

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Called and Chosen

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Introduction

In a previous issue of Present Truth Teaching Letter (April 2009, [Called—Chosen—Faithful](#)) I discussed the process of the Lord's "invitation", that is, calling, and our responsibility to respond and follow through after being "invited". In some ways this letter is a sequel to the earlier one. Since I want to build on the previous teaching and not repeat it, it would be a help to you if you took the time to re-read the earlier one before continuing with this issue.

The Scripture text for this lesson is this verse:

"For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14 NASB)

The basic meaning of "called" is "invited" and the basic meaning of "chosen" is "selected". So, the chosen are selected from those who have been invited or called. It is God who both calls and chooses. However, we know God is not arbitrary or capricious; therefore, He has His own reasons for His choices or selections. If we have been invited then we need to understand the criteria that God uses to choose or select us for His purposes. I know that I want to be both called AND chosen. I don't want to lose out after being invited into God's purpose.

Context

Jesus made this called, chosen statement at the end of one of His Kingdom parables. The parable compared the Kingdom of God with a wedding feast and dealt with those that were invited to the feast. Some believe this statement to be a "salvation" issue but in context the parable has nothing to do with Heaven or hell but is about those invited to the wedding party and if they are dressed appropriately. The called and chosen principle is applicable to much of what God does with us and is stated in other formats a number of times in the Scriptures (for example: "the last shall be first and the first last").

There is a process involved with this. First is the calling, which includes many. Last is the choosing, which includes few. In between the call and the choosing we have the application of God's criteria that qualifies those to be chosen. We call this "testing" and we have a very good

example of it in Judges. At the end of Judges six the call goes forth from Gideon to raise an army to take on the Midianites. The response to his call is given in Judges seven. 32,000 men respond to the call. After they are gathered, the testing process begins. The first test sent 22,000 home. The second test sent 9,700 home. God chose 300 out of the original 32,000. These 300 men passed the test to be chosen to do the work that God desired of them. In this case less than one percent of the called were actually chosen for the work.

Our modern form of evangelism concentrates on making “converts”. Jesus referred to making disciples. The Scriptures show that Jesus made thousands of converts, but by the time of His death on the cross there were only 11 men left that were called disciples. After His resurrection He appeared to over 500 at one time (*I Corinthians 15:6*) but only 120 went to the upper room to wait for the promise and power of the Holy Spirit, which Jesus said would be needed for them to be effective witnesses. The true progress of the Kingdom of God has always been dependent on quality rather than quantity.

Testing

After receiving the call to service, there are two primary ways in which God will put us to the test that we might be qualified by His criteria.

1. The Lord will allow circumstances to become very hard; or
2. The Lord will allow circumstances to become very easy.

This is shown in Kingdom parable form with what we call the parable of the sower. These are the verses from Jesus' explanation of this parable:

"In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky *places*, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no *firm* root in themselves, but are *only* temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Mark 4:16-19 NASB)

The hard circumstances are shown by the rocky places. Affliction and persecution comes because of the word and the converts fall away. Many are not prepared to endure opposition, persecution, ridicule, loneliness, poverty or apparent failure for the sake of the Gospel.

The easy circumstances are shown by the thorny places. Worldly desires and worries along with the deceitfulness of riches distract the converts and causes the calling to become non-productive. Many cannot remain steadfast and faithful in the midst of worldly ease and comfort, popularity, wealth and success.

Those whom God would choose cannot be deterred by the hardness of the stoney places nor wooed by the ease of the thorny places. They must have their eyes focused on the Lord and His purposes.

Calling and Choosing

We said earlier in this teaching letter that both the calling and the choosing is by the Lord.

However, in order for us to meet the criteria of God's choosing it is absolutely necessary that we also “choose” the Lord and His plan for us. As Joshua told the Israelites, “choose you this day whom you will serve...” Sometimes we don't clearly do this because we don't understand the importance of the call. The Scriptures describe God's call three ways”

1. High calling (Philippians 3:14)
2. Holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9)
3. Heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1)

This tells us that the call of the Lord to service is an exalted invitation and one that we should not take lightly. We should choose to pay any price to fulfill what the Lord has called us to do. As our Lord said, “he who loses his life will find it”. Our very life is found in the plans and purposes of God.

If the one who is called will also put all of his confidence in God, he has the assurance of God's word, “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” (1 [Thessalonians 5:24 NASB](#)). If we will yield ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit within us, then God is faithful to choose us to fulfill our calling.

We don't need to concern ourselves with the opinion of others—about who will send us or who will authorize us. It is the Lord who calls. It is the Lord who empowers. It is the Lord who fulfills His purpose in us.

Let us take the call seriously. Let us endure the tests. Let us be one of the few who are chosen not one of the many that are not. Let us be both called AND chosen.

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