. You remember Pilate's very shrewd question to Jesus when he said what is truth?

What is truth? And the truth was standing before him. The truth, the way of the truth and the life. At the trial and crucifixion of Jesus comes this opportunity of resistance.

Christ or Barabbas? Christ or Barabbas and they choose Barabbas.

They resisted the claims of Christ and claimed the way of the robber and the thief. A prime example indeed is that example we read of the young ruler in Luke 18 18 25 that young man that young ruler who came to Jesus and he discovered that for himself that it was going to be too much so he had to close in with resistance and you see God's call is both to nations and to individuals such as us not only to belong to him but to serve him and to bring glory and praise to his holy name and to make him known to other people and to make his gospel claims known also and

[21 : 21] God's call also calls us as Christians to live differently and positively as we read in 2 Peter 1 and 9 Peter reminds him he says but ye are a chosen generation a royal priesthood a holy nation a peculiar people that ye should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous right light God also and has called some people in many particular ways to serve him as we see in Abraham we see it in Moses we see it in Samuel and Jonathan and

the disciples Paul and Barnabas to mention a few as they were inherited with special gifts and it is the same with us

God has given many gifts to his church to work out and be examples to his name and to his glory but the last few respond to this call and I assure many if it's not all of us believe is calling to a broken world and to a nation of ours at this very time and in this very day in a very clear and loud and distinct voice he's spoken by COVID he's spoken by flood and fire one catastrophe of a kind and another that you and I witness in the world today but alas we see to the greatest extent it is still being resisted scientists and many other leaders have no answer to this present situation simply because they are resisting the wisdom and power of the one who created this world in the first place we come back to the young ruler there may be no greater story of this resistance than the rich young ruler of

Luke in all his commendable life he lacked one thing in the eyes of his Lord Jesus Christ you know sometimes when we read this story of the young ruler it might convict each one of us he claimed to have lived and kept all these commandments he was stating a statement that you and I would perhaps dare to make such a claim he claimed to have kept all these things there seemed to be nothing lacking at all in this young man's life it was very commendable sometimes I say to myself I wish I could have said that and lived such a life as he said that he had lived and kept from his youth from his very youth up but you see Jesus who searches all the hearts

God who searches all the hearts looked into that young man's heart and he saw something yet that was not commendable something that he had still not committed himself to and he said to this young man go and give all sell all that you have and give to the poor and come and follow me you see the demands the demands of Jesus is demands of total commitment full surrender and nothing else was what Jesus was calling this young man to but it was too much it was too much it was too big a price for this young man to commit himself to and so he walks away and resists the very claims of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ he chooses to resist and you know sometimes one feels in singing the words of that hymn I'm sure that each one of us has sung over the past years all to Jesus I surrender I I surrender all can we fully adhere to these words the young ruler the Dutch young ruler certainly could not have ever sung these words and we might ask ourselves can we really sing these words with a full commitment can we because you see this is such the price of following [27 : 18] Jesus he asked that young man for a full and total surrender but it was too much we think of Felix King Agrippa before Paul Job's wife Job's wife in the face of such afflictions and trials that befell Job and there again Satan was at work supreme work there he comes into the sons of God are meeting together and there he comes in and shows his face in the midst of the sons of God and questions God as regards his servant Job and he says he tries to make a claim with God that if you take away that hedge that he claimed

God had set around Job he'll curse you to your face but Satan was to be proved wrong and here is Job's wife the one who should have been standing by him as a support and a strength what does she say are you going to carry on with your integrity and believe in a God that allows such infirmities calamities to come upon you and your life she said curse God and die curse God and die that was the verdict of Job's wife but you see Job was made of much more metal than that he trusted in God even in the midst of the most terrible trials and affliction that a man could face God simply gave in to the will of

God and trusted in God and we see the outcome of his blessings at the end of Job's life we just think of the evil kings I've just recently finished reading chronicles and first and second kings and one king after another succeeded so and so this king succeeded his son succeeded him and what did they do they done evil in the sight of the Lord many most of these kings done evil in the sight of the Lord very few ever done what God expected of them and many who followed like David their father many evil kings and yet God in his mercy allowed some of these kings to reign so long and to commit such evil deeds and provoke

God to wrath and to anger and yet God allowed many of them and yet his judgment in the end fell upon many of them again we remember the cry of the mob at Christ's trial before Pilate there again we see the supreme resistance being portrayed the cry of the mob when Pilate presented Christ to the mob he said we will not have this man to rule over us we will not have this man to rule over us and again we see the choice Barabbas the thief and on the cross we see resistance at Calvary we see it portrayed in the two thieves the one on the other hand said if thou be the

Christ come down from the cross and save us and yourself if you be the Christ he said come down from the cross and save us and yourself and the other one was the very opposite when he said Lord remember me when thou comest into your kingdom there again in the midst of Christ's suffering we see the resistance of one thief who refused to accept Christ as the crucified one and the sinless spotless lamb of God we come back to Felix in Acts 24 here we have a man who in some way knew something of that way but out of curiosity and self seeking in verse 26 he came with his wife to hear

[32 : 47] Paul concerning his faith and testimony in Jesus Christ nevertheless like so many before and after he heard Paul's testimony to Christ and the truth moved or unmoved Felix resisted until a more convenient time of which we never read of it occurring this man even trembled at the words of Paul and yet he resisted the truth that Paul was speaking of Jesus Christ and of his salvation so we never read again of Felix ever having that opportunity to come and accept the call of Christ King Agrippa on the other hand is a more appealing case he he almost almost was persuaded by Paul Paul to become a Christian almost he said he persuaded me to become a Christian Christian I call him in turn Agrippa as I call him the almost there resistant the almost there resistant at that very point he resisted the words and preaching of Paul I can't remember who ever penned these words whoever penned these words of all the saddest words of tongue or pen the saddest words are these it might it might have been of all the saddest words of tongue or pen the saddest words of these it might have been and how often God has had to call his people Israel to repentance and to return to him.

We see how much the children of Israel continually provoked God face to face and led them to wrath and punishment and judgment upon his own people.

How often he had to call them and how often they called to him and returned to him in repentance and faith and how often as he sung in the psalm there God forgave them and received them back to himself.

What does this teach you and I about God? What does it teach you and I about God? I'm sure each one of us have experienced this in our own life and living.

[36 : 05] It teaches us this and it certainly teaches me and from experience how our God is a long-suffering God.

A long-suffering and forgiving God. The question is how long has he suffered with us?

And as we sung there in Psalm 78 he forgave again and again as they were known to him as a stiff-necked and rebellious people.

But for many and we thank God for this but for many the call was irresistible.

The call to Abraham was irresistible. Abraham obeyed it and went out not knowing even where he went but he went at the call of faith and the call of God it was a call of faith to Abraham and he's trusted entirely unreservedly in what God had called him to.

[37 : 20] And we know that the outcome God had called him to and the blessings beyond compare that God laid upon Abraham.

God like Abraham calls you and I to the same walk of faith. God calls you and I we know not perhaps what the future holds and the way we don't know where we're going that way or what may befall us what may befall us in the year ahead but God has called you and I tonight to take that walk of faith the same as Abraham and to trust in God and all his promises and what he says.

The call of Abraham was a walk of faith. The call to you and I is also to walk in the faith of Abraham as he trusted his heavenly father.

The call of Samuel Samuel was but a child. You see God calls children as well as adults. Samuel was a young child in the temple of God.

Jesus said suffer little children to come unto me for as such is the kingdom of heaven. How much value then is our children to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[38 : 56] How we should pray for them and that they be like Samuel that hear the call of the Lord for Samuel heard that call and it seemed like him I might say mistaken identity.

He thought this call was from Eli the priest and three times that call was received until Eli convinced him that the call was from God and he said the next time you hear that call say here am I Lord I am your servant.

The call of Eli at first seemed a mistaken identity. Remember when Jesus met Mary in the garden in that resurrection morning Jesus supposed Mary supposed Jesus to be the gardener but when

Jesus spoke her name she recognised his voice of the risen living Lord. Mistaken identity. So Samuel obeyed the voice of the Lord and we know what Samuel's life turned out to be.

God blessed Samuel too as his prophet and called him to be his servant. Samuel responded and found that call irresistible because it was a call and the voice of God himself.

[40 : 48] Speak Lord he said for thy servant heareth. Take the words of Isaiah in chapter 6 verse 8 and 3 he said I heard the voice of the Lord say who will go for us then said I here am I send me.

That was the call of Isaiah we read there again in Mark's gospel a call of disciples Jesus simply walks along and meets these fishermen toiling at their work and as he comes to them he calls them and says two simple words follow me and what did they do they found that two words they found these two words irresistible follow me and they left all even left their father and followed in Jesus Christ the call of Jacob look at Jacob by today's standards we might say of him

God called look at what he did to his father and to his brother look what Jacob did to his father and his very brother how could God call and bless such a man as Jacob but God did God did call Jacob and here is the gospel I'm sure and Jacob fulfilled in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said I come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance so with King David and Bathsheba that was a terrible sin to have a man murdered to claim his very wife and yet God still David was God's chosen vessel and

God forgave him when Nathan came and said God has forgiven your iniquity you see Jacob too had his benial and he had to cross his he had to cross his fourth job and to make restitution in the end to his brother Esau that was the coming of blessing of Jacob and it is a comforting thought and it must be a comforting thought to any sinner's ears at Psalm 46 and verse 7 tells us the Lord of hosts is with us the God of who the God of Jacob the God of Jacob is our refuge the

Lord of hosts is with us and the God of Jacob is our refuge last of John 11 and 28 he calls many many to in the midst of dire circumstances you see God can see through death and loss as in no other way as he did to the two Marys that hour and to all who were standing by at that particular time it says Mary stayed in the house it seems there was a rather reluctance with Mary while Martha went and met Jesus there seemed to be a little doubt even a rebuke from

[45 : 18] Martha when she said Lord if thou had been here my brother would not have died here we have the most glorious call ever witnessed in the raising of Lazarus from the grave this indeed was a most irresistible call if ever Martha goes to Mary and she says the master is come and call it for you the call of God the call of Christ is a personal call as well as to a nation and it says Mary made haste and came to Jesus because his call was irresistible and it is irresistible for salvation for forgiveness from sin for righteousness it is only found in him

John was called in Patmos to come to come up and to see John's was a call as no other was to see the final consummation of all things and this call was in the midst of persecution this call John was banished to the Isle of Patmos but oh what a banishment and what a call it was this as he was in the midst of tribulation and banishment he saw the return of our Lord in the clouds the fall of Babylon the marriage of the lamb and his wife the church the glorifying of the saints clothed in white the overthrow of

Satan and evil John saw the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven a new heaven and a new earth he saw Christ crowned in all his glory Christ victorious king of kings and lord of lords so that is the glorious call a call which is irresistible either we resist that call or we find the call and the one who made that call even of Jesus Christ our lord as the irresistible one and Martha's words to Mary is ours tonight to the unbeliever or to us who believe the master is come and call for you he's calling the unbeliever to faith and repentance to him and find in him his salvation and his savior his calling to us as christian believers i believe to a more holier and closer walk and trust in him and to find him the one who is absolutely resistless the choice tonight is ours either to resist or to find him irresistible the hymn that puts it like this for he is lovely for he is lovely the christ of god is fairer than the son our concluding worship tonight is the hymn that j the of o the v the the