

“The Calling of the Called” (Joel 2:26-32)(10.21.18)

Joel 2:26–32 (NIV84)

26 You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the Lord your God,
who has worked wonders for you;
never again will my people be shamed.

27 Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the Lord your God,
and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

28 “And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.

29 Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

30 I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

31 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

32 And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be deliverance,
as the Lord has said,
among the survivors
whom the Lord calls.

The word of God for the people of God.

Title: The Calling of the Called

LET US PRAY.

INTRODUCTION:

After six months you might be wondering, what is all this talk about revival? Many limit revival to those that are already, though in a lukewarm way, members of the faith. What is the urgency? What is the bottom line? Those that have ears let them hear. The individual must be revived in order that the Body of Christ be revived. In every generation, the gospel must be transplanted. How can a church stand idly by while a whole generation, or two generations, head along the broad way of destruction?

If we believe that God is righteous and holy; if we believe that there is judgement; if we believe in hell; if we believe in eternal damnation for those that don't love Jesus; then how can our heart not break for those that are separated from God? As you go through your day, think about every single person you meet. Ask yourself, "where are they going to spend eternity? Then ask yourself, "What am I going to do about it?"

My brothers and sisters, we have a calling on our lives. You have called on the Lord Jesus as the Almighty has called on you. You have been brought into a great blessing of kingdom living. I remind you of the scriptural mandate, to whom much is given, much is expected. We are to be an amplifier of God's calling to our generation. We need to take this seriously, as if millions of lives depended on it; because they do depend on it.

BODY:

We must remember the context of the promises we hear at the end of Joel chapter two. The Lord God had brought a locust army against Israel as a rod of correction. The people were to respond by rending their hearts, by repenting, and by returning to the Almighty. Then the people and the nation would be restored. They would be fed and satisfied.

Then Joel ventures further into a greater promise. The very presence of the Lord your God will be your confidence. There will be communion with God and there will be no competition for the people's loyalty towards God. This is the desire of God's heart and expressed in many places.

Exodus 25:8 (NIV84) “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.

Leviticus 26:11–12 (NIV84) I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. 12 I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

Ezekiel 37:27 (NIV84) My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

And ‘AFTERWARD’ we have a great bridge to the New Testament birth of a church. Verse 28-32 of Joel 2 is Peter’s declaration in Acts 2:16-21 that Joel’s prophecy is coming true. God the Holy Spirit has come down upon the 120 and the crowd of thousands. Peter proclaims Jesus. The people heard, were cut to the heart and responded, “What shall we do?” Acts 2:38 (NIV84)

38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And three thousand people were added to the 120 Jesus followers that day. The church was established. The new dispensation of the Church Age was birthed. The Church is the chosen people of God.

In 1 Corinthians 3:9 (NIV84) Paul says, “For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building.”

And again in Ephesians 2:19–22 (NIV84)

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1 Peter 2:4–10 (NIV84)

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For in Scripture

it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.”

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone,”

8 and,

“A stone that causes men to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

How do we become the people of God? How hard is it? What is the toll to cross over the bridge into the kingdom of God?

In the Monty Python and The Holy Grail movie, they must answer three questions to cross over the Bridge of Death. If you get a question wrong you are cast into the Forge of Eternal Peril. One of the knights overcomplicates the process and another is asked a question that is too difficult. Both of them end up in the Forge of Eternal Peril.

Joel explains how simple, although I wanted to say easy, it is to be delivered, to be saved. Call on the name of the Lord. There is a mystery here though. Verse 32 starts with everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; and ends with whom the Lord calls. So, which is it? Both. How can that be?

Jesus says, John 6:44 (NIV84) “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last

day.” And, in Matthew 22:14 (ESV) For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Certainly, God’s grace is in play. Then there is the two thousand year old debate about the limitations of free will for men and women. The promise of which we should take hold is the word EVERYONE. The King James translation says WHOSOEVER. When we see this through the lens of 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV84) The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. I believe we can see how widely the net of salvation is cast.

The Children’s Chat skit from the Gospel of Mark is a good illustration of this mystery of calling on the Lord and the Lord calling us. And, I confess I just stumbled across it, probably at the leading of the Holy Spirit. I chose to do the little skit to make it more memorable to the children and to you.

Mark 10:46–52 (NIV84)

46 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the Son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” 50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

51 “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

52 “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

A lowly poor beggar, a blind man on the fringes of society, somehow knew that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. He called, he cried out for mercy. Did you catch that others tried to dissuade Bartimaeus

from calling Jesus? They tried to prevent him from coming to Jesus. Too many, sometimes even those in the church, are impediments to bringing others to Jesus. They reject the everyone or the whosoever. Or maybe, in fact, they reject Jesus himself.

But then, Jesus calls him. Bartimaeus cannot get there fast enough. The Greek word translated as Rabbi here is actually a more selective word. It was often used prayerfully as Lord. Though physically blind, he walked by faith. Jesus commends him. Your faith has healed you. Your faith has saved you. He was healed and from that time on followed Jesus on the Way.

What is our calling on the Lord? Charles Spurgeon explains, "To call on the name of the Lord means, first, to believe in God as he reveals himself in Scripture. His revelation of himself is his "name." If you make a god of your own, you have no promise that he will save you: on the contrary, if you make him, he will be good for nothing, for he will be less than yourself. If you are now willing to come to the light, and see the Lord as he displays himself in his own Word, then you shall know a great God and a Savior. You are not merely to believe in a god, but in the living and true God: in Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you accept him as being what he states himself to be, in him you shall find salvation."

I couldn't say easy earlier because we are warned that trials lay before us. Blood, fire, smoke, and darkness are foreboding words. The earth and moon and sun are affected. If that didn't get your attention, the hair on the back of your neck should stand up when you read "the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Surely we want deliverance. Surely we want to be saved. Surely we want to be among the survivors whom the Lord calls. Almighty God, I am calling on you to call on the people of this community. I am calling on you to call on the people of this region. Lord, give them a heart that longs for your grace and goodness. Give them ears to hear and eyes to see.

We again see a warning in Revelation 17:14 (NIV84)

14 They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.”

A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures says, “Those only shall be delivered in the great day that are now effectually called from sin to God, from self to Christ, from things below to things above.

God’s calling on us comes from grace, from his position of power, and from his character of love. Our calling on the Lord comes from our need. That is why it is so hard for a rich man to enter into heaven. In the middle of chapter 10 in the Gospel of Mark a rich young ruler turns away from Jesus in dejection. But, the chapter ends in joy for a blind beggar.

There is another aspect of this word calling. We are to live out our calling. We are to live out our God given purpose. This week, I worked with our Troop 77 Boy Scouts who are pursuing their God and Life faith merit badges. We talked and learned about God working through people.

We ended our discussion by looking at Acts 4:13 (NIV84). When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. We too are to be a people with Jesus. We are to be a people living out our calling as part of the Body of Christ that we call the Church.

CONCLUSION:

On Pentecost, the world saw the interplay of individual, community, and the divine exhibited. The faithful had gathered for constant prayer. The Holy Spirit came upon individuals and on the collective. Peter proclaimed Jesus and God worked in people’s hearts.

We too will pray fervently. We have and will continue to demonstrate our love for our neighbors. God is working in hearts. I can see the Lord moving. Jesus is calling, “Cheer up! Get on your feet!” There are so many that need to follow Jesus. And, there is an immediacy because we do not know when the great and dreadful day of the Lord will come.

The early church believed that Jesus was coming back at any time. They were willing to suffer and die for the gospel of Jesus Christ. They looked around and saw a world in desperate need. I see the same need and that is why we have been in this sermon series, "A Region Ripe for Revival." What are we willing to do for Jesus?

This past Tuesday night, I was greatly encouraged. We had many first time guests for dinner. They were welcomed by many here at Emmaus. There were hugs. There was encouragement. We talked with them. We showed them around. We prayed with them. Some people that had not been here for a while returned and there was joyous reunion and connection.

Emmaus Church was founded in 1790, 228 years ago. Next year, our sanctuary will be 150 years old. Butch told me that before I revealed why, he was guessing that might be the reason I was asking you to pray for the Lord Jesus to grow the church to 150 people.

Imagine how much more we can impact our community for the kingdom of God. Let us live out our calling as living stones being built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood. We must declare the praises of Jesus who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.