

THERE IS A LONG DISTANCE CALL FOR YOU!

TEXT: *Mark 2:16-17:*

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard it, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 5:32: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

What is your reaction when the phone rings? After a busy day – don't even want to answer it? If lonesome or in trouble — eager to call?

Now suppose it is a long distance call, and I hold up a note which says, "It's for you". Our reactions are usually much different — surprise, anxiety, worry, fear, or excitement.



When you know it is from someone who is very important or loves you very much, you are glad. You hurry to the phone to take that call!!! You listen attentively.

Do you realize that God is also calling you? All of you!! This call is for both the Christian and for sinner alike.

HOW DOES GOD TALK TO MAN?

A. **The Bible records times when God spoke directly to man.**

1. **Moses**

Exodus 3:4: And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

2. **Pharaoh**

Exodus 4:23: And I say unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn.

3. Samuel

1 Samuel 3:4-14:

⁴ That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

⁵ And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

⁶ And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the Word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

⁹ Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for Thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth.

¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

¹² In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his



house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

¹³ For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

¹⁴ And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

4. Saul of Tarsus



Acts 9:4-6:

⁴ And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?

⁵ And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

⁶ And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

B. Dreams

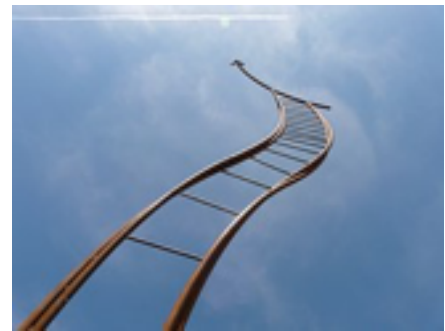
1. Jacob

Genesis 28:12-15:

¹² And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

¹³ And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;

¹⁴ And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the



east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

¹⁵ And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

2. Joseph

Genesis 37:5-10:

⁵ And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.



⁶ And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

⁷ For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

⁸ And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they

hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

⁹ And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

¹⁰ And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down **ourselves to thee to the earth?**

3. Pilate's wife

Matthew 27:19: When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.

C. **The Holy Spirit**

Acts 13:2: As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

D. **Sometimes through voice of a preacher**

He can reach those He would call with His messages of love and eternal life.

E. **When all these fail – He often calls in more severe measures: sickness, tragedy, etc.**

1. **Hezekiah**

2 Kings 20:1: In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the Prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2. **Children of Israel**

(Leviticus 26:14-41) v. 18: And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

(Deuteronomy 28:15-68) v. 15: But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the Voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all His Commandments and His Statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

As in my Scripture text, He tells people that because they have not heard when He called in other ways, now He would send hunger and thirst — even shame and vexation of spirit.

God does not delight in the use of more severe measures, but only in difficult situations will some of His Own people turn to Him again. With some, it is only in hard places that they will reassess their values and decide what is really worthwhile.

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WHAT IS GOD'S CALL USUALLY ABOUT?

Answer: Our basic spiritual education

Illustration: Basic secular education, they call it the three R's:

READING – “RITING” – “RITHMETIC”

A. **Reason**

He calls us to think with Him about our spiritual condition. To Reason *with Him*.

Isaiah 1:18: Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

1. “Now” is the key word — don’t put it off.
2. Personal conversation. God knows us better than we know ourselves, but next to God, we know more about our own sinful state than anyone else. However, sometimes we can be so blinded by our sin that every one of our associates will know us better than we know ourselves.
3. When He tells us He has the answer to our sin problem, we need to hear it! We need to be good listeners.



B. **Repentance**

Mark 2:17: When Jesus heard it, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 13:3: I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning His Promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1. If God talks to you about repentance, will you say, “Sorry, wrong number – I’m a righteous one!” “I’m not so bad – I’m just as good as most church members.”
2. Or would you say, “Yes, so glad you called



– be merciful to me – I’m a sinner.”

Luke 18:13: And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

3. Humble yourself before God in complete surrender of heart, mind, and will.

Luke 15:21: And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

4. Be more sorry for the hurt your sins cause God and your fellow men than for the hurt you are carrying because of them.

Psalms 38:18: For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

2 Corinthians 7:10: For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

5. When God calls us to repentance, we are to show by our new outward conduct that we are sorry for our past sins.

Acts 26:20: But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

Matthew 3:8: Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:



- C. **Rest** — The call from God is also about Rest. Are you interested in that? This is the joyful call for those who have passed the first two “R’s” of Reason and Repentance.

Matthew 11:28: Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST.

WHAT KIND OF REST DO WE FIND?

1. We sleep better. Free from the past burdens of sinful living
Leviticus 26:36: And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.
Isaiah 57:20: But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

2. Free from anxious thought about the future.
3. We also find rest in our waking and working hours – for His Spirit in us enables us to work without strain and tenseness, and without ill tempers.



4. We do not find retirement from worthwhile labor; but renewal to work on new levels of achievement and with new purpose for the glory of God.

“Rest is not quitting the busy career,
Rest is the fitting of ourselves to new sphere.”

Our sphere, that we need to be fitted for, is the one of doing God’s Will, daily. In His Will I will find rest. For His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

GOD’S NEWEST CALL NOW IS TO LIBERTY

A. Liberty from the flesh

Galatians 5:13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.



Failure to heed this admonition results in bondage as:

2 Peter 2:18-19:

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

B. Liberty from condemnation

Romans 8:1: There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

GOD'S CALL TO SELF DENIAL AND SUFFERINGS FOR CHRIST'S SAKE

Mark 8:34-35:

34 And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.



35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it.

Suffering for righteousness sake

1 Peter 2:21-23:

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:

23 Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him Who Judgeth Righteously.

GOD'S CALL TO SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

Exodus 33:16: For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? is it not in that Thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

Leviticus 20:24: But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.

1 Kings 8:53: For Thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be Thine inheritance, as Thou spakest by the hand of Moses Thy servant, when Thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD God.

Ezra 10:10-12:

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do His pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18:

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

GOD'S CALL TO DIVINE SERVICE

Exodus 3:4: And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

1 Samuel 3:4, 10b:

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

10b ...Speak; for Thy servant heareth.

1 Samuel 16:3: And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto Me him whom I name unto thee.



Matthew 4:18: And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Matthew 4:21: And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

Matthew 10:1: And when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples, He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Luke 19:13-15:

¹³ And He called His ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.



¹⁴ But His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this Man to reign over us.

¹⁵ And it came to pass, that when He was returned, having received the kingdom, then He commanded these servants to be called unto Him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Acts 13:2: As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 16:10: And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.

Philippians 3:14: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

GOD'S CALL TO HOLINESS

1 Thessalonians 4:7: For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

2 Timothy 1:9: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His Own Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

1 Peter 1:15: But as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of conversation;

1 Peter 2:9: But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light;

2 Peter 1:3: According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who hath called us to Glory and Virtue:

We are called to be saints — means sanctified ones

Romans 1:7: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2: Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and ours:

1. Have you answered this call?
2. How did you answer it?
3. When did you answer this call?
4. Where did you respond to this call?
5. How many of you know that this call is also a command?
6. Why does God call us to Holiness?

1 Peter 1:15: But as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of conversation;

WHAT IS YOUR RE-ACTION OR RESPONSE TO THESE CALLS?

- A. Phone calls are a two way communication, you know. Calls from God are also a two-way communication. If you welcome the call you will respond positively and in the affirmative. If there is any doubt, you will delay in your reply. If you reject the call, then you are in for great calamity.



The Bible records the replies and responses from many people. One such two-way communication is recorded in:

Isaiah 65:11-14:

11 But ye are they that forsake the LORD, that forget My holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

12 Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

13 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

14 Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

Proverbs 1:24-33:

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Luke 13:34-35:

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

Luke 14:15-24: 15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God.



16 Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto Him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these . Then the Master of the house being angry said to His servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as Thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper.

B. There can be no neutral reactions to God's call.

1. If you are invited to a party — you either attend or not.
2. If you are asked to serve on a committee — you either serve or not.
3. If you are asked to come to a wedding — you either come or decline.



C. God is on the line -- right here and right now!!



1. Your decision on His call to reason about your sins in your life, you either will consider or brush Him off.
2. Your decision about repenting for whatever keeps His joy and peace from coming into your heart, you either come or refuse to come.
3. Your decision on the Rest He has promised for those who accept Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life – the Rest that will equip you to be one of God's children through faith in the Blood of His Son.

D. DON'T LET GOD RECEIVE A "BUSY" SIGNAL FROM YOU. Answer Him now. He is tenderly, earnestly, calling today. REMEMBER: it's a call to eternal life.

1 Timothy 6:12: Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

IN CONCLUSION: No, God is not some dreaded power, a dictator with unsatisfied anger — God IS LOVE. Even when we are in rebellion against Him, the Lord has His hand stretched out still (**Isaiah 5:25**). He is tenderly saying:

Matthew 11:28: Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

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