

Sonship

Lesson 5

The Confidence of Sonship in the Light of Our Calling,
Predestination and Ultimate Glorification -- Romans 8:28-30

I. Called, Chosen, Elect

Our Sonship comes in the context of a specific calling and purpose for our lives individually and now, as children of God, for our lives corporately as part of the people/family of God. Understanding that calling gives us wisdom in understanding the purposes of God in the larger movement of history, as well as our place in it, and gives us the perspective and knowledge to live fruitful, productive lives for God's glory - his goodness displayed in the earth - whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

The terms that Scripture uses to define the nature of our relationship with God is that we are "called" and "chosen" (or elect - same word), which carry different nuances of the same issue: that God has laid claim to our lives for his purposes. The one term - "elect/chosen" - places more emphasis on the fact that it is God who has set up this relationship and the other term - "called"- places more of an emphasis on the effect this has on us, but both terms are interacting around the same issue: that God has chosen and called us, as his people, to be the expression of his kingdom of light, righteousness, compassion, justice and humility for the benefit of the dark, broken world around us.

In the scriptural use of these terms, calling and election are not presented as points of doctrinal debate and discussion. They are life-defining terms for the church that are meant to instill us with the confidence that God knows exactly the problems of evil in this world; he knows exactly the problems of our own sin; and yet, he has in his love and wisdom, called and chosen us to be his people to bring the healing of his salvation to the nations.

- A. Called, Elect, Chosen - we have received a summons; it is more than an open-ended invitation (as in "consider this" as an option), but a stronger sense of demand and responsibility; an obligation.

How does scripture describe the different elements of what we are "called" to and "chosen" for?

Romans 1:6 - called to belong to Christ Jesus. He is your Messiah, your King. His agenda is the agenda of your life; we are called to be in fellowship with him [*1 Cor 1:9*]

Romans 1:7 - called to be saints; God's holy ones in this world - set apart for his purposes of goodness and righteousness in the world [*cf 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9*]

Ephesians 1:18 - called to inherit the world, the home of righteousness forever [*cf 2 Pet 2:8-13*]

Colossians 3:15 - called to reconciliation and peace [*Eph 4:1-6*]

1 Peter 2:21ff - called to enter the sufferings of Christ, by enduring injustice in order to bring salvation [*Romans 8:16-17*]

- B. Put all together, our calling and “chosen-ness” are directly related to the reality that we, together with all God’s people, are part of the reconciliation of all things in Christ. In fact, we are the means of God’s practical implementation of the reconciliation purchased by Christ on the cross.

Ephesians 1:3-10; Colossians 1:13-20

Reconciliation comes about through the preaching of forgiveness and the Kingship of Christ through the cross and resurrection AND equally, the display of God’s justice, mercy and compassion among the nations through the reconciled church.

Ephesians 3:1-13

You are called, chosen, elect for this purpose - to display the true nature of God’s glory in the earth; to bring healing and restoration and life, wherever there is death. This is simply Jesus’ command to seek first the kingdom of God.

Crucial application: this gives us both individually and corporately the direction and purpose for our lives on a daily basis, as well as the broader framework for making larger life decisions.

- Each day we are called to be about the business of addressing the evil of that day, and doing good [*Matt 6:31-34*]
- Even if we are in places of injustice, we are God’s answer and means of salvation to the one who is oppressive and evil [*1 Peter 2:13-3:7*]
- Corporately, the church is called to care for the poor and oppressed, especially in the family of God; even on a global scale [*Acts 2:42-47; 2 Cor 8-9; Matt 5:43-48; Gal 6:9-10*]

C. That specific calling has always been there for the people of God and God will not waver in seeking to bring that to expression in our lives as his people

- 1) Abraham as the Covenant head of the people of God [*Gen 12:1-4 cf 18:16-19*]
- 2) Israel as the Covenant people [*Exodus 19:1-4*]
 - a. Their failure was not only a personal failure of sin, but also a corporate failure to be the light of the nations [*Isaiah 26:16-19*]
 - b. Her failure was precisely in her refusal to bring justice and compassion to expression [*Isaiah 1:15-19*]
- 3) That calling was fulfilled in Christ
 - a. Jesus is the True Servant Israel who brings God's justice to the nations [*Isaiah 42:1-4*]
 - b. He is anointed by the Spirit to fulfill his calling [*Luke 4:18-20*]
 - c. He fulfills the law [*Matt 5:17-18*]
- 4) That calling is over the life of the church

You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world

You are the new nation of God's people, called from Jew and Gentile to proclaim God's glory among the nations [*2 Pet 2:9ff*]

D. The calling is irreversible. God is absolutely committed to bringing it about.

- 1) Even when Israel failed miserably, God never changed his purpose for their lives [*Isaiah 2:1-5; Isaiah 26:16-19 cf Eph 5:7-21; Jeremiah 31:1-14, 31-37; Romans 11:1-12, 25-36*]
- 2) And he will not change his purpose for our lives either [*John 15:1-11; Romans 11:13-24; Col 1:9-14; Galatians 6:6-10; I John 3:16; Revelation 2-3*]

II. Predestination [*Romans 8:28-29*]

Closely connected to our calling is the Sovereign promise of God that he has already predetermined that every event in our lives will work toward the purpose of fulfilling this calling. His calling is backed by his power and grace and love to fulfill this. This is God's active commitment to make sure that all things work together to fulfill his good purposes in and through us as his people. This gives us the freedom and confidence to look for and see those purposes being fulfilled now.

Eph 1:11-14

A. God's predestinating work in the life of the Patriarchs and Israel

- 1) Abraham and Pharaoh [*Gen 12*]; Abraham and the Canaanite kings [*Gen 14*]; Abraham and Sodom and Gomorrah [*Gen 18*]; Abraham and Abimelech [*Gen 20*]
- 2) Isaac and Abimelech [*Gen 26*]
- 3) Jacob and Laban [*Gen 28ff*]
- 4) Joseph and Pharaoh and the nations [*Gen 36-50*]
- 5) Israel in exile [*Gen 15:13-16*]; 7 of 10 times "that the Egyptians may know," [*cf Isa 19:19-22*]

B. God has graciously and sovereignly determined to use even our sinful choices and the sinful choices of others to fulfill these purposes

- 1) Acts 2:22-24 - Christ on the Cross - "you by the help of sinful man did what God had predetermined to happen as the means of your salvation"
- 2) Acts 8:1-4 - the persecution of the church leads to the spread of the Gospel
- 3) Philippians 1:12-14 - imprisonment leads to the spread of the Gospel
- 4) Romans 11:29-36 - even disobedience leads to mercy

III. Glorification - an aorist indicative - an accomplished, past-tense action, factually stated

Closely connected to this calling and predestination is the absolute promise and guarantee of God that this is all headed toward and will end in the complete restoration of all things; the complete expression of God's goodness and righteousness [2 Pet 3] - the home of righteousness forever.

This promise of "glory" is not simply future. It is the living hope that we will see the goodness/glory of God manifest now in this broken world, as well as the ultimate hope that our labor will be eternally blessed and God's full goodness will be finally, fully revealed.

A. An understanding of "glorification" from the life of Christ [John 12:20-33]

Both the "son of man" is glorified and God is glorified. And that glorification is both in his death and in his resurrection and that brings life for all men.

B. 2 Cor 3:7-4:18

We are "glorified"- put into a position of manifesting the glory of God now, and men see that and glorify our Father in heaven. Even if they don't acknowledge it, the glory still remains. At the same time, we are looking for the day when the full glory of God will manifest in the new heavens and the new earth.

Debunking misinterpretations of Habakkuk 3:17-19

IV. The assurance of our faith is strengthened by seeing the calling and predestinating and glorifying work of God at work in our lives

I John 3:11-24; 2 Peter 1:3-11