

**Series: God Saves #1312**

**Title: Romans 8.28**  
**God Calls**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Welcome back to our time in the Word of God at Romans 8, verse 28. We have established the ones who love God are the ones for whom God causes all things to work together for good. Concerning our love for God, we have two questions to answer and the first is *why* do we love God? The answer is we love God because we have been called to love God. Anyone who loves God does so because God has called that person to love Him.

Our nature is to *hate* God. It is *not* to *love* God. We are all born sinners, coming right out of the womb opposed to God. So then how is it even possible for us to, one day, begin to *love* God? This is only possible because God takes action in our lives. He calls us to love Him. That is what we are talking about today.

Romans 8, verse 28 says this, "To those who love God, to those who are called..." That is the phrase in this verse we are talking about at the start of this week. And you heard the word "called."

In Scripture there are two meanings to calling. In both of these God is the one calling out to people. The first is what we can say is a **general call**. The second is a **particular call**. Yesterday we had the example of the five friends you invite to your home so that you can serve them dinner, and share with them the Good News of the gospel. Your five friends come, and each one of them listens as you talk about the gospel. All five of them hear the same words. The Holy Spirit is speaking through you, by His power, giving you wisdom to know how to tell your friends about the Lord Jesus.

So far, the Holy Spirit is using you to give God's **general call**. And at the end of the night, something common happens. Four of your friends reject the gospel. They refuse to take to heart God's free offer of salvation from sin. They appreciate the meal and thank you for being their friend, but their hearts are cold and indifferent to Christ. God has called. They have heard the call in the sense that every word you say registers and make sense to their ears, but it goes no further. We can describe this general call as an **external call**. Because it stays on the periphery, on the outside of the person. The gospel never takes root in the internal man and woman.

*However*, one of your five friends hears this same gospel call. He is listening to the exact same words coming from your mouth. His ears hear what the other four heard. The big difference is he *believes* it. He accepts that he is indeed a sinner in desperate need of the forgiveness of Christ in his life. He is compelled to stay late into the night after everyone has left and you and your friend sit down together as you have the honor of talking with him about who Jesus is and what He has done for him. In the middle of the night he sets out in his own discipleship of the Lord Jesus. And it is still your honor and joy to walk alongside him teaching this new brother in Christ all you know about God.

Here is the second meaning the Scripture gives to calling. This the **particular call**. Or, we can describe this as the **internal call**, because this call penetrates into the heart and soul of the person who answers this call. The whole time, unbeknownst to you, God had singled out *this* friend to accept your message of the gospel. As you spoke the Holy Spirit sovereignly and supernaturally transformed the inner man. God did something only God can do: He called this man and this man answered the call, and became one of God's people, a sinner fully redeemed by Jesus Christ. The general call of God went out and was rejected by four, but the particular call went out to this man in particular and he accepted it. The theologian's word is **effectual**. The particular call is an effectual call. The call of God is effective. It takes effect in his life.

The particular call, the effectual call, the internal call compels this new believer into *loving God*. He has been moved from one side of the dividing line to the other. He crossed the line! Once he hated God, but now he loves God, and he loves God *because he was called by God to love God*. I want to make certain you get this, so I will repeat it. Once the new believer hated God, but now he loves God, and he loves God *because he was called by God to love God*. This is true for all true Christians. This is how God saves us. He calls us to love Him. This is *why* we love God!

As you read the Scripture, you will repeatedly find this to be the case. No one just all of a sudden, out of the blue, in their own free will starts loving God. No one. All who love God love Him because God has called them to love. Briefly, let's just take the Apostle Paul as an example. In Acts chapter 9 we read about Paul, still going by the name Saul, and this is literally how the chapter begins. I am reading Acts 9, verse 1, **"Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest..."** I would say that is a man that hates God. He is on a rampage against the disciples of the Lord. He is breathing threats and murder against the people God loves and who love Him. Saul is persecuting the people of The Way as the earliest Christians were known.

I continue the reading in Acts 9 at verse 3, **"As [Saul] was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; <sup>4</sup>and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' <sup>5</sup>And [Saul] said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting..."** I told you Saul was persecuting. He hated God, even though Saul *thought* he loved God. There is a lesson there about those who *think* they are loving God by their actions but actually do not love Him at all. But the main point I want you to capture now is this: Jesus *calls* out to Saul. Here is the **particular call**, the **effectual call**, the **internal call**.

We know this because of what we read, and I will leave it to you to read the rest of this chapter, even the rest of the Book of Acts, but you can take my word for it now: Saul, who is Paul, was absolutely transformed *by God* and made a new creation in Christ, Paul went on to write this very Book we are reading (Romans) in which he tells us that we love God because we have been called by God to love God, just as Paul myself had been called of God to love God.

And if you will read Paul's letters carefully, you will see this matter of being called by God comes up all the time. We have it twice in Romans chapter 1. Listen to how Paul describes himself in Romans 1 and verse 1, **"Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God..."** The particular, the effectual, the internal call of God upon his life made Paul an Apostle. And then drop down just a few verses to verse 7. I am still in Romans chapter 1 and now verse 7. Listen to how Paul describes the Christians at Rome to whom he writes this letter. **"To all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."**

The believers, the Christians, the people of The Way in Rome are beloved of God, *called*. There is the call again. This describes the particular, the effectual, the internal call of God upon those lives. And we read about this same calling in other epistles, especially in Ephesians. But let me end with this. Yesterday we heard Jesus describe the general call. In Matthew chapter 22 and verse 14 the Lord said, "For many are called..." That is the general call of God goes out to many. And Jesus continues, **"But few are chosen."** That is the particular call. The effectual call is for the chosen. Jesus' words in full are, **"For many are called, but few are chosen."**

In Scripture there are two meanings to calling. The first is the **general call**. The second is the **particular call**. What we have in Romans 8, verse 28 is the particular call (also known as the effectual and internal call). More tomorrow because God Is.

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