

The Call of God

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Date: 09 June 2019

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- [0 : 0 0] Now turning back to the last portion of scripture we read the gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. Mark in chapter 1. And simply looking at verse 17 this morning.
- And Jesus said to them, follow me and I will make you become fishers of men. And what I want to look at this morning is the call of God.
- The call of God as we have it brought before us in these two portions. And firstly we will look at probably the most important call, his call to Abraham.
- God's call to Abraham. And then we will look at a special infant. And thirdly we will look at the reasons behind God's call.
- The reasons behind God's call. And firstly coming to the call to Abraham. And much has been spoken and written about the call of God to men and women and boys and girls down through the ages.
- [1 : 2 1] We come across Isaiah in the temple. And he is given a vision of the holiness of God.
- And the impact that that vision of God's holiness had upon Isaiah was. That it transformed Isaiah's view of himself.
- And it transformed Isaiah's view of his fellow beings. We find Isaiah once he is given this vision of God's holiness.
- Expressing the impact it had upon him in this way. Woe, he said. I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. And I dwell amongst a people of unclean lips.
- It transformed the view he had of himself. Now, this vision that was given to Isaiah. Some are of the opinion that it was not his conversion experience.
- [2 : 2 3] That it was his call to the office of prophet. But even so, it had this impact upon him. That it transformed the view he had of himself.
- And the view he had of his fellow beings. And the words that he uses simply means, I am a sinner. I am undone. I am a sinner. And I dwell amongst sinners.
- And then we have Paul. God then puts the question to Isaiah. Whom shall I send? And who shall go for us?
- And in spite of the view Isaiah had now of himself. That he was a sinner. And that he dwelt amongst sinners.
- That everybody. Every one in the. Everyone who may dub the human race. They were all the same. That's the view that he had.
- [3 : 2 3] That's the view he was given. They were all the same. And yet. When God puts the question. Whom shall I send? Who shall go for us? Because Isaiah's reply was.
- Here am I. Send me. And then we come across Paul on the road to Damascus. And Paul is also given a vision.
- A vision of the glory of the risen Christ. And as we all know. Paul was zealous for one thing. And that one thing was the teaching of Judaism.

And he fully believed that that teaching was the truth. The whole truth. And nothing but the truth. And he looked upon Christ.

And the followers of Jesus Christ. As being nothing but deceivers and blasphemers. And he was of the opinion. And the sooner he would get rid of Christ and his followers.

[4 : 28] Out of this world. The sooner he would rid the world of the followers of Jesus Christ. So the world would be a better place. But once he was given a vision of the glory of the risen Christ.

What impact did it have upon Paul? He turned his back upon Judaism. The very teachings that he believed.

Was the truth. And nothing but the truth. And he joins. He joins himself to the followers of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ. Then we have Peter. James. John. And Andrew. And suddenly this man comes into their company.

And this man says to them. Follow me. He says. Follow me. And what impact did it have upon them? They turned their backs upon the employment.

[5 : 33] That provided for them a living. And they followed this Jesus. And at the end of the beginning of the book of Genesis.

We have God calling Abraham. And when God. When God's call comes to Abraham.

It commands Abraham. To turn his back upon the country. He had been born and brought up in. And set his face towards a country. That he was unfamiliar with.

And had little knowledge of. Had little knowledge of. You see.

God created the heavens and the earth. God created men and women in his own image. And these very men and women rebelled against God.

[6 : 44] They rebelled against God. And the fruit of that rebellion. And the fruit of that rebellion. We find that we do not have to read very far into Genesis.

Before we come across the first murder. Cain. Cain murders his brother Abel. Because he was jealous.

But Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God and not his. But you see Abel's sacrifice was offered up in faith. And Cain's was not.

And this jealousy led to Cain killing his brother. And as we read on in Genesis.

Past that first murder. We find things getting worse and worse and worse. Until God finally destroys the first world.

[7 : 45] With the flood. Every living thing. Was destroyed by the flood. Apart from one person. And one family. And that was Noah.

Who had found favor in God's sight. And Noah. Was asked by God. Was told by God to build an ark. And to take his family into the ark.

And God told him. The animals. That he was to take in. And the birds of the air. That he was to take into the ark. And Noah followed God's command.

And as he was building the ark. Over these 120 years. He was being mocked by the rest of the world. And yet. What Noah.

Had promised. Came. And every living thing. Human. Humans. And animal. Was destroyed by the flood.

[8 : 48] Noah was saved. Through the building of the ark. And his family. And it's a solemn. It's a solemn. Part of scripture.

When we see Noah. Stepping out from the ark. Into a world. That was now empty. Nobody there. But himself. And his family. And he offers.

Up to God. As. Sacrifice. Of thanksgiving. Had things changed.

Was this. This. This was a new beginning. But the question is. Had things changed. No. That rebellion.

Against God. Was still found. Active in Noah's own family. And what we find. As we read on.

[9 : 45] In Genesis. What we find. Is a world. Filled with uncertainty. A world ruled by pride. A world that was in darkness.

A world that was under. The dominion of violence. And in the midst of that. Uncertainty. And pride.

And darkness. And violence. God calls Abraham. God calls Abraham. What was he calling Abraham for?

So that this. Uncertainty. Pride. Darkness. And violence. Would not have dominion. Within.

Creation. Would not have dominion. Within. The creation. It was.

[10 : 40] Through the family. That would come from Abraham. That the messianic promise. Would be fulfilled. Remember. The promise.

That God gave. One will come. One will come. He said. From the seed of the woman. That will bruise. The head of the serpent. And he. Will bruise.

Whose heel. It was from. The family. Of Abraham. That this. Messianic promise. Would find.

Fulfillment. God. It is possible. It is possible. As it is true. Of all of us. That when God's call.

Came to Abraham. Abraham. Would have. Been filled. With anxiety. With fear. And with doubt. God.

[11 : 37] When God's presence. Draws near. To me. And to you. That is very often. The effect. It has upon us. And it would have been.

No different. For Abraham. He would have been. Filled with anxiety. With fear. And with doubt. But yet. What do we find? He is obedient. To the call.

He is obedient. To the call. You see. Abraham. Came from. A well. Off. Family. He was living.

In a city. The city. Of world. That was renowned. In that day. For. Its education. It was a city. That was full of. Idolatry.

Yes. But then. During that day. In Abraham's time. It was renowned. For its education. And. When.

[12 : 35] You take all of that in. It's easy to see. That Abraham. Would have been living. A very comfortable. Lifestyle. He was married.

He was well off. And of course. Being rich. Being wealthy. In those days. It was measured. By the stock. That you had. And Abraham. Had much stock. For the call of God.

Is commanding him. To turn his back. On all of that. And turn his face. Towards a country. He was unfamiliar with. And a country.

He had little knowledge of. He was to leave. Himself. And his wife. His servants. And to stop.

And go. To another country. That he had no knowledge of. And the amazing thing. Then. That we find.

[13 : 40] Is that. Not one portion. Of that land. That Abraham. Was told to go to. Not one portion. Of that land. Was given to him.

The only. Possession. He had. Within that land. Was the. Piece of land. That he had bought. To bury his wife. Sarah.

And we find. Abraham. And his son. Isaac. And his grandson. Jacob. Wandering in tents. While they are. In this land. Of Canaan.

Looking. To a city. That has. Foundations. Whose builder. And whose maker. Is God. His builder.

And whose maker. Is God. And that is. What is common. As far as. God's call. Is concerned. Once.

[14 : 35] It comes. To me. Or to you. We have. To turn. Our back. On something. And very often. We have.

To turn. Our back. Upon a lifestyle. In which. We might. Have been. Very comfortable. And live.

Out. A completely. Different. Lifestyle. In the world. In which. We. Find. Ourselves. God. I don't know.

About you. But I. Was very comfortable. In the lifestyle. I was living in. Especially. Until. Maybe not so comfortable. In the last couple. Of years. Before. The call.

Of God. Came. To me. But. I was pretty comfortable. In the lifestyle. I was living. And. I was giving. Very little thought.

[15 : 32] To eternity. Or. Salvation. Maybe. The last couple. Of years. I was not. That comfortable. In it. But this is. What the call.

Of God. Demands. Of me. And of you. To turn our backs. Upon the lifestyle. That we might. Have been. Very comfortable. In. And live out.

Live out. A different lifestyle. Within. Within the world. In which we are situated. And that. That brings us. To the second thing.

That we have here. A special. In fact. And the first question. We can. Ask is. How do I. Or you. Know. That it is.

The call of God. How do we know. That it is. The call of God. Taking in the many voices. That are calling. Out to us.

[16 : 28] Within the world. How do we know. It is the call of God. Well we know it. Because of this. It transforms. When that call. Comes to us. It transforms.

The view. That you or I. Have of the world. Completely transforms. The view. That we have of the world. And it. Has the same.

Impact upon us. As it did. Upon Isaiah. It transforms. The view. That we have of ourselves. And the view. That we have of our fellow beings. We can all say.

With Isaiah. I dwell. I. I am. I am. Passion of unclean lips. And I dwell. Amongst the people. Of unclean lips. We are all sinners.

I'm a sinner. Everybody else is a sinner. It transforms. The view. That we have. Of ourselves. And our fellow beings. And it also.

[17 : 25] Leads us. To realize. That we are not just. Dealing. With a world. That is visible. But that we are dealing.

With a world. That is unseen. Just the same. As it was. For Abraham. Isaac. And Jacob. They were looking. For this city. That has foundations. That could not be found.

In this world. But that could only be found. In the world. That was to come. And so. We find ourselves. Suddenly realizing.

That it's. That the world. Is not simply. Made up of the things. That are visible. But that. There is. An invisible world. That we were. Giving. Giving very little.

Thought. To. Very little. Thought. To. And we. Might have been. We might have been. The same.

[18 : 20] As Abraham. As Abraham. Was. Filled. Once the call. Of God. Came to us. We might have been. Filled with fear. Anxiety. And doubt. What is going to happen.

Now. Where is this. Leading me. And yet. In spite of that. Fear. And doubt. And anxiety.

We are. Obedient. To the call. The same. As Abraham. Was. He makes us. A willing. People.

In a day. Of his power. That doesn't mean. To say. That he pushes us. To follow him. He does not. But he leads us.

To weigh in the balance. Weigh up in the balances. What is more. Profitable for us. To stay. Where we are. Or to follow him.

[19 : 20] And we certainly. Realize. That it's far. More profitable. For us. To follow the call. Does it mean.

To say. That we're going to be rich. We're going to be wealthy. But in the long run. Taking in.

This world. And the world to come. It is far more profitable. For us. To follow. The call. Of God. And at the very beginning.

When that call. Comes to me. And to you. There might be hesitation. Accompanying. Our obedience. We might be very hesitant.

In giving obedience. To the call. We might be even wrong. In our discernment. Of the reasons. Behind the call. We might not be.

[20 : 21] Comprehending. The reasons. Behind the call. Very well. But that does not matter. Doesn't matter. I would. Whether we are hesitant. Whether we.

Whether our. Whether our discernment. Is wrong. But what matters. And what is important. Is that once this call. Comes.

That we follow. Wherever. That call. Is leading us to. We follow. That call. Wherever. It is leading us to.

Whether it is. Wanting us. To stay. In the community. We are in. And to be. Witnesses. To God. Within that community. Or whether. It is calling us.

Somewhere else. Like it was called. Like it was calling Abraham. And many. Down to the ages. Have been called. To other lands. Maybe not. Or maybe not. As missionaries.

[21 : 16] But simply. To witness them. But the important thing. Is. That you or I. Follow the call. Wherever.

That call. Is leading us to. That is what is important. And the thing. About. Abraham. The thing.

About. Abraham. And his family. The family. That would come from him. They were going to be. Instrumental. In giving birth. To an infant child.

That would have. An enormous impact. Upon this world. And how. That. How did that. Infant child. Have that. Enormous impact.

Upon the world. By being. Obedient. To the world. Of God. By doing. By doing the will. Of the father.

[22 : 15] And by coming. Into this world. To reveal. The father. It wasn't. By taking a sword. Into his hand. Or any other.

Weapons of war. That he had this. Enormous impact. Upon the world. But simply. By taking. To himself. The sword. Of the spirit. Which is the word.

Of God. And preaching. That word. While he was. In this world. He put upon himself.

The helmet. Of salvation. The breastplate. Of righteousness. Took into his hands. The sword. Of the spirit. Which is the word. Of God. And he had his feet.

Shod. With a. Gospel. Of peace. And he had. An enormous. Impact. Upon the world. In which we live. And Isaiah.

[23 : 09] If you go to the prophecy. Of Isaiah. In chapter 9. Isaiah. Gives four special names. To this infant child. The first name.

He gives to him. Is the wonderful. Counselor. And the word. Wonderful. The word. Wonderful. Makes us. Think.

Instantly. Of divinity. You remember. You remember. David. Remember. David. When he was. Meditating. Upon the intimate. Knowledge. That God.

Had of himself. Remember the words. He used. In Psalm. 139. And verse 6. Such. Knowledge. He said. Is too.

Wonderful. For me. It is too. High. I cannot. Attain. Unto. God. The word.

[24 : 01] Wonderful. Reveals. To us. That this child. Was going to be. Divine. He was going to be.

Divine. He was also. Going to be. The counselor. He was going to. Impart. His own. Wisdom. To. His people. The second name.

He gives him. Is the almighty. God. The almighty. God. Who would be. Victorious. Over all his enemies. And what did that mean.

For the. For his people. It meant this. For his people. That the very. Protection. That this. Almighty. God. Could afford to them. Would be theirs.

As long. As they were found. Within. This world. And the third name. That he gives. To this infant child. Is the eternal. Father.

[24 : 59] And as king. He would. Exercise. A special. Care. Over his people. Like a father's. Care. Over. His family. He would.

Exercise. This special. Care. Over his people. And the word. Eternal. Reveals. To us. That this. Special. Care. Would not. Be confined. To this world. Alone.

But that it would. Follow. His people. Into the world. That is to come. And the fourth. And final name. Isaiah. Gives to this child.

Is the prince. Of peace. The prince. Of peace. Now. None of us. Can experience. Peace. Without.

First. There being a victory. Peace. The peace. That we have enjoyed. As we have been hearing. In the last few days. The peace. That we have enjoyed.

[25 : 55] Over these years. Is as a result. Of the sacrifice. That our. Parents. Or grandparents. Were ready to make. In the last war. And therefore.

We have enjoyed. A war. Free existence. Within this part. Of the world. Because. Of the sacrifice.

Of others. This is the prince. Of peace. And this prince. Of peace.

Would be victorious. Over every enemy. That belonged. To his people. He would be victorious.

Over the world. Over the flesh. Over the devil. Over sin. Over death. Over the grave. And when you and I.

[26 : 58] When the call. Call of God. Comes to us. And we believe it. When we are united.

To Christ. By faith. We experience. This peace. Instantly. Ruling within our hearts. And as Jesus himself said.

My peace. I give unto you. Not as the world. Giveth unto you. Do I give unto you. It is a peace. That passes. All understanding.

Simply because. He has been victorious. Over all. Our enemies. Even death itself.

And he has nudged victory. From the grave. And that is why. We might not be. There are times.

[28 : 01] When we might not be aware. Of this peace. Ruling within our hearts. But it's there. And it will never leave. It will never leave.

The hearts of his people. Because. The victory has already. Been attained. Through his cross.

And through his sufferings. Through his death. And through his resurrection. He has. Been victorious.

Over. Every principality. And power. That was able to keep me or you. Away. From enjoying. The fellowship.

Of God. From enjoying. The fellowship. Of God. Well. Who is this child?

[29 : 02] It is none. He is none other. Than the very son. That God promised to David. That would sit on David's throne.

Eternally. The very one. That God promised to David. That he would have this son.

That would sit upon his throne. Eternally. And we must remember. That when. The children of Israel.

Or to put it. More accurately. The people of Judah. Were in captivity. In Babylon. In Babylon. The holy city.

And the temple. Were raised to the ground. They found themselves. In captivity. In a foreign land. Exiled. From the promised land. What was keeping them going.

[29 : 58] In that captivity. It was the messianic hope. The very. Messianic hope. That flowed. From the promise.

That God had given to David. That a son would come from him. That would rule. That would sit on his throne. Eternally. God called Israel.

Out of Egypt. Delivering them from. The bondage of Egypt. The slavery of Egypt.

Egypt. Why. Did he call them. And then he calls Israel.

His son. Why did he call them. Well he called them.

[30 : 54] For the simple reason. That the representative. Between man and God. Who was Adam. Had failed. He had rebelled.

Against God. And God. Had intended. That men. And women. That humanity. Would be. As stewards. Over creation. Taking care.

Of the creation. Adam. Would be. His representative. Adam. Rebelled. God. Calls Israel. Delivers them.

From the bondage. Of Egypt. Names them. As a son. Why. So that they would take the place of Adam. And that Israel. Would be God's representative.

Representatives. Within the world. They were to be lights. To the other nations. To the nations. Round about them. But as Adam. Failed. So Israel.

[31 : 52] Failed. So Israel. Were disobedient. To the word of God. Just as Adam. Was disobedient. To the word of God. God. However. The covenant.

That God. Had made. With Abraham. Was going to stand. It wasn't going to fall. To the ground. Without being fulfilled. And within that covenant.

What was the promise. God gave to Abraham. That a seed. Would come. As we were reading. In Genesis chapter 7. That a seed. Would come.

From Abraham. That would be made. A blessing. To every nation. On earth. On earth. And that.

Is what we have. With this infant child. This special infant child. This is the promised seed. This is the one.

[32 : 53] Who was going to be. A blessing. To all nations. The one. Who would take. Israel's place. The one. Who would take. Adam's place. The one.

Who would be. The one. And only. Mediator. Between God. And man. The man. Christ. Jesus. The man. Christ.

Jesus. Which brings us. To the. Third thing. That we have. The reasons behind. Our call. Well. As we find.

The sin front. Growing up. And becoming a man. We find. The call. Of God. Then. Coming. Through him. Follow me.

He says. And I will make you. Fishers of men. I will make you. Fishers of men. This was none other.

[33 : 49] Than God. Revealed in the flesh. And when we hear. His voice. Calling to us. We hear the voice. Of the good shepherd.

Shepherd. The word shepherd. In ancient days. Were you. Was used. For rulers. And these rulers. Were meant to rule. For the good of the people. Many of them didn't.

But this is the good shepherd. This is the good ruler. Who has the concern. And the welfare. Of his people. Ruling within his heart. And what does he say.

What does. What does. What does scripture say about him. That once he puts forth his sheep. His sheep. Follow him. For they know his voice. Once he puts forth his sheep.

He goes before him. And his sheep. Follow him. For they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger. But they will flee from a stranger.

[34 : 51] For they know not the voice of a stranger. And when you and I were called. Whenever that took place.

It was the voice of the good shepherd. That was calling us. Did you know his voice? Of course you did. And that's why you followed him.

And that's why you followed him. And the other question is. What sort of people. Does Jesus call to himself?

What sort of people. Does he call? Well we find. In the portion. We read in Mark. They were fishing.

As we read on in the gospels. Some are tax collectors. Some are sinners. They were common people.

- [35 : 54] Like you and me. He's not calling to himself. Superheroes. People who have a great following.
- On Twitter. Superheroes. He's not calling to himself. Super intellectuals. Although he has done. He has done.
- And we cannot. Shut out. That he doesn't call such people. But it's common people. Like you and I.
- That he calls. And who on earth. Would ever have visualized. On this day. When Jesus called.
- Peter, John. Andrew and James. Who on earth. Would have ever visualized. The impact. That these common people.
- [36 : 50] Were going to have. On this world. Through the preaching. Of the gospel. And that impact.
- Is still. Carrying on. Within the world. Still going on. Within the world. Doesn't left the world.
- The gospel. The gospel. That was first. Preached by the apostles. And handed down. To us. Is still having. The same impact.
- Maybe not. In this. Part of the world. That we are living in. It's not. It's not so evident. But in other parts. Of the world. It is going on.
- Tremendous. Impact. Upon the world. So what are the reasons. Behind our calling. Well. The first reason is. That we are to bear.
- [37 : 47] The name of God. Within the world. We are bearers. Of God's name. And we are to make. Every effort. That we do not. Bring any shame.
- Or dishonor. To that name. That we are now bearing. We have been called. To be witnesses. To the light. And salvation. That is to be found.
- In Jesus. Christ. We are set free. From the. Bondage of sin. From the captivity. Of sin.
- For what? Well. As Israel. As the exodus. Reveals to us. When Israel. Well delivered. From the bondage of Egypt. What did God say.
- To Pharaoh. Let my people. Go. So that they will. Worship me. On this mountain. For he had chosen.
- [38 : 43] We have. We are set. Free. From the bondage. Of sin. To worship. The one. Through. And living God. And to do.
- His will. Within the world. Exactly what Jesus. Was doing. Exactly what Jesus. Himself. Was doing. To worship.
- The one. Through and living God. And to be seen. To be doing. God's will. Within the world. We have been given. Also the spirit. Of prayer. Isn't that what.
- Jesus. Jesus himself. Said about Paul. When he was. When he gave heed. To. His call. Behold. He prays. God.
- And what is prayer. Prayer is. Praising God. Praising God. For his wonderful goodness.
- [39 : 44] Praying for the good. Of our nation. Praying. For the good. Of the world. In which we are situated. You see. The prayers.
- Of the Lord's people. Encompass. The world. In which we live. And who knows. And only eternity. Will show it.
- Probably show it. How much. The prayers. Of the Lord's people. Have been keeping. The sin. Of the human heart. In check. The same goes.

For the preaching. Of the gospel. And the witness. Of the Lord's people. The question is. If you remove. The Lord's people. From this world. What sort of world.

Would you be left with. And the answer.

[40 : 40] To that. We can see it. In other parts. Of the world. Where the gospel. Witnesses. No more. For the gospel.

Witness. There is no more. We are also. Called. By God. To be instrumental.

In the salvation. Of others. To be instrumental. In the salvation. Of others. To be instrumental. In setting others. Free. From the bondage. Of sin. So that they will do.

The very same things. That we are doing. That they will do. Carry on doing. The very same things. That we are doing. Worshipping.

Praying. Doing God's will. We are also called. To be witnesses. To a great. And wonderful love.

[41 : 40] A love. That is unspeakable. The love of God. To sinners. We are called. To testify. To that love. In order. That the world.

Itself. Will come to taste. Of that love. As well. We have been called. To testify. To the fact. That there is no other name.

Given under heaven. Amongst men. Through which we must be saved. But the name. Of the crucified. Christ. For in him alone. Will we find salvation.

And the very. Presence of God's people. Within the world. Is a witness. To the resurrection. Of Jesus. For it.

Needed. The very same power. That raised Jesus. From the dead. To raise me. And you. From the grave.

[42 : 39] Of sin. To bring us. From death. Unto life. And it is the risen Christ.

That calls. Me. And you. It is not a voice. That comes from within the tomb. That is calling us. But a voice.

That is beyond. The grave. That comes from beyond. The grave. The risen. Savior. Who can say of himself.

I am alive. And was dead. But I am now alive. Forevermore. Now alive. Forevermore.

It is the. The risen Savior. That calls us. It is. The voice. Of the good shepherd. That is living.

[43 : 40] In the power. Of an ever ending. Life. That calls me. And you. From darkness. Into his own. Marvelous light. We should never. Be guilty. Simply because.

We are not superheroes. Simply because. We are not. Super intellectual. Simply because. We don't have a great following. On Twitter. We should never be guilty.

For we have been called. To prepare. This world. For the judgment. That is to come. And to prepare. This world.

For the new heavens. And the new earth. That is the promise of God. Within his word. And the question. For you this morning.

Have you experienced. This call. Or are you still resisting. This call. Well.

[44 : 43] Listen. To the response. Of one woman. Charlotte Elliot. To the call. Of Jesus. She put it down.

As a poem. Just as I am. Without one plea. But that thy blood. Was shed for me. And that thou biddest me.

To come to thee. O Lamb of God. I come. Just as I am. Though tossed about. With many a conflict.

Many a doubt. Fighting some fears. Within and without. O Lamb of God. I come. Just as I am.

Poor. Wretched. Blind. Sight. Wretched. Healing of the mind. Ye all. I need in thee. To find. O Lamb. Of God. I come.

[45 : 41] Just as I am. You will receive. Will welcome. Pardon. Cleanse. Relieve. Because. Your promise. I believe.

O Lamb. Of God. I come. And may it bless to us. These few thoughts. Let us.