

TEACHING GOAL

To understand the necessity for the effectual calling of God's Spirit.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?
- A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption and sanctification, and the various benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

S.C. 32, L.C. 68-69, W.C. of F. X, Savoy 10, Young 58, 59

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: John 6:41-71

Support Passages: Romans 8:1-11, John 5:41-47, Ephesians 4:17-19, Hebrews 3:7-13, Romans 3:9-18, II Timothy 3:2-4

BIBLE STORY

II Samuel 9: The story of David and Mephibosheth illustrates the bondage of sin and the necessity of the sovereign act of God to bring one out of this condition into the covenantal blessings.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:44, ESV)

APPLICATION

Let us thank God with our lips and the services of our lives for drawing us into the saving benefits of redemption by His sovereign power, for we are drawn into the kingdom of King Jesus.

SUMMARY

We have learned that the effectual calling of God's Spirit is part of the *Ordo Salutis*. Because of this, effectual calling is directly related to predestination (election) and justification, etc. It is God's means of bringing His people into the kingdom of Christ and apart from this activity of the Spirit it is not possible to be saved. One of the basic reasons why such an act of God is necessary is that we are in total bondage to sin, being completely unable to either save ourselves or even approach God for salvation. We cannot in ourselves make the first or smallest movement toward the cross.

The doctrine of Total Depravity was very prominent in the Reformation as witnessed by Luther:

“You make the power of *Free-will* to be --that certain small degree of power, which, without the grace of God, is utterly ineffective.“

“Do you not acknowledge this? - Now then, I ask and demand of you, if the grace of God be wanting, or, if it be taken away from the certain small degree of power, what can it do of itself? 'It is ineffective (you say) and can do nothing of good.' Therefore, it cannot do what God or His grace wills. And why? because we have now separated the grace of God from it; and what the grace of God does not, is not good. And hence it follows, that *Free-will*, without the grace of God is, absolutely, not free; but, immutably, the servant and bond-slave of evil; because, it cannot turn itself unto good. This being determined, I will allow you to make the power of *Free-will*, not only a certain small degree of power, but to make it evangelical if you will, or, if you can, to make it divine: provided that, you add to this doleful appendage - that, without the grace of God, it is ineffective. Because, then you will at once take from it all power: for, what is ineffective power, but plainly, no power at all.”

And Calvin:

“Wherefore those who have defined original sin as a privation of the original righteousness, which we ought to possess, though they comprise the whole of the subject, yet have not used language sufficiently expressive of its operation and influence. For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evils that it cannot remain inactive. Those that have called it concupiscence have not used an expression improper, if it were only added, which is far from being conceded by most persons, that everything in man, the understanding and will, the soul and body, is polluted and engrossed by this concupiscence; or, to express it more briefly, that man is of himself nothing else but concupiscence....”

The text in John 6, which is our study passage, states directly that no one can come to Jesus (for salvation) unless the Father draws him. Now the word *draws* translates the Greek word *helkousai* but it is really much stronger than that. It is used, for example, in Acts 21:30 to speak of Paul dragged out of the temple. It also is used in connection with the act of dragging in a net of fish. Conceptually, we see it in Lot, unwilling to leave Sodom, having to be dragged

out of the city of sin. So it is here. It is not just that the Father draws us with the cords of love, but He drags us against our natural will. Verse 65 uses another term for it - a grant from the Father is required in order to come to Jesus for salvation. The intimacy of the relationship pictured here in the eating of Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood is totally impossible apart from the effectual calling (dragging) of the Holy Spirit, for apart from this vital and intimate relationship with Jesus no one can be saved.

When we understand the state of sin in which we are all naturally found (Romans 3:10-18); that we are dead, in darkness; that we do not have love for God in us (John 5:42); that we who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8); futile of mind, darkened in understanding, excluded from the life of God, ignorant and hard of heart (Ephesians 4:17-18); when we see ourselves as completely evil and unbelieving (Hebrews 3:12), and then we begin to understand the necessity for electing love through the means of the effectual calling of God's Spirit. We need to praise God for His grace in saving us who are His people. We need to praise God not only with our lips but with obedient lives that radiate His grace and that openly love Him who first loved us.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them." (Hosea 11:1-4, ESV)