

## Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 10 am

### Called?

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Service lead by Joshua Emmanuel

Matt 22:1-14 (page 990)

1 Corinthians 1:1-9 (1144)

### Notices

Joyce Cooke prayerletter

Fellowship lunch next week – bring and share

### Prayer and Exordium

God speaks. God speaks to people, He calls people.

Just as Jesus beckoned to the fishermen alongside lake Galilee. The Lord called to them - to leave their nets - and to follow Him.

Jesus called out “Peter come, John, James, Andrew come and follow me” and they did, they left their nets and everything behind - and followed Him.

■ Jesus is still calling people - today, name some in front, “..... come, ....come, .... leave your old life and come and follow me” he says

As the fishermen were to leave – and follow. So with you and I, we cannot follow - if we haven’t first left.

Today we will think about that calling, the Lord’s call on a person’s life.

On the first Sunday of 2024 you received this year’s KNBC Motto text: **To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy.** 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:2 Remember? **called to be Holy.**

God’s Call is often mentioned in the Bible. A calling out of – a calling into, a calling from - a calling to.

And there is also the call on as we see in the next line **together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—**

The word we translate ‘call’ is the verb kaleo Strong's 2564 derived from the root kal ---, to "call". The past tense kletos so we have "clamour, klaxon”.

In the Greek it is often not just kaleo call, but eis-kaleo to call in, or epi-kaleo to call upon, or sun-kaleo to call together, or ek to call out.

In fact the word church is ek-klesia and means ‘called out’.

### *The Church – is a called out people*

■ Such as a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly.

■ Or soldiers called out of their barracks to assemble on parade and ready for duty

The first time the word is used in the Greek OT is the Assembly in the desert. The people having been brought out of their captivity in Egypt are now to assemble in the desert.

■ Imagine those in a prisoner of war camp who are now rescued, they are released and all come out to assemble as free men and women.

Christians we are called out of this world to be the Lord’s Holy Assembly.

The church 'Ek-klesia' is past tense, we are His 'called out people'. Let us grasp that.

We the church are those called out to be His Holy people, snatched from the world, from the sinful ways of the world, and set apart for Himself. Jesus, through his finished work on the cross, bought back or redeemed the lost. That's how it's done. Jesus Christ has enabled people to be set apart and included in God's family and to share the family likeness of God's Son. That is what he wants for us here at Kings Norton. Paul saw the church in Corinth; a church troubled, a church with problems, but a church, a group of people chosen by God, and set apart. People called out to be God's people. To be a church called from darkness into light, called to be holy, as he says here, **sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be holy**.

Christian, God sees you as **sanctified**, set apart from him for him, because you have trusted in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, for your salvation. And if you are set apart, that has consequences for the way in which you live. (see more at 24\_01\_07.doc for more)

✚ So the 'church' is **the living community of those who have responded to the call of God**.

Union with Christ necessarily involves **union with his people**. The church is not simply a place to come to because it is useful to our growth; it is a necessary part of our Christian experience, to be taken with utmost seriousness. Every Christian baptized into the body of Christ is already in the church, it's the essential context of our faith.

It was God's love for the church that brought Christ to Calvary (Eph 5:25). Hence the measure of our conformity with the mind of Christ will be the extent of our concern for the church, its calling and extension, its life and zeal, its understanding and conviction, its growth and unity, its purity and holiness, both worldwide and in our local setting.

The church is a **worshipping** community. We need to affirm our commitment to public worship and examine our attitudes to it. As NT priests it is our privilege and responsibility as we assemble week by week to bring to God an offering of praise (Heb. 13:15). Are you faithful to your part in this?

The church is a **fellowship** in the Spirit. We need to affirm our commitment to the fellowship of this our local church - and examine our attitudes to our fellow Christians. Are there feelings of malice, envy or

pride of which we need to repent? There may also be criticism, slander or gossip to confess; possibly even an apology to make, or past hurts to forgive. Perhaps there is need for greater generosity in our sharing in hospitality, in time and friendship, or with our money or our prayers, or in other practical ways.

The church is a **servant** community. Will you affirm your commitment to serve the church and the world in Christ's name? This will involve identifying the gifts the Lord has given to you to use for him and each other. Be alert to opportunities for service.

The Apostles through the gospel **called people from among the gentiles** – that's us, **called** from our godless way of life with all its vain interests, hobbies and priorities - **to the obedience that comes from faith** Rom 1:5 Faith shows in obedience – it's not just a feeling of being accepted, it is a call to leave a life **in rebellion** - to now submit to God **in obedience**.

✚ That is how faith is shown, to Trust and obey – they go together.

If that is you - you are no longer your own In Romans 1 Paul speaks about **those called to belong to Jesus Christ** v6 and **called to be Saints** v7

- I had the happy experience on Thursday of going back to JLR and Gaydon, my old workplace. I was asked to go and speak about the work of the Birmingham City Mission. Two weeks ago it was thirty years since I left engineering to join BCM.
- I knew then the Lord was calling me and it became clear through a number of events that this is what I should be doing. I had the Lord's Call to full time Christian ministry!

But that is not the main call the Bible speaks of. For me that call came on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1985. That was the call for me to leave my old ways and the call to be His, for His purposes, for His service and for obedience to my new master.

So do not think that this is a call that only Christian workers, pastors, missionaries have. No. Every Christian x2 has been called to a ministry. To be his man or woman, boy or girl wherever you are, for his purposes, for his service, for obedience. To be a witness for him among your work colleagues, your college or school classmates, your neighbours, your family and your friends.

Those fishermen were called to leave their nets and follow Him. Do you too know Christ's call? Have you left your nets as it were? If so he has a work for you to do. A work prepared in advance that he wants you, and you alone, to do. Are you doing it? On Thursday we saw how God's chosen people came together **"each to his own work"** Neh 4:16. What has he for you? do you know it? Are you doing it? Come and see me if you are not sure.

When the men sent by Cornelius arrived at Peter's house he eis-kaleo, in-call he "called [them] in," he "invited" them in. Acts 10:23

Not only are we called out of the world but **God called you into** x2 fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ., 1 Cor 1:9 and to be like Him **just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;** 1Pe 1:15

✚ So God is a God who calls - Who will hear that call? Who will heed that call?

This is laid out clearly in Matt 22 as many were called to the wedding banquet. It's the invitation, the call in.

In Matt 22:3 **He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come,**

The word 'Kaleo' is used twice, what this says literally is: the servants are to call those called. To call the called. But they didn't come!

■ You have a letter to go to the hospital for an appointment – and when the time comes for you – you are not there. In the QE Hospital screens show just how many missed appointments - there are over 200K a year!

Actually we can do better with the illustration it is more like being...

■ called to meet the king, you are amongst many waiting in the ante-chamber. Then the call comes for you to come through - and there's no response. In fact it's worse than that - you refuse to come. x2. What would the king think about that? He or she's refused to come !

That is what we read in Matt 22:3 **but they refused to come.**

He sends out other servants v5 **but they paid no attention.**

**"Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find."** Mt 22:9

✚ This is what we call the - General call

Others did come in - and came in gladly – but not everyone.

The master knows, He sees one who shouldn't be there. **"'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless."** Mt 22:12. Like being in a church building - but not being saved.

The king gives all who come in the right clothes to wear, so with salvation we need to be clothed in Christ's righteousness. This man would not accept them. He was too proud, he wanted to stay as he was – do you realise our goodness is described as being dressed in filthy rags! **Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'**" Mt 22:13

✚ If you are not clothed in Christ's righteousness this morning then urgently seek Him for it!

The cross

Oh to see my name , - Written in the wounds, - For through your suffering I am free, - Death is crushed to death, - Life is mine to live - Won through your selfless love.

*This the power of the cross, - Son of God slain for us, - What a love, What a cost,- We stand forgiven at the cross* Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

This is God's general call by which he summons all who hear the gospel to come to him **"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."** Mt 9:13. There's a distinction between this general call and what is known as God's **specific call.**

It is specific for it is to an individual.

■ On your house phone no-one ring up and says "is anyone there?" The caller wants to speak to you. To you. "May I speak to John? May I speak to Rachel" A name is given. This is the specific call.

This is also sometimes known as His effective call because it effects a response, Here God's summons leads to a response of repentance and faith in Christ. This distinction can be clearly observed in Jesus' teaching **"For many are invited – the word is called, - but few are chosen."** Mt 22:14

Not only is in effective but it is irrevocable – it cannot be undone - because it is specific and because it is fully in-line with God's eternal elective purposes then that person will come. For example when Paul spoke **the word of the Lord** in the synagogue in Pisidion Antioch that is in Asia minor, southern Turkey **all who were appointed for eternal life believed."** Ac 13:48. Those appointed – they believed.

Jesus himself said “**All that the Father gives me will come to me.**” Joh 6:37

In the wonderful Romans 8 passage we read that **those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.** 8:30

■ There they are like train carriages all coupled together

It’s in the past tense - **that train will arrive** – for the Lord has determined it.

“**For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.**”

Heb 9:15

In this specific call the Lord calls some to share in the merit and favour of his Son. This invitation is given outwardly by the preaching of the gospel, but also inwardly by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit moves like the wind, we cannot see it, or tells where it will go – be we see the effect.

■ Just as storm Isha last week - so when the Spirit comes to a person, things are turned upside down, a huge upheaval takes place but unlike the destructive storm the Spirit of God clears away the old and creates new life. Maybe more like the lava flows in Iceland that kill off everything to bring a fertile new ground for the new seeds to flourish.

*So what can I do?, some say, what can I do? I need to wait for that call to come to me??* No. you are to call upon the Lord

### **Call on**

So this is not the Lord calling me - but my calling out to him, calling on his Name. Epi-kaleo is the verb, epi, to call ‘on’ or ‘upon’, it’s an action on my part - it’s not passive – it’s active.

Paul speaks of those who call on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, - and if you do – then we will know you are His.

Paul addressed the church saying it is not just you at Corinth who have the Lord, but you **together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus**

A Christians is often spoken of as someone who calls on the Name of the Lord, that is in a way a shorthand phrase who a Christian is, someone who calls on the Name of the Lord. It is a responsive call.

When the Lord confronted Paul of his sin the Lord sent him to Ananias who said to him: **And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’** Ac 22:16

*So what should I do? -this is what you must do....*

**Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.** Isa 55:6

■ On Thursday I was having a conversation with someone who didn’t like the idea that God calls or chooses some and not others.

■ I asked him “will you repent and believe in Christ? Will you turn away from a life of sin” and his answer was - NO. NO.

There as clear as day shows that you are not - at that time - one of the elect. If you do live a life of Repentance and Faith then you are, and clearly so!

### **So let me summarise -**

■ One often asks a teenager what they hope to do in life, we are looking to see if they have a vocation, will they be a nurse? Or policeman or woman, or hairdresser, a mechanic, many strongly feel a vocation to – that is a calling to – something in particular.

So it is with someone becoming a Christian. We have a vocation, a calling, we are like the **soldier called up**, or like **those idling away in the market place but then picked up and taken off to work in the fields**. So a Christian is called to work in the master’s vineyard. From that time on – for the rest of our short life on this earth we are called to work for him – as much as we are able.

This calling is high and upward in Christ, made in heaven by God on account of Christ. It is a call to Holiness, and we as Christians are to walk worthy of this calling Eph 4:1

What a wonderful and privileged group of people His church is. That’s is how God sees us this morning set apart in Christ Jesus called to be Holy as we call on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us continue in this, let us help each other in this, let us do what Paul did to such great effect in that commendable church in Thessalonica, he said to them: “**encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.**” 1Th 2:12

*End*