

# God's Calls

by Robert Constable

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*God calls men because they are lost, because he loves them, and because he wants to redeem them to himself.*

**Duration:** 34:19

**Scripture:** Proverbs 1:33, Malachi 1:2, Matthew 7:9-11, Matthew 11:28, Mark 4:26-29, Hebrews 1:1-2, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Calling"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the danger of turning away from the call of God. He shares a story about a father who had done everything for his son, but the son wasted his opportunities and rebelled against his father. The preacher highlights the urgency of responding to God's call, as time is running out. He also uses various biblical metaphors, such as Jesus as a door waiting to be opened and God as an advocate, to illustrate God's desire to bless and provide for His children.

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## Transcript

I'd like to refer to the passage which we used for our reading this morning, because I believe this is one of the most remarkable and astounding passages in the word of God. Because I have called, and you have refused. This is amazing, this is God speaking.

Because I have called, he says, God is doing all that infinite love and infinite wisdom can do to call wandering men and women to himself. Let me say that again, I want you to hear that. God is doing all that infinite wisdom and infinite love can do to call wandering men and women to himself.

This is an amazing thing, and this is God speaking in this passage. Because I have called, and ye refused. God is speaking, and men ought to stand and listen when God speaks.

But it isn't so in this passage. Men are refusing. Ye refuse.

This is men, this is you, this is me, this is I that has got the temerity, if you will, to hear the voice of God and refuse to respond to it. Because I have called. Now, why does God call? Why does God call to men? I'd like to suggest some reasons why he calls to men.

One reason may be because men are lost. Men are lost away from God. The word of God tells us, all we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way. We are lost, and so God calls because we are lost, because we have sinned. The word of God says, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And it isn't as though I'm calling people names when I say this. None of us are perfect. We are all ready to admit that none of us are perfect as just another way of saying that all of us have sinned, all of us have come short.

There is none righteous that is righteous in the sense that we have done nothing that is not righteous. There is none righteous. No, not one, the Bible insists.

Not one righteous. We may be differently made, and our failures may take different forms. Some of us may have missed the mark.

That's one of the things that it means when it says that all have sinned. We have all missed the mark. In other words, we haven't been dead on in the target.

Our lives have got some kind of a defection in them, or we have failed of the very best. Now, we might mean the very best that God has in mind for us, or we might even only have in mind the very best we have in mind for ourselves. Which one of us has measured up 100 percent to all the aspirations of his own heart, let alone to the standard that God has established? We are all self-centered.

The first thing we think about is how things affect us individually, ourselves. This alone is a missing of the mark that God has established. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself.

You don't have to go very far in the law of God to find that there has been a missing of the mark, a failure, and largely because of our self-centeredness. We think first of ourselves rather than thinking first of God. Our failure may be because of frustration.

We establish standards for ourselves, like we come to New Year's Day and we all make new resolutions, you know, that we're going to do better this year than we did last year. And it doesn't take very long, does it, before the New Year's resolutions have gone the way of all resolutions, and we forget that we've made them, because it's so frustrating to be trying again and again and again in our own strength, and we are lost. The Bible tells us that the soul that sinneth, it shall die, and we all expect to die.

We know that we're going to die, and the reason we are going to die is because we have sinned. If any of us had lived a perfect life without any flaw in it, whatever, there would be no occasion to die, because it is by sin that death comes. And we all expect that.

We accept that as one of the facts of life. The Bible tells us it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment. Then we will give an accounting of these lives of ours, of the fact that we have not responded to the word of God, to the call of God.

This is one of the reasons, I take it, why he has called, because of our need. Our need is so great. We are so far from him.

We are dead in trespasses and in sin, and we are going to a Christless grave, and God doesn't want this for us, and so he calls to us. But then another reason why he calls is because he loves us. He doesn't want to see this happen to us.

He wants to deliver us from this. In this, the love of God is manifested in that he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. He sent his Son to take our place, to bear our judgment, to identify with us in our failure, so that we might be identified with him in his glory.

This is the way God manifested his love, here in his love. Not that we love God, but that he loved us and gave his Son we might live. God doesn't want us to die.

He doesn't want us to be carried into death in our sins, and away from him permanently, and he has demonstrated his will in this, in that he spared not his own Son. The Bible asks the question, he that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? If God has given us the very best that he has in order to redeem us to himself, what will he not do for us? As I said, God is doing all that infinite wisdom and infinite love can do to call wandering men and women to himself, because God wants us for himself. He wants us to share his life.

He wants a holy people. You remember Peter, in his epistle, wrote these words, Be ye holy, for I am holy, and most people are frightened to death of the idea of being holy. You know, they have some sort of a notion that being holy means having to wear a halo, or to be something extra special.

Well, it is extra special, but you could very easily, in the word of God, equate the word holiness with the word happiness, and this is what God wants for us. He wants us to be happy. You see much happiness around? You see much happiness in the world today? Not very much.

God wants men to be happier, freer, wiser, purer than ever they can make it on their own, and in order for them to be this, he has given his son. And in the giving of his son, he has called men to himself. He calls because men are lost.

He calls because he loves men, and he wants to redeem them to himself. And that's what makes this statement so remarkable, so remarkable. Because I have called, and you have refused.

You know, this is almost unthinkable. That men have refused God's call in view of the fact that in calling men, he wants to do them good. Now, how does he call? We've been thinking about why he calls, but how does he call? And I suggest to you there are several ways by which God calls men.

He calls men in nature. Not many people hear the voice of God in nature as they look about them and see the beauty that he has created and the provision he has made, but there are a lot of things in nature that call us to remember God and his call. The sun comes up in the morning, and it mounts up to the heavens.

Each morning, there is a new day, a new beginning, a new opportunity, and then the sun reaches its zenith, and it starts to go down, and it is as though God is saying, you're having your opportunity, but the opportunities are getting away. They're getting away day by day, day by day. The sun goes down, and our opportunity of responding to the call of God is becoming shorter, and he's speaking to us that way in the rising and in the setting of the sun.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, and he was telling us about God, his Father, and his will to do us good, how many pictures he used that are very common to us in the natural world. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come into him and sup with him, and he with me.

What a wonderful picture this is. He presents himself as a door that may be opened, and he speaks of himself as the one at the door who is ready to come through the door. He's just waiting for men to respond

to his call, to respond to his knock at the door.

Anybody can understand that, can't they? Simple language. And then he speaks of the fact that of sitting at the table. The Lord Jesus said on one occasion, Now, you being evil know how to give good things unto your children.

If a child asked for a fish, you wouldn't give him a stone. You know enough for that. Well, the God that made us, he knows enough, too.

He's not about to give us something less than our hearts aspire to. He wants to bless us. He wants us to have the things to which our hearts aspire.

He wants to give us the very best, and so he calls this way, in this simple way. Two lawyers, the Lord Jesus in conversation, presented himself as an advocate. They could understand the work of an advocate and what an advocate does.

It was in their line of work when he was speaking to the people in the country. He talked about seed falling into the ground, and dying, and bringing forth fruit. This was language they could understand, and the Bible is full of this kind of language.

Why is it full of this kind of language? Because he wants to meet us where we are. Each one of us has a different point of view, sees things a little differently because of our background, our culture, because we are us, and he wants us to be sure to hear what he has to say. To the storekeeper, he speaks of a measure.

Teach us to measure our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. They are running out, he said. So, God speaks in nature.

He also speaks in history, and that's what the Old Testament is all about. From the book of Genesis through the book of Nehemiah, the Old Testament is history, and God is telling us in the experiences of people how he feels about us, what he wants to do for us. In all the Old Testament history is a wonderful relating of the will of God to do men good, and to bless men.

And then we come to the prophets in the Old Testament. You remember that statement in Hebrews where it says, God, who in many ways and on various occasions spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets. He spoke by the prophets.

People were getting away, people were becoming occupied with their own lives. They needed somebody to remind them of God, and so he sent the prophets, and they spoke of God. They spoke of the God who loved them, and who longed to draw them after himself.

And they wouldn't hear either, and years went by, and centuries passed. You come to the end of the Old Testament, the book of Malachi, the last book of the prophets in the Old Testament, and that book begins with these wonderful words, I have loved you. And in the original, the tense of that statement is such as to mean, I have always loved you, I always will love you, I love you now.

The constancy and the urgency of the love of God is pressed in upon us, and he asks the question through the prophet Jeremiah, why will we die? Why die? God doesn't want us to die. God wants us to live, to live his life. And then, as though that wasn't enough, he says in Hosea, holy for him, speaking of

the people, holy for him, how can I let thee go? How can I let thee go? He doesn't want to let men go, and so he continues to call men.

I'm reminded as I speak of a story they tell about a situation out in California. A group of young high school students went out to climb up in Yosemite Park, to climb up to the top of Half Dome, and their scoutmaster took them up in the morning. They got to the top of the mountain, they had their lunch there, and two of the boys said to the scoutmaster, we'd like to go down on the shortcut.

And he said, all right, you know the way, you can go the shortcut, we'll meet you at the lodge. And the two boys went off, and the rest gathered up the stuff after their meal and started down the way they had come up. At the end of the afternoon, they were down at the lodge, and they said, where are the other two boys? They said, what other two boys? Well, the two boys that came down on the shortcut.

No boys have come down. Well, we'd better find them, it's going to be dark soon. And so out they went to find these boys, but they couldn't find them.

They came back to the lodge, they called in the rangers in the park, said there's a couple of boys out there, we've got to find them before it gets dark. And they went out, and they searched, and they searched, they couldn't find the boys. They came back long after dark, couldn't find the boys.

But you can't search all night, so they said we'll be at it again in the morning. In the meantime, they called the boys. Well, one of the boys came back.

One of the boys came back across the valley floor, and they said to him, where have you been? Where is your friend? And he, crying, said, we just lost. Then I nearly didn't find my way, and I don't know where he is. And so early in the morning, the search parties went out, and they searched the mountains all day, all the next day, all the next day, and they couldn't find that boy.

They called his father, who was the principal of the high school over in Stockton, and he came to the park, and he was with the search party, and he urged them to keep looking. They kept looking. I never could find that boy.

Finally, the search had to be called off. You can't carry on this kind of thing forever. But the rangers at Yosemite Park say that one of the saddest things in their memory in the park was the coming of that high school principal, the father of that boy, every Friday night to the lodge.

And at the break of day in the morning, he started across the valley floor and up the mountain, and they could faintly hear in the distance his voice as he called his father, calling his father. This is exactly what we're talking about this morning, God calling you, God seeking for men and women, God calling to you. And he calls by his Spirit.

How many times the Spirit of God comes in and convicts us of the fact that we are not perfect, that we have come short, the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit of God within our souls. And then the Spirit of God has given us the word of God, and as we read the word of God, we learn of God's will to bless. Come, he says, let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

God calling, wanting men to come to himself, and he calls by his providence. Sometimes we get rather used to the idea that in the circumstances of our lives we are delivered from death. Every now and then

somebody will tell you a story about how he was nearly killed, but God in his providence came in and kept and protected, and he's done that for all of us, times without number, times that we know nothing about.

His caring hand has been upon us, and he has watched over and kept us through all our circumstances, as he has brought us into a sense of blessing. And we have times in our lives when we say, life is good, I love life, and he speaks to us in the blessings of the way he wants us to be. And then he speaks to us in judgment.

Things come into our lives that hurt us and make us weak. There are things come into our lives we cannot understand, and we say, why this to me? God is calling, God is speaking and saying, I'm in control of your life, turn to me and find deliverance. So he speaks in blessing, and in judgment, and in tragedy, and in death, and that's why the Bible says it is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of feasting, for the living will take it to heart, for anything will stop you in your tracks to consider as much as going into the house of mourning.

And God is saying to us, we all come here, we all come here, take note of this. Let me say again that God is doing all that infinite love and infinite wisdom can do. To call men to himself, he's doing everything that the almighty, infinite God can think of in order to draw you to himself.

This is his will. Oh, but it says, because I have called, and ye refused. Imagine men refusing a call like that.

Well, you don't have to imagine it, do you? You couldn't have a group as large as the group that's in this auditorium this morning without having some people here who have refused up until now. They have refused to hear the voice of God. They have thought they can do better for themselves than the God who made them would do for them, and so far they are holding the control of their lives in their own hands.

The Bible warns, there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death, is the way of death, and you refuse. Now, it is almost, if I had a hard time to believe part of the Bible, it would be in the next statement or two. Here it says, because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, but no man regarded.

You have said it not, all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. Now, this is what we've been talking about. Listen to this, I also will laugh at your calamity.

This is God talking, too. And if you ever heard God say anything that was hard to understand, it's this statement, I will laugh at your calamity. The God who loves us will laugh at our calamity? Yes, but let me remind you that he will love before he laughs.

It is in love he calls. It is a remarkable thing that men refuse to respond to the call of God. I don't know what word to use about how remarkable a thing it is that God will laugh at them.

God will laugh at their calamity. This is amazing, but really when you start to think of it, when you stop to think of it, is it any more amazing that God would laugh at man's calamity than that man would laugh at God's word? It's just that we're more accustomed to the one than the other. We're accustomed to men and women laughing at the word of God, and refusing his call, and turning from him and going their own way.

We're accustomed to that. We're not accustomed to God's laughing. We're accustomed to God's loving.

But whether we're accustomed to it or not, the word of God says, I will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh. God mocks.

Yes, but not until you have mocked. God is not mocked. God has the last word.

He will not mock you unless you mock him. And every time you are under the sound of the word of God and his call to you, and you turn away from it, you have mocked him. You have said, I couldn't believe it.

I wouldn't believe it. I'll take care of myself, thanks. Amazing.

God is not mocked. If we laugh at God, God will laugh at us. If we are deaf to the call of God, God says in this passage, he will be deaf to our call.

If we neglect so great salvation, he will neglect us. Let's face it. We're dealing with a God of truth, a God who loves, a God who longs to save us from our sins and from ourselves, and to share his own life with us.

But if we don't want it, he's not going to force it on us. He's not going to make us take it. No, if we reject it, there will come the time when there is no more opportunity.

He will mock with us. Then shall ye call upon me, and I will not hear you. He says, this is a dangerous thing, to turn from the call of God.

They tell another story about a father and a son, and in this case, the father had done everything he could do for the son. He had given him the finest education. He had raised him to have a fine career, but all through his college years and later, this son was just carousing and drinking and wasting the opportunities that he had.

One day, his father met him in the street, and he said, son, how long is it going to be before you straighten up? And the boy beat his father out on the public street until he was lying in the street. The father went home. They had a nice home on the edge of a grove in a small community they lived in.

The father walked home, and he walked out back toward the grove, and the neighbor saw him go. When he got into the trees, the neighbor heard this man scream at the top of his voice, and then he heard him scream again. And then, with a yell that just about tore the neighbor's heart out, he turned around and he walked from that grove back to the house quietly.

And later that night, the boy came home, and as he came to the front door, the father said, get off the premises, and don't you ever put your foot on this premises again. And a few weeks later, the boy died. You would never have known it if you'd known the father.

It was as if he never existed. Some lacklander would have affected the father more in his death. He had torn him out of his heart, and this is another picture of the way it is with God.

He makes every provision. He has provided his son. He that spared not his own son.

He has given us the best, and he has invited us to take his provision and make it our own, and share his life with him forever. And we turn away from him, as though it was of no account. And one day, God will tear us out of his heart, and when we cry to him in all the terror of the consciousness of our lost condition eternally, there'll be no answer.

There'll be no answer. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Oh, listen to me this morning.

This is no idea of mine. I have been delivering to you the word of the living God that is faithful and true, and this morning he offers life and liberty to all who will respond to his call. Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.

I will give you rest. Have you responded to this gracious call of God? Oh, he wants you to respond today, now, while you have the opportunity. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear's evil.

God help us this morning to really understand what is involved when we have the opportunity to hear the call of God through his word. God help us all to respond while we may.

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