

W449_Ye_See_Your_Calling_8.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open Book. It is number eight of the series entitled You See Your Calling. It is our custom at this meeting to read a portion of scripture together. And those of you who are listening to this recording, if you care to join us, will you switch off for a moment or two while we read from the first Epistle to the Thessalonians chapters one and two? This evening we bring our study, the present study at least under the heading. Ye see your calling. To a conclusion by turning our attention away from the Godward side that he called us to our response. It's obvious that we cannot call ourselves. As a reference in Hebrews that Aaron made not himself a high priest, but he was called of God. And every one of us are conscious that if God hadn't called us, we should have no even inkling that there was a possibility He would accept us. And so we've emphasized in seven of these studies the Godward side. But it's right to have truth in the balance and to realize that although we cannot call ourselves. There is some sort of response that's expected if we belong to Christ, if we are members of his body, if we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, if we ever hope that so wonderful that words fail us to express it. And I say, is that you? You say yes. Will you say, I wouldn't have known it if you hadn't told me? Well, that's rather bad, isn't it? Well, now, none of us are going to be sort of, uh, disturbed unduly because we don't reach the heights.

[00:02:03] But we ought to be disturbed a little. If there's no desire in our hearts that we should walk worthy of this calling, whatever poor show we may make of it. I reminded you, I think, in an earlier study that in the doctrinal section of Ephesians, we are told of the hope of his calling. And in the practical section of Ephesians, we are told of the hope of your calling. But that's perfectly consistent. There's no need to say now, what does it mean? It means what it says that from the doctrinal point of view, the calling comes from God. And only in the practical side is it your calling to see what you are going to do because you have been called. That seems to be the obvious reason. And then you will remember there are many passages in these epistles where we have both root and fruit. We find, for instance, in Ephesians, if you'd like to turn to that epistle for a moment. Ephesians Chapter three. Where the concluding prayer says a verse 17, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. That ye being rooted and grounded in love rooted. But there's also fruit in the epistle to the Ephesians when you come to chapter five, for instance. For the fruit of the spirit.

[00:03:37] Is all goodness and righteousness and truth. And the same is in Colossians, where there is the rooting and the grounding. And there in Philippians, the next epistle, if you'll turn to it, there is this. Desire that there should be fruit. It says in verse chapter one, verse nine. And this. I pray that your love may abound, yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment or judgment. See, this is one thing to have love is another thing for it to be used or directed that ye may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. There are the fruits. And again, while we are Philippians in chapter four, verse 17. Chapter four, verse 17. He has been speaking to these Philippians in chapter one and told them that they were the ones at the very beginning that contributed to the expenses of preaching the gospel. And he says, I know you've been hindered from doing so. You lacked opportunity. And then in order to correct any idea that he was nudging their memory, that it was time they sent another donation. Do people do that, do you think? Friends? Well, you look at your mail and read what they say. He says in verse 27. Not because I desire a gift. Don't think that. But I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

[00:05:22] So you see, there is such a thing in these epistles that reveal this high and holy calling and interrelationship between God's unspeakable gift and our response or manifestation that it has touched us. I remember seeing a play on Words, a missionary magazine where there was a black person being baptized and he would have his purse in his hand with the money in it. But I said, Why? He says, This is a personal affair. I'll forgive him. The play with the words, because I think some of the folks I know, when they have been baptized, they left their purse behind. You know, it's a personal matter. So here we have this relationship of root and fruit. The route is invisible or should be in a growing tree. And you don't just dig up your tree to see whether the roots are active because that would kill the tree. But you know full well as the seasons go, whether the fruit is whether the root is in congenial soil, whether the tree is healthy because of the fruit that grows out in the open. So with regard to you and me, we cannot look into the book of life and see whether our name is there. And yet, if you'll turn with me to a passage, we shall have to go back to more in detail presently to Peter. Chapter one. Two. Peter Chapter one. He says. Um. Suppose you just read a few verses? Verse eight.

[00:07:21] But if these things be you abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore. The rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election. Sure. Now, you see, you can't bring about your election. That is entirely in the control of God, in his sovereignty. But if you have a consciousness that you respond to the word of God, and this is according that you have heard and that you have said your I mean to. Then he says there are ways whereby this can be assured. Now we have as our reading or, you know, the many passages also where it says you do not gather figs or thorns by their fruits. Ye know them. And you need not be a student of biology or botany to know whether the fruits are there or not. It's obvious. So we are dealing now not with a root that's beyond our control. We are dealing with a fruit, which is our individual response and not, of course, without his mercy or without his sunshine, without his grace and without his rain. Oh yes, we need those. But they are all at our disposal. So first of all, will you come back with me to one Thessalonians that we read just now? One Thessalonians.

[00:09:09] He gives thanks for them, you see. And he says in verse three, remembering without ceasing your work of faith. And labor of love and patience. Of hope. He doesn't really say he thanks God for their faith or their love or their hope. He did. But now he was thankful that associated with faith, there was the work of faith. And associated with love was the labor of love and associated with hope was the patience of hope. Then at the bottom of this very side chatter, he seems to refer to it again. Verse nine, for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you. And how you turned to God from idols. The worker fight. To serve the living and true God. And to wait for his son from heaven. The patience of hope. The labor of love. As though he's emphasizing this consequence. So we go back on our reading for a moment and look at verse five. Knowing brethren. Beloved, your election of God. Well, that's a challenging verse, isn't it? For somebody to write to a company of God's people and say he knows their election of God. Well, Paul was caught up to paradise, and he heard unspeakable words that it was not right for him to utter. But I'm sure he doesn't say here he was caught up to paradise or anywhere else and out in the book and saw your neighbor or somebody else's neighbor. But he tells you how he was sure that they were the elect of God.

[00:11:00] By the next verses. So shall we look and see whether we also can have this blessed assurance knowing brethren beloved your election of God for. I continue to remind myself and others that Paul is a logical writer. Some people shy at the word logic, but faith isn't illogical. We cannot found out God by reasoning. But he does say when he's speaking about a very holy response, it's your logical or reasonable service. So he says, Boy, I'll give you my reasons for knowing that you are the elect of God for our gospel came not unto you in word only. That's how the gospel must go out. If I were preaching the gospel to the unsaved this evening. I could tell them what God has done. I could call upon them to believe His son. But I couldn't do anything except be say, behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. But he said, when we preach the gospel to you, it didn't come in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you, for your sakes. And he speaks about our entry in Among you is manifested by your acceptance of what we have to say. There is a sort of an answer in their very attitude. But ye became followers of us and of the Lord.

[00:12:37] So they didn't merely merely hear and forget it. They heard and they followed. This is, of course, a consequence. You became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction. Well, that's a test. We would if we could avoid affliction. I suppose that's natural and normal. But many times it's a testing thing. Which we would be glad of afterwards when we look back. You remember Joe? If ever a man was afflicted and bothered, is to know why it was Jobe and his three friends couldn't console him until at last he, by the grace of God, reached this conclusion. He knows the way that I take. And when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. So you say if that's the consequence of a little affliction because you now become a Christian, I welcome it. But I don't want to take with me into that glory any false metal, anything that will bring discredit upon the name of our Savior. So. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy. Oh, there's a difference between much affliction and grumbling and murmuring and advertising it. And that irrepressible joy which comes by the spirit of God in the midst of it all. I don't say we ought to take our mottoes from the world, but I remember seeing in a shop window once when I was on holiday.

[00:14:20] Think of the kettle. Well, is up to its neck in hot water, it seems. Okay, well, I'll pass that on to you next time you're up to your neck in hot water. Think of the kettle. It sinks when you think about the Thessalonians. They receive with joy that which they received in affliction without a contradiction in terms. Show that you are examples and don't bother about the word sample. Sometimes in the New Testament it says N sample and sometimes it says example of be both friends. The one is a dipping in the lifting out what it looks like and the other is lifted out and looks like and see it's just the same words. Doesn't make any difference in sample or example. For all that believe in Macedonia and achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord and all were feeling without being able to check it at the moment. The sound of the archangel, the voice of the archangel and the Trump of God contains a similar word. You may not be able to speak like angels. But you may be able to make a witness in your small corner that will be accepted by God as parallel from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia, in Achaia, but also in every place. The words that you speak. Oh, no, no, I'm sorry, but in every place your faith to God, word is spread abroad. It isn't what you're saying.

[00:15:55] It's what you are and what your response is. And to quote another proverb of the world, somebody wrote once. That your actions make such a noise. I can't hear the words you speak. It's one thing for us to tell folks we are believers. It's another thing for them to be convinced by the life you live that it is so. That's where we are this evening. Kim, you sounded out the word of the Lord. And every place your faith to God would he spread abroad so that we need not to speak anything? Wasn't that a witness? Surely he says you have made your calling and election. Sure. By the very response in life and heart and soul and witness to this message that was sent to you. If you turn now, just for a moment, back to Philippians. We have in chapter two. A wonderful chapter. He brings in perhaps the most complicated passage concerning the person of Christ that the New Testament possesses. And says in verse five, Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. And then who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be grasped at, to be on equality with God, but emptied himself as the literal word is. And he brings all this wonderful doctrine just to bear upon you and me who have received this high calling. Verse 12. Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence work out.

[00:17:51] Now doubt it work out. Your own salvation. He doesn't say work for it. You can quote the alternative passage in Ephesians. It's not of works, lest any man should boast. Then he goes on to say, But we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. So don't be afraid of good works and always there, the fruit on the top of the tree and not the root that is in the ground. You can have no good works at the root. That's God's gift. But if there's no fruit, then some may be doubting whether the root is there is see? So he says here. Work out your own salvation. And please, friends, don't try to work out somebody else's salvation, will you? Because you haven't got time or energy to do that for somebody else. I've sometimes been in a meeting, you know, and verse has been read or a verse from a hymn has been I've seen somebody look and say, Oh, I'm glad so-and-so was here this evening. Well, all right, that's that's fine. But you be glad you're here this evening to hear it. So you may be wanting it to. Busy for what we know. So he says here, work out your own salvation. We fear trembling. Now you don't believe unto salvation with fear and trembling. That's God's side. But when it comes to what you are going to do about it, you don't enter it into a bravado spirit.

[00:19:23] You enter in this spirit. I must walk delicately. I must remember my frailty. I must remember all my circumstances. I must cast myself upon the grace of God continually. But I work out nevertheless. For it is God which worketh in you. As a will and to do of his good pleasure. So we're not left you without the energy. In Ephesians, we are told positively that the power that worketh in us is the power that was rorted Christ when he was raised from the dead. So there's a power that the world cannot resist. And then the next verse almost seems like an anti-climax. You work out this salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you. And it is do all things without murmurings and disputings. Now I have a feeling that some will read that to grumble and to murmur was the Englishman's privilege. He gambled and paid. But there's something deeper than that here, friends. You read about the history of the people of Israel that came out of Egypt under the aegis of the Passover lamb. They went through the Red Sea. They saw their enemies destroyed. They never went back to Egypt. But they murmured and they murmured and they murmured. It's mentioned so many times and lifted out in Hebrews Chapter four. Chapter three and four. Again that they lost the entry into the Land of Promise. So watch the murmuring spirit, which does not keep pace with these unspeakable gifts of grace.

[00:21:11] And then he goes on to say in verse 15 that you may be blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without rebuke. Don't boggle over this and say none of us can make ourselves sons of God. Of course you can't. It doesn't say so. But you may be sons of God. That may bring rebuke. But he says you be blameless and harmless. Unreviewable sons of God shining like a light in darkness in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom ye shine. Or among a command among shine Ye as lights in the world holding forth the word of life. Then comes the apostle's own personal relationship. That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain. Neither laboured in vain. Well, now we turn from that passage to the one that gave us our text this evening. That is the second of Peter. And while Peter acknowledged that Paul had a message and an apostleship that was different from his own, there are some things which are common truths, whatever your calling may be. And this is one of them that the calling should have a response. Now we have to compare two passages here, one in the first chapter and one in the second. Now, first of all, I want you to notice just key words. Those of you who are listening to this tape, if you would like to switch for a moment and get a little piece of paper and a pencil, you might be able to follow, but most of you will have the card upon which this outline is drawn.

[00:22:54] But those of you who are listening, first of all, he says, let's start with reading the first verse to get the introduction. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, grace and peace be multiplied, multiplied. Keep that word in mind. Put it down. If you're not, if you're able on a piece of paper multiplied, then presently, he says. Further down. Verse five. And beside this giving all diligence, add to your faith. So there we've got grace multiplied, and you do some addition. God does the multiplying, but you do the addition. And this adding. Is to fight and the multiplying is through the knowledge of God. Now they come back again. And we read a very extraordinary word. Verse three, according as his divine power. Is divine. Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. So you're not left wondering whether there's any power available to seek to adorn this doctrine? It's brought prominently before you that there has been given unto us his divine power. Now, I daresay you know what I'm going to say next, because he goes on to say, after he speaks about this verse for.

[00:24:40] Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature. There is a divine power. You become partakers of a new nature which is of God. And then we have the word virtue. We'll read verse three again. According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Then when you look further down, he says. Verse five. And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue. Has a very simple outline, isn't it? But it's obvious it's there, isn't it? So we've got multiply and we've got ADD. We've got divide power and divide nature. And we have the his virtue and we have your virtue and his virtue comes first and yours comes as an echo. Well, now this is where he's exhorting the believer. But there's a very close and intense parallel to this in the second chapter. The second chapter he is speaking about others. Let's read verse 18 to the end of the chapter. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they are lure through the lusts of the flesh. Through much wantedness those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. And while they promised them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption. For whom a man is overcome of the same is he brought in bondage? For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world.

[00:26:37] To the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. They are again entangled therein and overcome The latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them. But it has happened unto them. According to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the soul that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Now, if you go back to the first chapter, they escape. It says we'll just pick up the reading again. Verse four. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might not be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world. For these others escape pollution and corruption. But unless unless they've only listened to words, there has been no divine nature. There is no divine power. When it speaks about a divine nature, it refers to the inner man. That which is within. And the picture here is a cell. Now, of course, in nature. That's right. A cell wall is in the mud because that's having a mud bath. And I'd be some ladies have mud baths, but that's another reason. But it pictures a picture. The cell that is washed friends. Is a cell still. External agreement with the teaching of Scripture.

[00:28:27] Leaves you like a sail that is washed. Well, a salve that is washed, I suppose, looks nice and pink, but its nature is the same. Its nature is the same. So if you will, you notice at the bottom how it says the sound is washed. Returns. You are wallowing in the mire. This. Now, if you'll go back into first officer, you'll see the contrast. And chapter. To. Verse 24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye are healed. For ye were as sheep going astray. There was very little, little between you and a cell that was wallowing in the mire. The sheep lost. But are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls. They returned to the shepherd. The SAO returned to the mud. So what we've got to differentiate then is between an external change and turning over a new leaf. All the new leaves we turn over will be just as blotted and dead by the time we get to the end of the page frames. And as far as I could interpret Scripture, I do not see any evidence that salvation ever turns a soul into a sheep. I see that the sheep were sheep were they were lost sheep. And where they're found, they're still sheep. He came to seek and to save the lost sheep. What will be the fate of the poor souls that have no change of nature? I leave to God I would rather deal with positive truth and speak to the believer and urge that this is to be our character.

[00:30:34] But having received the divine power, having received a partaking of the divine nature, that we not only have the seed of God within us, as the Scripture says, but externally we begin to seek to make it manifest. I felt. That before we we brought this series of studies on the question of our calling to a conclusion. It would be a good idea to just emphasize once this very important and very searching aspect that we have according. And that comes from God. We cannot put our names in the book of life. Whatever we do. But God has effected a most marvelous and miraculous change. We are now partakers of the divine nature or growing. The seed of God has been planted within us. The outward man is perishing, but the inward man is being renewed day by day. So we are told in the epistles to put on the new man. Not put it all in a mock piety, but exhibit to others that we now belong to him. And so I would bring this meeting to a close by, praying that those of you who have been with us through this study rejoicing in the various aspects of this high and holy calling, may see that there is a corresponding desire and need, that there should be a high and holy walk.

[00:32:08] And if that leads us, leaves us with a certain feeling of our own weakness, so much the better. For a high look and a proud step can never work out this great

salvation. It is as God works it. And the final word, as I've mentioned, that verse again, it is recorded in history that the church or the city rather Philippi. Receive some revenue for the city's affairs because they worked a gold mine that was near. You notice it, They worked it. Now, I don't know whether the house I've got in Beckenham stands on top of a gold mine or not, but unless I dig down underneath, it might as well not be there. Don't worry. I'm not going to dig. You see, God has given us something. And he looks to us now to work it out as he works in that we may not only be children of God, but children of God without rebuke, that we may adorn the doctrine of God, our savior in all things. You see your calling, brethren? It's not him that Willeth or of him that running. You see your calling, brethren? It's not for those who are wise or those who are great. God hath chosen the weak things. You see your calling, brethren? It's holy. It's high. It comes from God alone. Harry looks to you and to me that we make this little effort by his grace, to seek to walk worthy of the calling wherewith you have been called.