

We've been engaged in a topical study on the Doctrines of Grace. Last week we began to consider what's commonly called Irresistible Grace. I mentioned that each of the five points have another side to them. Total Depravity doesn't deny that fallen man can do good deeds in a civil sense; Unconditional election doesn't deny God's general love for all men, and Limited Atonement doesn't deny Christ's death was sufficient for the sin of the world.

Thus, last week, we looked at the other side of Irresistible Grace which is the Universal Call (sometimes called the Free or Well-meant Offer of the Gospel), which brings us this morning to the Effectual (efficacious) Call.

- I. It's Effectual
- II. It's Rational
- III. It's Loving

I. It's Effectual

1. By effectual is meant "effective, successful, or powerful"—it's a call that actually brings sinners to God.
2. Remember last week—there's a universal call that comes to all people and an effectual call that comes to some people.
3. Thus, while all men are called or summoned by God, only certain people are actually brought by God.
4. It's for this reason, Scripture at times refers to Christians as "the called" in contrast to the unsaved (uncalled).
5. Rom.8:28—"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose."
6. By "His purpose" is meant His eternal purpose—God purposed from eternity who He would call in time.
7. God purposed to save them in eternity, called them in time to Himself, and now they love Him as a result.
8. Rom.8:30—"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."
9. Notice the same order—predestined, called, justified, glorified—only those predestined in eternity are called in time.
10. 1Cor.1:26—"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*."
11. Not every person is called in this sense; in fact, relatively few wise and noble people from the world's perspective are called.
12. Rev.17:14—"for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are* with Him *are called*, chosen, and faithful."
13. Christians are described with three words—they are chosen (from eternity), called (in time), and faithful (to the end).
14. Thus, when Scripture describes Christians as "the called" it's referring to this specific and effectual call.
15. While God calls or summons all men in the gospel, He only calls or summons some men effectually (thus, I want to briefly examine three texts that describe the effectual nature of this call, and then summarize two truths from them).
16. Jn.10:16—"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."

17. By "other sheep" are meant Gentiles, which along with a Jewish remnant, comprise one flock with one shepherd.
18. They are His sheep because they were given to Him by His Father from eternity in the covenant of redemption.
19. Our Savior says two things about these Gentiles—"them also I must bring" and "they will hear My voice."
20. The first phrase "them also I must bring" refers to what He will do, whereas, the second "they will hear My voice" refers to how.
21. He will bring them to Himself—this refers to effectual calling—He will bring them just as He brought His Jewish sheep.
22. Notice, how He will bring them—"they will hear My voice"—He will make His word effectual to them.
23. Thus, by "hear My voice" He means, they will hear with the ears of the heart so as to believe and obey it.
24. 1Cor.1:22-24—"For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."
25. Notice Paul speaks of two types of people—Jews and Greeks who are not called and Jews and Greeks who are called.
26. In other words, not every person is called in this sense—only the elect are effectually or savingly called.
27. The preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness to one group and the power and wisdom of God to the other.
28. 1Thess.1:5—"For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance (conviction), as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake."
29. Notice, while the gospel comes to all men (universal call), it comes in power of the Spirit to some men (effectual call).
30. How do you know whether the gospel comes in word only or in the power of the Spirit, it comes in "much assurance" or "deep conviction."
31. (1) The effectual call is the powerful work of the Holy Spirit—this is why it's called irresistible grace.
32. This means, it's grace that produces its intended goal—it's grace that effects the salvation of those called.
33. Who can stop God from doing what He pleases, Ps.115:3—"But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases."
34. This power is necessary for two reasons: first, man by nature refuses to come, and second, man by nature is a slave of Satan.
35. (a) Man by nature refuses to come, Jn.6:44—"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him."
36. If you remember, man's inability to come to Christ is not due to any lack of faculty necessary to come.
37. Fallen and depraved man remains a man—he's not a rock or stone—he has a soul with a mind, heart, and will.
38. The problem is his mind is darkened and deceived, his heart hates God, and he refuses to return to Him.
39. Who is powerful enough to overcome the native enmity and hatred of God that resides in man's heart?

40. (b) Man by nature is a slave of Satan, Matt.12:29—"How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house."
41. While Christ bound Satan at the cross, He plunder's his house by effectually calling them to Himself.
42. Thus, Christ's power is seen at the cross, when salvation is secured, and conversion, when salvation is applied.
43. In fact, I suggest, God's power is more evident in calling sinners to Himself than in creating the world.
44. A.W. Pink—"When Paul speaks of the Divine power in creation he mentions 'His power and God-head' (Rom.1:20); but when he treats of the work of grace and salvation, he calls it 'the exceeding greatness of His power.'"
45. A.W. Pink—"God proportions His power to the nature of His work. The casting out of demons is ascribed to His 'finger' (Lk.11:20); His delivering of Israel from Egypt to His 'hand' (Ex.13:9); but when the Lord saves a sinner it is His 'arm' which gets Him the victory (Ps.98:1)."
46. (2) The effectual call is the work of the Spirit through the word—both the universal and effectual call come through the gospel.
47. Thus, the word that comes to all men in the universal call is the same word that comes to some men in the effectual call.
48. The difference is not in the word itself—the same gospel comes to all men equally and without distinction.
49. The difference is this—the Holy Spirit adds His weight to the edge of the gospel in the case of the elect.
50. For example, let's say twin sisters hear the gospel—the same message comes to both girls (both are told the facts, exhorted to repent and believe, and promised salvation is they did).
51. And yet, one hears the message and isn't concerned about it, and the other is convicted over the message, motivated by the promise, and repents and believes.
52. Why the difference? Why does one person obey the summons and another does not? It's because God's Spirit blesses the word to one in a way, He does not bless the word to the other.
53. And this is very good news! Because it reminds us that no person is beyond the saving grace of God.
54. LBC (10:2)—"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, nor from any power or agency in the creature co-working with His Special grace, the creature being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit; he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead."

II. It's Rational

1. By rational I mean, God calls His elect as rational creatures and does not drag them to Himself as stones.
2. This is often a misconception of effectual calling or irresistible grace, that God brings us to Himself against our will.
3. But nothing could be further from the truth, for as we shall see under this heading—God makes us willing to come.
4. Thus, the first thing I want to do is remind you of the order of salvation, or the way in which God brings us to Himself.
5. The first step in the application of our salvation is effectual calling which includes regeneration and conversion, which results in justification (I think it would be helpful to review these three words).

6. (a) Regeneration—it is through the effectual call, that the Spirit infuses the dead soul with spiritual life.
7. This is the first step of effectual calling—God raises the dead sinner to life opening the eyes of our understanding.
8. This is a sovereign work of God wherein the sinner is passive—he is acted upon—he is raised from the dead.
9. (b) Conversion—the word conversion refers to the change that takes place through repentance and faith.
10. Having raised us from the dead, the Spirit communicates to our souls the graces of faith and repentance.
11. Thus, while repentance and faith are gifts from God, the newly awakened soul exercises those graces (the sinner repents and believes).
12. (c) Justification—having been regenerated, the sinner exercises faith in Christ and is joined to Christ.
13. Thus, while we distinguish these three (regeneration, conversion, justification), they happen together.
14. Nobody is regenerated who isn't also converted, and nobody is converted, who isn't justified by faith.
15. Ps.110:3—"Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth."
16. Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm—each statement within the entire Psalm is spoken to Christ by the Father.
17. It describes Christ as a victorious Royal-Priest, who atones for our sin, and sits at the right hand of God.
18. V3—"Your people shall be willing (shall be freewill offerings) in the day of Your power"—notice what and when.
19. What will happen—"Your people shall be willing"—they shall freely join themselves to Christ as followers.
20. When it will happen—"in the day of Your power"—that is, in the day when Christ effectual calls them.
21. Jn.6:44-45—"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me."
22. Notice, our Savior explains what is meant by the Father's drawing—"It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'"
23. Our Savior is referring to several OT prophecies like Isa.54:13—"All your children shall be taught by the LORD."
24. This refers to true covenant children (not our physical offspring)—every NC member will know God (Jer.31:34).
25. They will each be "taught"—they will all "hear" and "learn" from the Father—this is how He draws them.
26. This necessarily means, God will teach them through the intellect or He will teach them as rational beings.
27. (1) In effectual calling sinners are taught the truth of God—they are taught by the Spirit through the word.
28. This underscores what I've already said—God calls His people through His word blessed by His Spirit.
29. The sinner begins to understand what the word of God says—he begins to be concerned for his soul.

30. Furthermore, he begins to see in Christ a suitable Savior—he begins to see salvation is by grace through faith.
31. Now, a sinner often begins to see these things prior to regeneration—these can be called pre-birth pains.
32. Acts 2:37—"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'"
33. Acts 2:38—"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"
34. Acts 2:40—"And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'"
35. Acts 2:41—"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."
36. (2) In effectual calling sinners willingly return unto God—God makes the sinner able and willing to repent and believe.
37. Though sinners come by grace, nevertheless "sinners" come—they willing and whole-heartedly believe.
38. John Calvin—"As to the kind of drawing, it is not violent, so as to compel men by external force; but still it is a powerful impulse of the Holy Spirit, which makes men willing who formerly were unwilling and reluctant."
39. LBC (10:1)—"Those whom God has predestined unto life, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone; and giving them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."
40. David Steele—"The Holy Spirit, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ. The inward change wrought in the elect sinner enables him to understand and believe spiritual truth; in the spiritual realm he is given the seeing eye and the hearing ear. The Spirit creates within him a new heart or a new nature. This is accomplished through regeneration or the new birth by which the sinner is made a child of God and is given spiritual life. His will is renewed through this process so that the sinner spontaneously comes to Christ of his own free choice."

III. It's Loving

1. Here I simply want to underscore that effectual calling is the result of the electing love of God in Christ.
2. Christ calls those given to Him by His Father—He brings them to Himself because they are His Father's gift.
3. Jn.10:16—"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."
4. Christ "must" bring them! Why? Because they are His sheep given to Him by His Father in eternity past.
5. Furthermore, Christ "must" bring them because He loves them and desires to reveal Himself to them.
6. Jer.31:3—"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."

7. The identity of those referred to is found later in the chapter in vv31-34 and described as God's NC people.
8. He's here in v3, referring to them collectively—He loved them with an everlasting love and drawn with lovingkindness.
9. Put another way—because He loved them, He drew them to Himself—or He longed to have them near Him.
10. This can be illustrated in Joseph—outside of David, Joseph may be the fullest type of Christ in the OT.
11. Joseph typified Christ in two fundamental ways: first, in his humiliation, and second, in his exaltation.
12. If you remember, his brothers wickedly sold him into slavery, and he was then elevated to the ruler of Egypt.
13. Because of the famine, his brothers are humbled to come to Egypt a beg for food to keep them alive.
14. At first, Joseph concealed his identity because he wanted his brothers to feel their wickedness toward him.
15. First, we all (like Joseph's brothers) have sold Christ into servitude because of our sins; second, we all (like Joseph's brothers) need to be humbled; third, Christ (like Joseph), reveals Himself to His humbled brethren.
16. Gen.45:1—"Then Joseph could not restrain stood by him, and he cried out, 'Make everyone go out from me!' So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers."
17. Gen.45:3—"Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph.'" V14—"Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck." V15—"Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him."
18. Mark 1—The elect are called to believe in Christ, Jn.6:45—"Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me."
19. Put another way, every person who's been effectually called comes to Christ—they answer the summons.
20. Thus, how do you know you've been effectually called or drawn, but that you have believed on Christ.
21. Mark 2—The elect are called to fellowship with Christ, 1Cor.1:9—"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."
22. In other words, they are not only called to believe upon Christ, but to enjoy loving fellowship with Christ.
23. Mark 3—The elect are called to be like Christ, Rom.1:7—"To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."
24. That is, they are called to be "holy ones"—they are called with a holy calling which results in a holy life.
25. Mark 4—The elect are called to suffer for Christ, 1Pet.2:21—"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us (1Pet.3:9)."
26. Christians are not only called to believe in Christ, walk like Christ, but share in the sufferings of Christ.