

# The Call Of God

**Introduction.** Living as a Christian has its origin in the call of God (Romans 1:7). This call is by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14). No small part of the first letter to the Corinthians is occupied with reproofs for the disorders which had arisen in the church. Before proceeding, however, the apostle does commend them for the attainments which they had made.

In all of Paul's letters except Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus, he follows the customary formula of including a thanksgiving in the introduction of his letter. In each case, the introduction is not just a hollow space filler but contains statements particularly relevant to the congregation or person addressed. We are going to note some very precious facts inherent in this call as given to us in 1 Corinthians 1:4-9.

## ***I. A Call To Grace***

- A. "Grace" is used to refer to that which is bestowed on another but which he does not deserve. A few times this original word is translated as "gift" (1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:19; cp. Romans 15:15; Ephesians 3:8). "Grace" definitely receives more emphasis in the New Testament than in the Old Testament. "Grace" appears 131 times in 122 verses in the New Testament, but only 39 times in 37 verses in the Old Testament.
- B. The grace whereunto we are called could never come as a response to human merit (Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:8). It was given purely through love (John 3:16). But in the Corinthian's case, as will be our case as well, this act of grace was received by them when they submitted to the call of God through the gospel.
- C. John Calvin taught and Calvinists believe that God's grace is exercised on the heart of man in a direct manner by the Holy Spirit above and apart from the gospel. He also taught that it is completely of God — that man's will does not cooperate with God, it is completely controlled by God. However, this view negates God's wonderful grace and man's ability to chose or reject this grace.

## ***II. A Call To Enrichment***

- A. This word means "to make rich." Most of the time when the idea of riches are mentioned in the gospels, physical riches are meant (Mark 10:23-25). In the epistles, "riches" are metaphorically used to represent the surpassing value of what we have in Christ (Romans 2:4; Ephesians 1:7, 18; 3:8; Colossians 1:27).
- B. The church was blessed with men who could communicate God's revelation because they understood it well by miraculous means. Their internal condition, which will be discussed throughout the rest of the book, was inexcusable. The condition of the church was not caused through ignorance, nor by a lack of revelation. The problem was caused by sins like carnality, pride, and lust.
- C. The new life in Christ enriches us with power from God and a new set of values placed in our lives. There is a deeper knowledge of God, a clearer vision of the treasures of His word, a fuller expression of what makes this life palatable, and a living hope of enjoyment of eternity. Truly this is a rich person — rich in faith and rich toward God (James 2:5).

### **III. A Call To Patience**

- A. The Corinthians possessed all spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). They were not deficient in any of them. Because of the manifestation of these gifts, the testimony of Christ was confirmed or established among them.
- B. Having noticed the gifts which the Corinthians possessed, we now see what the Corinthians were doing — waiting for the coming of the Lord. Their eyes were focused on the future; their hopes and expectations were not focused on the world, but on Jesus (Philippians 3:20). The Thessalonica brethren waited for the Lord as well (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).
- C. Our hopes and dreams are contingent on Jesus' promised return, therefore we hope for the consummation of everything in Jesus. That Jesus in whom we now believe but have never before seen will be revealed to us on that day (1 John 3:1-2). That day will be a day in which the curtains of heaven will be drawn back in order for us to see our Lord (Hebrews 6:19-20).

### **IV. A Call To Blamelessness**

- A. Herein lies the practical use of our blessed hope. Our lives are affected by becoming a Christian (1 John 3:3). "Blameless" signifies what cannot be called into account, i.e. with nothing laid to one's charge as the result of public investigation. It was the absence of a charge or accusation against a person.
- B. Paul was blameless in his observance of the Law (Philippians 3:6). Both Paul and Peter called others to blameless living (1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Peter 3:14). This commandment goes all the way back to Abraham (Genesis 17:1).
- C. Whereas the day of the Lord will be a terrible day for sinners, to the Christian it will be a happy day. One need not shrink back in fear of the Lord because he is forgiven. However, we must continue to walk in the light (1 John 1:7). Walking in the light is analogous to living blamelessly, and we can do because of the forgiveness of God through the blood of Jesus.

### **V. A Call To Fellowship**

- A. The word in the original language for "fellowship" occurs eighteen times in the New Testament and is translated as communication, communion, sharing, contribution, distribution, and fellowship. The noun form occurs ten times and is translated as companion, partaker, partner, and to have fellowship with.
- B. This high calling brings us into partnership with His Son in all spiritual matters. We are laborers and heirs together with God (1 Corinthians 3:9; Romans 8:16-17). We work with one another, side by side, to build up the kingdom of Christ (Philippians 4:14-16). This fellowship is a present possession which will be more fully enjoyed in heaven (cp. Revelation 7:9-12).
- C. This fellowship demands that we live righteously, for no unrighteousness can remain in fellowship with God (Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:8, 11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-7, 14; Titus 3:10-11; 2 John 9-11).

### **VI. A Call By A Faithful God**

- A. The final sentence in v. 9 is intimately related to v. 8. It contains the reason why God will confirm the Corinthians and why they will be blameless. The God who

promised to forgive us will do what He said. The God who promised not to allow us to be tempted above what we are able to bear will do what He said. The God who promised to provide a means of escape from every temptation will do what He said.

- B. We can depend on God. Six times in the Bible is God called “faithful” (Deuteronomy 7:9; Hosea 11:12; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Peter 4:19). He cannot lie. We are going to stand before God accepted in judgment not because of our own attainments, but because of His faithfulness.

**Conclusion.** Christians are indeed richly blessed to have been called into fellowship with Jesus. The word “call” means “to invite or summon.” Today, we are going to invite and summon you to partake of the same blessings which were bestowed upon the Corinthians. Please don’t receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1).