

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 9, Election Formulations, Number 4: Faith, Gospel and Calling

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on salvation. This is session 9, Election, Systematic Formulations, Number 4: Faith, Gospel, and Calling.

We continue our lectures on the doctrine of salvation or soteriology with some conclusions concerning election, election, and faith, and then the election and the gospel.

Election and faith. Scripture clearly teaches that the means of salvation is faith in Christ. This is evident in Acts where Paul and Silas tell the Philippian jailer, quote, believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.

Acts 16:31. Paul speaks plainly, quote, the righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe since there's no distinction, Romans 3:22. In several passages, we learn that election is the cause of faith, and that faith is a result of election.

In John 6:35, after Jesus defines coming to him as believing in him 6:35, he says, everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me, I will not put out. The father's giving people to Jesus is one of John's pictures of election. All the Father gives to Jesus will come to him, and will believe in him.

Here, John teaches that election precedes faith. Second, in Acts 13 48, after Paul and Barnabas turn from the Jews to the Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, many, many Gentiles believe the gospel. Luke combines election and faith.

When the Gentiles heard this, he writes, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13 47 48. The text points to a divine, and the text puts a divine appointment to eternal life prior to the faith of the Gentiles.

David Peterson, in his commentary, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Pillar of the New Testament commentary series, pages 399 to 400, writes that Luke draws attention to the way in which God uses the gospel to call out his elect and to save them. Those who seek the Lord from among the nations are those whom he has already claimed as his own. Yet this happens as God enables them to believe through the proclamation of the gospel.

Close quote. God ordained persons to salvation and then drew them to Christ in the preaching of the gospel. Once again, the election is the cause of faith, not its result.

Third, Paul leads us to the same conclusion. He's grateful to God for his loving election, resulting in the salvation of the Thessalonians. Quote: We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning, God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the spirit and through belief in the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:13. In his love and will, God eternally elects his people for salvation. He then manifests the results of that election in history by means of initial sanctification and faith.

Faith is thus the result of election. In Romans nine, Paul says that God chose Jacob and rejected Esau before they were born for this reason so that God's purpose, according to election, might stand. Romans 9:11.

A few verses later, the apostle rules out all human effort in salvation, including faith, when he concludes. So, salvation does not depend on human will or effort but on God, who shows mercy. Romans 9:16.

John, Luke, and Paul agree. God's eternal election results in faith, election, and the gospel. Election is a biblical doctrine, but it is not the only one.

And if we are to understand it rightly, we must see it in relationship to and in proportion with other truths of the Christian faith. It might be helpful to take a step back and ask, why are we saved? The Bible answers this in many ways, beginning with the ultimate reason. Again, this is a repeat, but I think perhaps it'll help us.

Maybe we'll get it hearing it the second time because God deserves to be praised, because God loves us, because God planned to save us, because Jesus died for us, because we heard the gospel, because the Holy Spirit convicted us of love, of sin, and drew us to faith because we trusted Christ. Our salvation is tied to God's glory, God's love, God's plan, Christ's death, the Spirit's work, the gospel message, and our faith in Christ. Our faith does not save us.

God saves us through Christ. But our faith receives what God has done for us in Christ. We're never the source, ground, or cause of our salvation.

God is. He is the Savior. We are saved.

He is the Redeemer. We are the redeemed. But salvation is by grace through faith.

So, we trust, we believe, we have faith, we repent. Ephesians 2, 8-9. We're not the cause, but we are active as we receive salvation through faith.

Further, it is important to remember that Paul teaches that salvation comes through hearing the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, Ephesians 1, 13. Anyone speaking of election without speaking of missions fails to do justice to the Bible. In Genesis 12:1-3, God chooses Abraham.

Barnaby Assohoto of Benin, and Samuel Negiwa of Kenya helpfully point out how God gives Abraham promises in the form of five I-wills. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you. I will make your name great. I will bless those who bless you. I will curse whoever curses you. And God commissions Abraham, you will be a blessing, and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Abraham is chosen for the sake of mission. In Exodus 19:5-6, God expresses his choice of Israel. They are his covenant people, his treasured possession, his kingdom of priests, his holy nation.

The particularity is striking. Out of all the nations, you are mine, God says. Even more striking is that God's particularity is for the sake of universality.

Out of all the nations, you are mine, and the whole earth is mine, so you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. God is on a mission to save, and he plans to reach the nations through his chosen people. They will witness to him and his ways through their distinctiveness as his holy nation, and they will witness to him through their proclamation as a kingdom of priests.

Quote, bringing the knowledge of God to the nations and bringing the nations to the means of atonement with God. The quote is from Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God*, a famous book. IVP, 2006, page 331.

Paul writes serenely in Romans 9 and 10. Note how he begins and ends his incredibly complex treatment on salvation history. Israel, the church, divine election, and human responsibility.

He begins his theological discourse by stating his intense and unceasing burden for the salvation of his people, the Jews. Paul so longs for their salvation that he would almost be willing to go to hell in order for them to be saved if that were actually possible. Romans 9:1 to 5. Then, after a heavy and detailed treatise, Paul stresses his deep desire and prayer for the conversion of the Jews.

He reminds them of that quote: everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13. But how will others call on Jesus without believing in Jesus?

How will they believe without hearing the gospel? And how will they hear without someone telling them? Paul then reiterates the necessity of the gospel.

Faith comes through hearing and hearing through the word of God, the gospel. How do we respond to such marvelous yet inscrutable truths? Two voices from the past offer much help. First, we humbly worship as 19th century Baptist pastor Charles Spurgeon reminded quote, I cannot expect to understand the mysteries of God, neither do I wish to do so.

If I understood God, he could not be the true God. A doctrine that I cannot fully grasp is a truth of God, which is intended to grasp me. When I cannot climb, I kneel.

When I cannot build an observatory, I set up an altar. How idle it is to dream of our ever-running parallel in understanding the infinite God. His knowledge is too wonderful for us.

It is high. We cannot attain to it. An allusion to Psalm 139, of course.

Second, we share the gospel as Baptist missionary William Carey stressed, quote, that our blessed Lord has required us to pray that his kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. It becomes us not only to express our desire of that event by words, but to use every lawful method to spread the knowledge of his name. Expect great things.

Attempt great things. Do not the goodness of the cause, the duties incumbent on us as the creatures of God and Christians, and the perishing state of our fellow men loudly call upon us to venture all and to use every warrantable exertion for their benefit. A doctrine of election, instead of hindering evangelism, if rightly understood in light of the Bible's total teaching, motivates us to preach the gospel that we might reach the people with the message of salvation, which they must believe to be saved.

Our next topic is calling. After a very brief biblical summary, we want to examine the systematic formulations of calling, which distinguish the calling as gospel invitation from calling as performative summons, efficacious summons. Calling is often used to identify someone's name or to signify an invitation given to someone.

So, calling is used broadly in both testaments. However, the term can refer specifically to God's call, both the gospel call that invites people to faith in Jesus and the effective call by which God works through the gospel call to bring people to salvation. The gospel call is intended by God to go to everyone without discrimination.

It is a call to whoever will believe the gospel. The effectual call or the effective call is issued by God himself, sovereignly, as he chooses, through the gospel call. It's called an effective or efficacious call because God issues it, and people respond to that call.

God uses the gospel call in the effectual call through the gospel call to bring people to salvation. Salvation is the work of God in both his free universal offer of the gospel and his effective call. Calling was a brief biblical summary of the way the verb call and the noun calling are used in both testaments.

It's too brief, but there it is. Calling, systematic formulations. God's calling people to salvation is a noteworthy and too often neglected theme of soteriology, the doctrine of salvation.

This call has two aspects. The gospel call is universal. The church is to preach the gospel indiscriminately to all people.

If in the name of Calvinism, any church or individual does not do this, they're simply being disobedient to the word of God. And I would call this, as the church historically has called it, a hyper-Calvinism. Scripture teaches, and experience shows that not all who hear the gospel believe in Christ.

God holds those who refuse to believe responsible for their unbelief. John 3:18, God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe, John 3:18, is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

This passage uses the language of the verdicts of the last day, condemnation and not condemnation, better-understood as condemnation and justification. John doesn't use the word, but that's the concept. Those events belong to the last day, but already they are realized; that is, the theme of the eternal destinies of human beings.

That theme is both already and not yet. Already, in the preaching of the gospel, based upon people's responses, humankind is divided into two groups, those who are not condemned and those who are, and the last day will verify that discrimination. Of course, people hearing the gospel now can move, as it were, from those who are not condemned to those who are condemned, from those who are condemned to those who are not condemned or justified, as they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Human beings are held responsible for their unbelief. John 8:24 tells us, in fact, I should stay at three one more time, John 3:36, whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Now, whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Unbelief is culpable biblically, plainly it is so. John 8:24, Jesus tells the Jews who are opposing him, I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He, I am the one I claim to be, you will die in your sins. 2 Thessalonians 1:8 speaks of the returning Christ, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, and apparently it's the same group, even those who do not obey the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus is going to be revealed from heaven, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Obey the gospel? Yes, the gospel is a command. If you obey it, you believe the gospel.

If you disobey it, you don't believe it. Both Paul and Peter use this kind of terminology. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed.

God holds those who refuse to believe responsible for their unbelief. 1 John 5 teaches the same thing. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself.

Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life.

Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. The scripture thus here speaks of the haves and the have-nots. It's not fame or fortune that distinguishes them or athletic prowess or wealth.

It's whoever has the Son of God as Savior has eternal life. Whoever does not have him does not have the life that really matters, that is eternal life. Scripture affirms genuine human responsibility and, at the same time, teaches absolute divine sovereignty.

Thus, along with the gospel call, there is an effective call by which God draws some to salvation in Christ. God issues his effective call through the gospel call. Traditionally, these two aspects of calling were called the external call and the internal call, respectively.

I want to constructively criticize this terminology. All hear the gospel, the message of salvation outside of them. It hits their ears again if Christians do their job.

That's the external call, but only some are saved. These receive God's internal effective call to salvation. These designations were somewhat confusing, however, because they could be understood to mean that some people receive only the external call and some only the internal call.

In truth, however, the internal call works through the external call. Thus, better names would have been the external call and the external slash internal call. Even better, however, are the names gospel call and effective call.

The first speaks of calling as a gospel invitation. The gospel call should go to all, to everyone. We are not God.

We don't choose people for salvation. We don't die on the cross and rise again, and we do not effectively call people to salvation. We promiscuously, the canons of Dort say, call whosoever will to salvation.

Offering the gospel to everyone freely but trusting God to work through that gospel call with his mysterious inner sovereign is an effective or efficacious call. The first gospel call speaks of calling as a gospel invitation. The second effective call, efficacious call speaks of calling as performative summons.

More about that in a moment. Calling as gospel invitation. To place these teachings in a larger biblical perspective, we continue systematizing by noting that God does not take pleasure in the judgment of lost persons.

As the prophet Ezekiel declares, Ezekiel 18:23, do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? This is the declaration of the Lord God. Instead, don't I take pleasure when he turns away from his ways and lives? Again, Exodus 18:23 and I'm sorry Ezekiel 18:23, and the same prophet sees 33:11 of Ezekiel, I take no pleasure in anyone's death. This is the declaration of the Lord God.

So repent and live Ezekiel 33:11. Therefore, Isaiah declares, turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is no other. Isaiah 45:22. The Old Testament thus declares God's desire to save sinners. What a beautiful verse in Isaiah.

Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth, the Lord says, for I am God, and there is no other. Isaiah 45:22. Jonah's reluctant mission to Nineveh likewise shows God's heart. As the prophet confesses, quote, that's why I fled toward Tarsus in the first place.

I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster. Jonah 4:2. Jonah ran away

because he was afraid God would show compassion on Jonah's political enemies. Yikes.

Peter in the New Testament delivers the same message in 2 Peter 3:9. The Lord is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. Jesus and his apostles proclaim the gospel call in the New Testament. It is the sincere desire on the part of God and preachers that sinners repent, believe, and be saved.

The Arminians at the Synod of Dort accused the Reformed of falsely claiming that the gospel offer, the gospel call, was a sincere offer on the part of God. Yes, it is a sincere offer on the part of the preachers. We believe that you, our Calvinist brethren, do want to see unsaved people saved, but we cannot see how it fits with your theology at all for you to claim it is also a desire on the part of God.

You believe in total depravity as we do, the total inability of people to be saved, but you also believe in unconditional election as we do not, limited or particular atonement which we do not, and irresistible grace which we do not. How can you possibly claim that? The Calvinists at Dort were unmoved. The Bible teaches both of those things.

God's absolute sovereignty and salvation as evidenced by his unconditional election, particular atonement, and irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit, but by the same token, it plainly and in numerous places teaches that the gospel is to be offered freely and that the desire to save people is not only true of the preacher but of God himself. The gospel call is a sincere desire on the part of God and preachers that sinners repent, believe, and be saved. I suppose I would ask my theological opponents to show me the same charity that I show toward them.

If somebody who disagrees with my theology is inconsistent, is theologically inconsistent, and yet biblically faithful, I rejoice in that. I would not want them to be more theologically consistent and more biblically unfaithful. Let there be inconsistencies in their thought, and we can think of some good names for the inconsistencies, paradoxes, antinomies, mysteries, whatever you want to.

I rejoice in being biblical, and at the end of the day, I'm more interested in being biblically faithful than theologically astute or complete or consistent, and I would ask those who disagree with me to extend the same courtesy to me. Rejoice that Peterson is inconsistent in his Calvinism if that's how you see it, but believes the bible when it tells that when it says that God desires the salvation of the lost and that the gospel offer is a sincere offer on his part as well as that of the preachers. We and the Lord want sinners to repent, believe, and be saved.

This involves sharing the gospel and its invitation and promises. As the name implies, this call includes the gospel. We are lost and cannot save ourselves.

The son of God died and was raised to redeem sinners, and it is through faith in him that we are saved. The gospel includes an invitation, and if somebody is hearing these words and doesn't know Christ, we sincerely invite you to trust Jesus alone for salvation. You cannot save yourself.

The gospel calls for the humility of faith, looking away from my own efforts to the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can save, and trusting him and his death and resurrection as the only way for God to forgive me and grant me eternal life. The gospel includes an invitation, asking people to trust Christ alone for salvation. The gospel includes promises, eternal life, and the forgiveness of sins to everyone who believes.

Many biblical texts feature the gospel. John 6:40, this is the will of my father that everyone who sees the son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:40.

Acts 16:31. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your family, your household. Galatians 2:16.

A person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. Even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law because by the works of the law, no human being will be justified.

Again, Galatians 2:16. Hebrews 9:11 and 12. Christ has appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, and he entered the most holy place once for all time by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:11 and 12. God intends the gospel call to be universal and to go to all without discrimination. God loves a sinful world and gave his son to rescue it. John 3:16 and 17.

Jesus poured out his heart over Jerusalem's stubborn rejection of God's prophets and himself. Matthew 23:37. Jesus lamented, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing. That is, Jesus addressing sinners with a free offer of lamenting that Jerusalem did not accept his free offer of God. How do we fit that with Jesus words in Matthew 11 after preaching and doing miracles in the in the Galilean cities that did not believe? He says I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.

Matthew 11:25 that you've hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children. Yes, father, for such was your gracious will. All

things have been handed over to me by my father, and no one knows the son except the father, and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him.

How can Jesus blame them for their unbelief and then say he must sovereignly reveal the Father to sinners? I do not know, but both are taught. The very next thing he says is this. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I'm lowly and gentle in heart. I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

Consistently, the scripture puts together side by side, absolute divine sovereignty, genuine human responsibility. I don't fully understand how that works, but I submit to it. I receive it as a teaching of the word of God and acknowledge it as a third biblical mystery.

I want to be careful. I define mysteries as biblically revealed truths that are both necessary and yet which human beings, finite, limited, even saved human beings are unable to put together perfectly. The two big ones are the doctrine of the trinity.

God is one. God is three. I know we try to avoid philosophical inconsistency by defining the oneness and the threeness differently.

I agree completely. They're both biblical at the end of the day. However, we affirm God is one, one God who eternally exists in three persons.

We exclude and reject heresies, setting parameters, but we cannot fully explain how God is one and three. Same for the person of Christ. In his incarnation, he is both God and man in one person.

We affirm those truths. We exclude heresies, thereby setting parameters, and we make sense of a lot of the Bible that way, but we cannot fully understand. Those two mysteries, antinomies and paradoxes, are plainly biblical and are necessary to the Christian faith.

Deny one of those, and you're lost. The third one, which is the notion that absolute divine sovereignty and genuine human responsibility, accountability, and culpability are compatible, is not necessary for salvation. But I understand it to be as much the teaching of the Bible as the former two.

It is not as important as they are, but it is equally mysterious as these things are put side by side. Luke 22:22. The Son of Man goes as it has been decreed.

God decreed the death of his son, but woe to that man who betrays him. Judas is responsible and culpable for his betrayal of the master. Wait a minute.

God decreed it. That makes Judas a pawn, right? No. Judas freely betrayed Christ, right? Yes.

That means God adjusted his plans. No, that's not true. Both are true.

God is in charge. Judas is not a pawn. Judas is guilty.

He did not change God's plan. We cannot fully understand how the betrayal of Christ is both the fulfillment of God's eternal plan and the culpable act of a responsible human being. Nevertheless, it is so within one breath out of Jesus' mouth, one sentence.

Jesus opens his arms wide to Jerusalem, the city that God chose for his name, the city that killed the prophets and rejected their message over and over and over. He opens his arms wide, nevertheless, inviting the weary and burden to come to him for the rest of salvation. Matthew 11:28.

He commands his followers to make disciples of all nations. Matthew 28:19. The apostles declare the same message, quote, God now commands all people everywhere to repent.

Acts 17, 30 and 31. God not only commands sinners to repent but also pleads with them to do so. He does this through his apostles, including Paul, quote, God is making his appeal through us.

2 Corinthians 5:20. We plead on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20.

God is making his appeal through us, the apostles and in derivatively through preachers of the gospel ever since. We plead on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God. The gospel is a command.

God commands his creatures to believe. The gospel represents God's heart. Preachers plead with people to turn from their sins and believe in Christ.

Although not all who hear the gospel call will believe and are saved, the gospel call is necessary for salvation. Paul offers the most extensive and explicit teaching on this in Romans 10:8 through 17. This is the message of faith that we proclaim.

If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in

righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. The scripture says that everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the will be saved. How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent as it is written? How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. But not all obeyed the gospel.

For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? So, faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. Romans 10:8 to 17, Christian Standard Bible. The only way to salvation is through hearing the message about the crucified and risen Christ, verse 17, and confessing his lordship, verse 8. Paul similarly stresses, quote, I'm not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew and also to the Greek.

This is the offer of the gospel call to whoever will come. Calling as effectual call, effective call, performative summons. Speech act theory, about which I know very little, distinguishes locution, illocution, and perlocution.

A locution is a statement. An illocution has to do with the purpose of the one who made that statement, and the perlocution has to do with the results of that statement. Calling is used in other ways in scripture besides the gospel call.

It is used as a performative summons. That is, when God calls inwardly and supernaturally, the call works. The call is heard.

In the effective call, God works internally and mysteriously by his spirit in the lives of many who hear the gospel call to draw them to saving faith in his son. The calls are interrelated. The gospel is powerful, Romans 1.16. Like a seed that takes root, Matthew 13:1 to 23, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:22 to 25, the spirit powerfully uses the gospel to enable faith.

Both calls are at work in Acts 13:48 and 49. After Paul and Barnabas turned from the Jews to the Gentiles, Luke reports that when the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord. And all who had been appointed to eternal life believed, Acts 13:48. Inextricably woven together are the apostles' free offer of the gospel, God's plan to save, and genuine faith on the hearer's part.

If we enlarge our perspective on the divine side, we see that scripture connects our being chosen in eternity with our being called in time, as Matthew Ebenezer from

India puts it. That's from the ESV Global Study Bible, Matthew Ebenezer, The Great Truths of the Bible, page 1881. I've done this before, but this is sort of a new context.

God effectually calls his people through the gospel call. Those he predestined, Romans 8:30, he also called. And those he called, he also justified.

Those he justified, he also glorified. Romans 9:23-24, what if God did this, to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory, even us, the ones he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? Paul connects God's choosing objects of mercy, God the divine potter making objects of mercy, with his calling first-century Jews and Gentiles through the gospel of Christ, effectively through the gospel of Christ, so the gospel works in their cases.

We ought to thank God, 2 Timothy, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14, we ought to thank God always for you, Paul says, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord because from the beginning, God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. When God effectively calls people through the gospel call, he brings about both short-term and long-term results.

In the short term, God intends the effective call to produce a life that is praiseworthy. Ephesians 4:1, I, the prisoner of the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received. This reminds me of an important principle I was taught by D. A. Carson many years ago, in an article he had written in a book called Scripture and Truth, which I believe he co-edited.

At that time, he taught us that we need to attend to the function of scripture. It captured me, and I've been captured by it ever since. It is not enough to know what the Bible teaches, we also ought to work hard to understand why it teaches what it teaches.

Now I do not limit applications to this, but I think we should start with them. That is, if we can understand why God gave this verse, paragraph, book of the Bible, or this teaching, this doctrine of the and then in prayer and in ministry, the minister that verse, paragraph, chapter, book, or doctrine toward those ends for which God says he gave it, there is power in that. The Holy Spirit blesses the word to produce what God said he wanted done.

Here, Paul says, I urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, Ephesians 4:1. Not only are we taught calling to distinguish gospel and effective call, I think we are, but we're then to live for God as those who have been called and who walk in a manner appropriate, worthy of that, appropriate to, worthy of that calling, which of

course pushes us to great reliance on the enabling grace of God and the Holy Spirit. Specifically, God wants his calling to produce, as the following verses will show, freedom in our lives, harmony with other believers, holiness before God and human beings, and the willingness to suffer for the gospel in the lives of his people. Freedom, Galatians 5:13, you were called to be free, brothers and sisters, only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.

God called us that we might not continue to live in sinful ways, but that we would live for him and serve other believers. Colossians 3:15, harmony, peace, harmony. Let the peace of Christ, to which you are also called in one body, rule your hearts.

This verse reminds me of teaching hermeneutics years ago, and the students knew I was trying to trick them. I was trying to show them how our pre-understanding, how our cultural conditioning influences our understanding of the Bible. And so I said, write in your own words the meaning of this verse, that the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

And invariably, they wrote, God wants us to have peace in our hearts and to not worry. And that's true; it's a biblical truth and a very American application. But the verse does not talk about our hearts and our individual well-being.

The verse itself says, let the peace of Christ, to which you were called in one body, rule your hearts. It's a collective verse. It's talking about peace, not that passes understanding in our hearts. That's biblical, but not here.

It's talking about harmony among fellow brothers and sisters. Colossians 3:15, and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. It was as if the verse just stopped there with my dear students, to which you were called indeed you were called in one body.

Yes, God wants us to have peace in our hearts. Philippians 4, 6, and 7. But here he's talking about the fact that God called us to salvation in Christ, resulting in our pursuit of the unity of the church, peace, and harmony with other believers in Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:7, God has not called us to impurity, but to live in holiness.

Compare 2 Timothy 1:9. 1 Peter 2:21, so what I'm trying to say is, if we give heed to the function of the doctrine of calling, it is not intended by God, even primarily, to settle theological debates. Although I think it is good for us to have confidence in God, who calls performatively and internally, and efficaciously through the external call, our confidence is not in people's free will but in God to work through his word. But God wants calling to produce freedom, harmony, holiness, and even a willingness to suffer.

1 Peter 2:21, you were called to this because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should suffer in, follow in his steps. 1 Peter 2:21, along with

short-term effects, God also intends for his calling to have glorious long-term effects in believers' lives. Ephesians 1:18, I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of his calling.

That's the hope of eternal life. That's the hope of eternal life and resurrected bodies on the new earth. 2 Thessalonians 2:14, he called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the end for which God called us, obtaining the glory of Christ. Surely, that motivates us now to love him, to worship him, to live for him with our whole hearts. Hebrews 9:15, Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

In all these passages, God connects calling, not just with Christian responsibilities and duties as we just saw, but also with the eschaton, with our final hope. This is given to encourage us to live for the Lord. 1 Peter 3:8-9, you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 5:10, the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 1 Peter 5:10, the God of all grace called us to his eternal glory in Christ. Hallelujah.

With this, we end this lecture, and we will begin the next one, Lord willing, on the doctrine of regeneration.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on salvation. This is session 9, Election, Systematic Formulations, Number 4: Faith, Gospel, and Calling.

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