

Completely Done 1 – Called

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[0 : 00] So this class is called Completely Done. Can a believer be secure in every season?! And so we're looking at called. What does it mean to be called?

So the Bible uses a lot of different words to describe the nature of salvation.! Election, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification, forgiveness.

There's just so many. There's a lot of different words. And so you may wonder, what in the world is going on here? What does it all mean? How does it all happen? When does it happen? And so in this Completely Done class, we want to give some definitions to what's happening.

But more than that, we want to help people see that what's needed for us to be made right with God is completely done. It's already been done for us.

And so there's nothing else to be added. When Jesus said, it's finished, it is finished, this is what he's talking about. Every bit of our salvation from beginning to end was purchased by the blood of Christ.

[1 : 04] So far more than definitions, we want to fill you with hope. I want to fill you with hope. It's meant to give confidence to the believer.

What a relief. Think about it. What a relief that we have nothing to offer to our salvation. Nothing to offer to it. God tells us it's done. And he tells us that it's completely done.

Fully accomplished and fully purchased. There's no layaway. We don't come in on the back end and make purchases. The believer is secure in this life and is guaranteed eternal life in the next. John Murray wrote a great book. In fact, I have a copy to give away if anyone is interested at the end. And he says it's about the application of redemption, of our salvation.

When we think about the application of redemption, we must not think of it as one simple, indivisible act. It comprises a series of acts and processes. Romans 8, 29, and 30 is often called the golden chain of salvation.

[2 : 11] It's like a sequence that happens. It's golden because it's precious and it's unbreakable. So there's a sequence there. So Romans 8, 29, and 30, we have it there.

It says, For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed in the image of his son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Those whom he foreknew, predestined, and those whom he predestined, he also called.

Those whom he called, he also justified. Those whom he justified, he also glorified. You can see there's a chain here. It's an unbreakable chain. You're not jumping off at different intervals.

So in this four-part class, we're looking at four of these kind of processes. Called is the first one. Next week is justified, and then sanctified, and last, glorified.

Those are the four classes, and it kind of composes the arc of the Christian life. Like, what does it mean to be drawn out of our darkness, and then justified, and then grow in the Christian life, and ultimately glorified with God?

[3 : 15] So that's where we're going in this class of today. Called. Point number one, God's Word. Let's start with God's Word. When the Bible speaks of calling, it actually has several meanings.

Sometimes, in a sense, it has a sense of being led or directed. Maybe called to a particular task or job or vocation, even a ministry. And sometimes it's even like a season of life that's assigned to you, like called to be a husband or a wife or called to a vocation, called to be single.

But in this class, we're going to zero in on two aspects of what it means to be called. The gospel call. These are theological terms. You're not going to find gospel call in the Bible.

But gospel call and effectual call. Those are the two callings. They're theological terms. The gospel call is first. It's also called an external call or visible call.

It means that the message of the gospel is proclaimed indiscriminately to all people. And so, everyone who's within earshot of this message and its recording, when the message goes out and it's called, they are called to repent and put their faith in Jesus.

[4 : 38] So, if you go to church, if you hear the preaching of the Word, if someone shares with you the gospel, if you hear the gospel message on Christian radio, you're being called, an outward call, a gospel call, to turn to the Lord.

And it's external. It's visible. It's news. It's a message. It's the message. It's often said that bad news travels at the speed of light and good news travels like molasses.

That's true. And the gospel call is both good news and bad news. If the White House were on fire tomorrow, God forbid, it'd make headline news and it would blow up all your feeds.

But the point is, though, that the gospel, which literally means good news, is objective historical facts. So, just like the news autoproclaimed facts, like the headline news that you watch on TV or read in a paper, or that you would have once read in a paper, papers don't exist hardly anymore. They're supposed to just report on historical facts, things that actually happened. And that's what the gospel is. It's news of historical, objective, divine acts.

[5 : 56] Our statement of faith describes the gospel in this way. The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ and all that he did in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension to accomplish salvation for humanity.

Therefore, the gospel is not a human action or achievement, but rather an objective, historical, divine achievement that remains true and unchanging regardless of human opinion or response. The gospel stands as the core message of the Bible, which in all its parts testifies to God's saving acts, culminating in the person and work of Christ.

This good news is the power of God for salvation for all who believe. This is the gospel message. It's the message that all that's been done in Christ. Mark begins his gospel this way, his book.

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark, like the other gospel writers, is announcing, like a herald, this is something that's happened in time.

[7 : 04] The gospel announces that the wages of sin is death. And all have sinned. God is storing up wrath for sinners to be poured out on a day when his righteousness will be revealed from heaven.

But the gospel also announces that the wrath of God fell on Jesus Christ and all who turn to him. The gospel is not advice to be considered.

The gospel is news to which we must respond. It's the core message of the gospel, of the Bible. And so we offer this gospel call freely, indiscriminately, to all.

It's a universal call. Again, John Murray says, God entreats, invites, commands, calls. He presents the overture of mercy and grace.

And he does this to all without discrimination, distinction and discrimination. This is God calling people to respond. We see it all through scripture.

[8 : 06] Come to me, all who labor. In Acts 17, the times of ignorance got overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. It's a call. And yet, we know that not everyone will heed this call.

Right? Not everyone who hears the gospel responds. Whoever believes has life. Whoever does not believe does not have life, John 3 says. So, Kevin DeYoung observes, Almost everywhere Paul went, large crowds rejected him and rejected his message.

The gospel will be an aroma of life to some and a fragrance of death to others. Same gospel perfume, different noses. I like the way it says that.

And so, this presents a bit of a problem. I think and trust this is nothing new to you. This is this gospel news is known to most of us in the church.

I think we have good teaching. Praise the Lord. But this is the gospel call. It's one aspect of being called. Number two, God's work. So, God's work, there's a couple of different things happening.

[9 : 17] So, the next call is what we call, theological terms, the effectual call. Point A. And there's a necessity for the effectual call. So, the gospel call goes forth.

Some respond and some don't. What's the problem? Why don't people respond? Why don't people always respond? Sometimes they do. Is the issue with the message or with the person giving the message?

Like some people are just really convincing and others are not. No, the issue is with us. It's the issue is with the hearer. The issue is with sin. We're born into sin, regardless of our upbringing. And we're unable to respond to the gospel call. In the fourth and fifth centuries, you may remember from history class, there was a British monk named Pelagius.

And Pelagius became well known for his bad theology. It's, he pointed, he positioned, he posited that there is no original sin.

[10:26] This was what he suggested. Original sin does not exist. Adam's sin only affected Adam, he said. And that his descendants, children who were born afterwards, are actually born innocent.

So for Pelagius, moral perfection is possible. So the idea that original sin doesn't exist, then, has been strongly denounced as heresy for centuries.

We are born into sin. We are inherited sin from Adam. In Adam all die, 1 Corinthians 15 says. So this sinful nature is baked into our being.

It's part of who we are. We can't get away from it. And we can't overcome it. And sin is far worse than we realize. It affects every part of who we are.

Our will, our minds, our desires, our thoughts. And it causes us to be blind. To be blind. So with that, we have to understand now, with that in mind, it's necessary for God to call us.

[11:30] To be the one to call us out of darkness and into light. So 1 Peter 2 says. You're a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

This is effectual calling. God has to be the one to bring us out of darkness. We're unable to do it ourselves. In our natural state, the Bible describes us as rebels against God.

Dead. Enemies of God. There's complete inability on our part. So much so that we're ignorant to our own lostness. We're captive.

We're unable to respond in repentance and faith. So why do some respond then? If we're unable, God gives the message. And some respond, some don't.

How's anybody responding? Can a dead person respond? Romans 8.30 again. Those whom he predestined, he also called.

[12:36] Those whom he called, he also justified. Those whom he justified, he also glorified. All those God calls, he justifies. See the chain, right?

Those whom he called, he's going to eventually. See the ark. If he's calling somebody, he's going to justify them. That's the end result. Glorify them. And so in Romans 8, all that he called are saved.

Again, the effectual call. This is the call that accompanies the gospel, where God draws a person to himself. It's the only way that a dead person can come to life.

There's an effectual call. So there's the gospel call. But then there's one where the God calls somebody, and it happens on the inside. It's not visible. It's not the message. It's not the preaching. It's not the gospel. It's where God moves from heaven, reaches down on the inside, overcomes a person's resistance to him, and calls the elect to himself. It changes their heart and their disposition toward him through regeneration.

[13:39] And it happens by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's wonderful. Point two, what does this calling affect? Well, I heard one preacher say that it brings about God's pre-decided and decreed consequence.

It's a mouthful. God pre-decided something, but it brings about it in time. When the gospel is preached and the invitation to trust in Christ, we always resist.

There's a resistance from spiritually dead people. But the effectual call is from God himself. It's a heavenly calling, Hebrews 3 says. And it is actually irresistible.

Not that I have the power to resist, but my resistance cannot overcome his call. God begins to wake us up. This is the effectual call.

Saving faith is the result of this calling. This calling. And we see it over and over in Scripture. Over and over. Ephesians 2. For by grace you've been saved through faith. And it is not of your own doing.

[14:47] It is the gift of God. Not a result of works. So that no one may boast. Matthew 16. And Jesus said to Peter, Who do you say I am?

And Peter says, You're the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, Blessed are you. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who's in heaven.

John 6. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them. That one's pretty clear. Matthew 11. I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.

Hidden to some and revealed to others. The Westminster Confession of Faith is helpful here. It says, In contrast to the gospel call, effectual call doesn't just make our embrace of Christ possible. It makes it certain. That's pretty strong. This call by the Lord is more like a summons. When my kids call me from the other room, I can decide if I want to respond.

[15:55] Is it something they can wait? Is it, am I occupied elsewhere? But when God calls us this way, it's a summons from the king of the universe to come to him.

Our creator calls us to himself, and we joyfully respond. Some have also likened it to like a subpoena, like a court subpoena. Like when you're subpoenaed to come to court, you have no choice.

You must come to court. But in this instance, we're not condemned, we're justified. Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. What a gift.

And without this call, we would never, we're dead in our sins. We would never go to God in this way. So we need God in order to turn to God. Our statement of faith says this about the effectual call.

God commands the gospel to be proclaimed to all people everywhere. But all people are spiritually dead and unable to respond to the saving news.

[16:56] Therefore, God graciously and effectively calls to himself those whom he chose to save in Christ. Through the proclamation of the gospel, the Holy Spirit regenerates the elect and brings them into a living union with Christ, bestowing new spiritual life, opening their eyes to see God's glory in Christ, enabling them to respond to the gospel in faith and repentance.

And with a renewed heart and mind, we receive Christ and rely fully on him for salvation, turning from our sinful, self-seeking way of life to love and follow Christ in joyful obedience.

B, regeneration. We're still under the heading of God's work. This is God's work. God calls people to himself and then he regenerates them.

This is also the Lord's work. And so in this order of salvation, some of the steps have a lot of overlap. And not all theologians necessarily agree on what these steps are or when it happens. But regeneration is really just another way of explaining the work of God. If the effectual call is when God uses the gospel to draw people to himself, regeneration is when he begins to impart new spiritual life to them.

[18:16] It's what happens when we're born again. Notice the prefix of regeneration. Re-generate. It's likened to the first time that we're generated or born.

But it's not an exact replica, though, is it? And regeneration is also a mystery. Not only is it completely the work of God, it's just hard to explain regeneration.

Even for the highly educated and religiously trained, it's difficult. That's the question that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and asked him. And he got tripped up on this mystery.

Jesus said that a person needs to be born again from above. And Nicodemus is saying, What are you talking about? How can a grown man go back into the birth canal? It's like vulgar.

It's confused. And Jesus answers, The wind blows where it wishes. You hear it sound, but you don't know where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

[19:23] It is not a fleshly rebirth. It is a spiritual one. Being born again is a mystery. It's an act of God. So if you're a Christian here, you've been acted upon by God himself.

The Lord has worked in your life. He's called you to himself and drawn you out of darkness. That's the effectual call. We don't regenerate ourselves.

It's not turning over a new life. It's not a way of reforming our lives or trying harder. You didn't merely come to your senses or anything of the sort. Jesus said it's being born from above.

God had you in mind before you were born and decided to call you to himself and open your eyes and allowed you to behold something of his glory.

And he did this not because he saw anything good in us, whether future faith or good works or anything. He did it for his own good pleasure. It pleases God to rescue sinners like us and it glorifies him.

[20:29] Titus 3, He saved us, not because of works done in us by righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out

on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

When I was 25 years old, I was a punk kid who was lost.

I was lost. I was completely stuck in pursuing my own happiness. And I was self-centered. And I was a good person.

I was a pretty good moral person. And I believed in God. I was not a believer, though. I was not a Christian. I was not born again. I believed God existed. But what could he do for me?

I didn't know. And, but I was, I was trapped in sin and it started to bother me. And I, I'm sitting on my couch and I'm 25.

[21 : 32] I'm thinking about my purpose. What am I doing? And how can I be happy? And I see a book staring me in the face called Purpose Driven Life. And, and I've never, I've never read it before. And so I open it and the first words say, it's not about you.

And it's like, what? Of course it's about me. And so I was so confused, but intrigued enough to keep reading. And so he, he, it's 40 chapters over 40 days.

And I commit to reading these 40 chapters and the gospel messages presented to me. And through, through that book, the Lord opened my eyes and imparted new life.

At the end of 40 days, I'm born again. Lord gave me a new life. I recognized that I, I had sin. I'd messed up my own life and needed to repent and turn to him in faith.

And, and it was amazing. I needed God. There was, it was in April of 2005. And I remember just everything was so green.

[22 : 34] Like I'd never seen spring before. It was like having new eyes. That was the result of it. But I recognized my sin. I needed God. And the Lord saved me. And it's a mystery.

It's a mystery what happens. I was not searching for the Lord, but the Lord came to me. I was not on a path of relationship with him. The Lord came to me. I was a rebel and he rescued me.

So trying to describe new life is like trying to describe a rainbow to a blind man. Sometimes it's something that happens to you. And even if you just grew up in church and you never remember a time when you didn't believe, this happened to you.

The Lord at some point in time has called you to himself, regenerated you and given you new life, regardless of the story. If you're in Christ, this has happened to you. God has acted upon you.

If anyone's in Christ, he's a new creation. Remember. Effective calling. Wayne Grudem concludes this section. He says, Effective calling is thus God the Father speaking powerfully to us and regeneration is God working powerfully in us to make us alive.

[23 : 43] Point three, our response. Yes, there's a response still. Effectual calling, regeneration, and conversion represent three terms that some theologians think is sort of a single thing.

And they are a single act. One of the reasons is because they happen in a moment. There's really no lag in between them. When God calls, he regenerates, and we believe.

Just right there. It happens. David Mathis helpfully says, There's no time lapse between God's regenerating work and our experience of faith.

It's like opening an eye. No time lapses between the lid parting and the light streaming in. It's really helpful. It's really helpful. And so for most theologians, this conversion step is faith and repentance.

This is our response. Faith and repentance. Faith and repentance then hang together. Neither repentance nor faith comes first. They come together.

[24 : 48] We don't just turn away from sin. We turn to God. We turn to Christ. John Murray speaks of penitent faith and believing repentance.

I think that's helpful. We see it also in Isaiah 55 where these things are hanging together. If you notice, it's repentance and faith happening in one verse.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, turning, and let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

So faith and repentance is seen as one act, and it's a response. And it's important to note that a response is necessary. We don't just sit back. The gospel is not something we passively listen to.

It's something we have to respond to. So how would you respond if you heard the White House was on fire? We'd respond in a certain way. Now consider how you would respond if you woke up to the smell of smoke in your own house on fire.

[25 : 53] It would be a different response. You'd get up and do something. It isn't enough just to listen to the gospel. The knowledge that your house is on fire demands a response. Get out.

The knowledge of our sin against the Holy God and his impending righteous judgment against us demands a response to repent and believe. But some may ask, since we are unable to go to God on our own, when he calls and regenerates, isn't he doing this against our will?

Well, no. We don't come to God against our will. The enslaved will. What happens is the enslaved will is set free.

We're loosed from the bondage of sin to be what God designed us to be. I thought about this week. I saw a story of a man who was wrongfully imprisoned in Minnesota.

He was imprisoned for murder. He was in there 30 years. And somebody else confessed to the murder like last week. And so they got him out.

[27 : 00] He was wrongfully jailed for 30 years. And so when they open the prison doors, are they doing that against his will? No. No. Well, he wants to get out. The difference is, though, he was wrongfully imprisoned, right?

We are rightfully imprisoned. Our sin blinds us rightfully. We're sin by nature. We commit sin. We're culpable for it.

And yet when the Lord opens the prison doors, it's like he's opening our eyes to who he really is. It's not done against our will. And so our wills are changed to love the things that we once hated.

Now we love what is good. We have a desire to please God and not just ourselves. Our evil heart is removed, and a new soft heart is put there instead. We see this in the promises of the Old Testament, Jeremiah 31.

He says, I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. Ezekiel 36 says something similar. I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you.

[28 : 03] And I will remove a heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh, a soft heart. And I'll put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and carefully obey my rules.

And so with a new heart intact, we turn from our former ways and hate the things we once cherished. We repent. We fall on his mercy, putting our faith in Christ alone.

We're converted. It's voluntary. It's a willing response in which the individual person puts his faith and trust in Christ. The last part of the statement of faith, 9.2 for the Sovereign Grace Statement of Faith, is helpful.

It's about our response. Only those who respond to the gospel in this way will be saved. Yet, even the response is a gift of God's merciful grace, ensuring that he alone receives the glory for salvation.

And this is so important, that only those who respond in this way are actually saved. While repentance and faith are not what saves us, a person is not saved without it.

[29 : 13] And so because calling and regeneration comes first, even the faith to believe is a gift.

Those things have to be in order. We have to understand that order. He calls us. He regenerates us. And we respond. He changes our hearts and we respond freely.

But it's a gift. It's a gift that's been purchased for us. We're not generating something in ourselves. It's all a matter of grace from start to finish.

It's a gift of God. So everything that is needed for our salvation was purchased on the cross of Christ. We just can't miss that. We can't miss that.

It's been purchased. It's completely done. There's nothing left to do. Nothing to add. The work of Christ has done it all. And we believe. So the end goal, as the statement of faith has said, is the glory of God.

[30 : 12] If I had some part to play in my being regenerated, I could boast about it. But boasting is excluded.

But if it's God, then the glory belongs to Him. And He is more than able. He has more strength to keep me to the end than I do.

If I'm relying on myself to keep me, I might accidentally let go or slip. But the Lord is keeping us. We can rest knowing that that work is done.

He will keep us to the end. These are the results of these doctrines. And they're so important. So if you are in Christ, you are secure. God's work in salvation has been done and applied to you.

It's been done and applied for those who are in Christ. So what else can we say? Great things that the Lord has done. To Him be the glory. Let me pray for us.

[31 : 15] Oh, Lord, we thank You. This is a mystery in many ways, Lord. But You have not left us to ourselves in this. We thank You that You've given us Your Word. You have given us Yourself. You've given us Your Spirit. And You have, for those who are in Christ, You have opened our eyes, called us to Yourself. One of the most common terms for Christians, called. And not just to a job, but to a task, Lord. Called out of darkness and into light. Father, to You be the glory. Father, our faith is tied to You, Lord. It's a gift of God. It's not a result of works. We don't want to boast. But we put our trust in You. We turn from sin. We turn from wickedness this day. And we say, Lord, have mercy on us. Help us to live for You. And to walk in Your ways according to Your purposes. And I ask that You be glorified. And we want to trust that You will bring us into eternity. Because it is Your good pleasure, Lord.

[32 : 15] So be glorified and bless those who have heard this call today to turn and repent. And we ask that You be glorified in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.