



sure...” (2 Pet. 1:10 KJV). Those who have been called and elected must work to remain as one of the called and elected!

and all have been called to repentance (cf. Rom. 10:18; Acts 17:30). We must not allow ourselves to think that having been called and elected through the Gospel seals our destiny, for even those who have been called can forfeit their election (cf. Gal. 5:4; Heb. 2:1-3). This is why those chosen and elected *in* Christ must heed Peter’s warning: “...brethren, **give diligence to make your calling and election**

We must never adopt any thinking that allows us to believe our fate has been sealed for all time and there is nothing we can do to change it. Though the Scriptures speak of the called, the chosen, predestined, and elected, we must understand these ideas as God would have us understand them—as variables dependent on our choices as men and women. Have you answered the call of the Gospel, or have you hardened your heart against the Spirit? Have you sought election in Christ, or dismissed yourself from obedience? There is no force great enough to hold you back or separate you from the love of God except yourself (cf. Rom. 8:38-39). Will you submit to the call today and become one of the chosen in Christ?



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Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.
Please come again.

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**

ISSUE

13.41

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

October 9
2011



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:

Kyle Pope
Jason Garcia

Your Calling & Election

By Jason Garcia

It’s not unusual to here folks speak of their “calling”, especially in the religious world. One may say, “I felt *called* to mission work”, and yet another, “I was *called* to preach the Gospel”. In either case they are referring to some experience in their past which they have determined to be an event directly prompted by God and singling this moment out as their “calling”. Unfortunately many people have confused God’s call to all men with some personal, emotional experience that deeply affected them. To complicate things further, they may believe that this experience was the result of the Holy Spirit’s influence irrevocably causing them to serve God. Please don’t misunderstand me, there is a way in which God calls people, and there is a way in which the Holy Spirit affects us. Are people called to serve God? Yes. Are people moved by the Spirit? Yes, through the Spirit’s revelation. Have people been predestined and elected to have a relationship with God? Again, the answer is “yes”. However, due to the confusion surrounding these teachings we must be certain we’re aware of and understand how the Scripture defines these doctrines.

The Spirit inspired Paul to make God’s plan known through the Gospel. The message of the Gospel was incredible and inspired a

powerful response in people who believed it. When Peter spoke the message, his listeners were **“cut to the heart”** (Acts 2:37). The people who heard the message from Paul implored him to speak it again and again because it was so incredible (cf. Acts. 13:42). In fact, prophecy foretold that the Gospel would be so wonderful that people could scarcely imagine its greatness (cf. Acts 13:41). This same message, this Gospel has the power to call people to serve God. Consider



Olsen Park church of Christ

what Paul said to a first century church: **“It was for this He CALLED YOU THROUGH OUR GOSPEL, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (2 Thess. 2:14 NASB). How were these men and women *called*?—Through the Gospel of Christ that was preached by His apostles. Does this mean that every Christian in history has been called this way? No, because there have been a few exceptions. Paul, for one, was called in a special way. He recounts his calling by the Lord several times in Acts and alludes to it in his letter to the Galatians. There he says, **“For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ”** (Gal. 1:11-12). Paul was a special, as were all the other men who came into to direct contact with the Lord, and were eyewitnesses of His glory. Does this mean that people can still be called in our time the way that Paul and other apostles were called? Jude answers for us when he says by the Spirit, **“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints”** (Jude 3). The Spirit makes it clear to us that some men were chosen by the Lord to receive a special revelation directly from Him and, in turn, pass it on to those who would become saints through obedience to the Gospel. In short, all men are called by the Gospel which has been preserved by the providence of God. Faith still comes from hearing the Word of God (cf. Rom. 10:17). Someone might well agree thus far, but still argue that men can be called today to do specific work just as the apostles were called in their time to specific tasks (e.g. preaching to gentiles or Jews, going to specific locations around the world etc.). Where do we find such teaching in Scripture? Do we not find, instead, teachings that illustrate talents as peculiar to different individuals and each must cultivate and utilize his or her abilities to serve the Lord? The Lord expects men to make the most

of their God-given talents and abilities (cf. Matt. 25:14-29). Paul teaches us to make use of individual aptitudes within the church in order to serve (cf. 1 Cor. 12:19-31). So then, we are called by the Gospel, called to serve the Lord; some may do this as teachers, some as elders, still others may serve as deacons. Talents certainly aren't limited to offices within the church. Each one has a strength on which to capitalize—hospitality, encouragement, knowledge, and generosity to name a few. When we are called by the Lord, it will not be with signs and wonders nor will we here a still small voice, but we can be certain that we hear His Voice in the Gospel, and it is His *Word* that calls us to serve Him (cf. Heb. 3:12-15). This gives rise to another question: Are those who are called predestined to eternal life? In a word, yes (cf. Rom. 8:29-30). However, we should be careful not to adopt a superficial understanding of predestination and election. A God who desires all men to be saved would not doom a set number them to hell expecting them all the while to receive His offer of grace (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; Acts 17:30).

How should we understand Scripture's teaching regarding predestination and election? Paul will speak extensively in the first chapter of his letter to the Ephesians regarding God's choice of those who will be saved. Within ten verses Paul will speak of the blessings to be found in Christ more than five times, and the particular verse which speaks to our point is verse 13: **“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise...”** (Eph. 1:13). Earlier in the chapter Paul spoke of these same people as

having been chosen before the foundation of the world and having been predestined to be adopted as sons in Christ (cf. vv. 4-5). Does this mean all accountability had been removed from them and their election was a sure thing? No, for how does Paul say they were elected? By *listening* to the message of truth, and *believing* it. All those who listen to the Gospel and believe it are those who are predestined! Can anyone listen to the message and believe it? Peter answers and says **“O the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself”** (Acts 2:39). Did you catch it? Who is the promise for? *All* who are far off! Someone may object citing the phrase “as many as the Lord calls” as proof that there is only a set number of people appointed to salvation by the Lord. I ask again, who is it the Lord has called? The message is intended for all men