

Called To Love God

(Rom 8:28-30)

- The context is still the assurance of justification by faith

I. Rom 8:28 not universal

A) “Them that love God”

1. Why does Paul use this term, and not “them that believe?”

- i. It is set in contrast to those of the world in v.5-7
- ii. It also is in conjunction with the “called” of the same verse
 - a) This is contrary to the false dichotomy of “head” and “heart” that is so popular today
 - 1) Salvation is more than mental assent to doctrine of truth
 - 2) the 1st commandment is not limited to mind only, but includes the whole man
 - 3) James 2:19- “The devils believe and tremble”
 - b) There are only 2 classes of people in the world, and this is best brought out by circumstances and fruits
 - 1) “Love of God” brings this out clearly
 - (a) True love of God is a desire to serve Him and please Him and be found obedient to His will
 - (1) John 14:21- Love + keep commandments
 - iii. “Love” here is set in the reaction of the child of God to adversity (v.26)
 - a) Love is not simply just emotion or feelings that pass
 - 1) Matt 13:3-8 & 18-23 (Parable of the Sower)
 - (a) Professed faith often vanishes when tested, proving no love of God
 - (b) Job is the great example of true love of God in adversity:
 - (1) Job 1:20-21- Job’s reaction
 - (2) Job 2:9-10- Compare Job with his wife
 - (3) Job 13:15- “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him”
 - (c) Love of God makes the person say “although I do not understand what’s happening, I do know God is all good and loves me and is right in what He is doing”

2. Love of God is great assurance

- i. 1 John 4:19- If I love God, then that proves He loves me, and I am not a child of wrath
- ii. Eph 4:17-18
- iii. 1 Cor 2:9-14

B) “Them who are called”

1. This “calling” is the only explanation for our love of God (Rom 8:7)
2. General call -vs- effectual call
 - i. Matt 22:1-14- Parable of the feast
 - a) There are those called by invitation and those compelled
 - ii. 1 Cor 1:18-29- God has chosen and called specifically
 - a) Acts 17:30- All men are commanded to repent
 - 1) But it is God Who grants repentance
 - b) Mark 16:15- Man commanded to preach gospel to all (general)
 - 1) But does every person hearing the general call of the gospel enter glory?
 - (a) Rom 8:29-30- All the “called” here enter glory
 - (1) NO! and this in itself proves there are 2 calls
 - (b) Matt 23:37- Consider the majority of Jews who heard the preaching
 - 2) Is there any proof whatsoever that “all things work for good” to everyone that hears the general call of the gospel?
 - (a) Did “all things work for good” for Jerusalem?
 - (b) How about for the nations of the world?
 - iii. 2 Tim 1:9- “Holy calling according to His purpose”
 - a) Rom 1:1 & 7- Effectually called
 - b) Jude 1- Notice the order
 - c) 2 Thess 2:13- Notice the order
 - d) Gal 2:8- He wrought effectually in Peter and Paul
 - e) 1 Thess 2:13- He works effectually in every true child of God

II. How can we know if we have been effectually called?

A) By practical experience we can test ourselves:

1. Can I honestly say I am a Christian solely by the grace of God?
 - i. Or do I claim to have “decided for Christ”
2. Am I surprised at my Christianity? (as Paul in Eph 3:8)
3. Do I realize that something has been done to me, rather than I have done something?
4. Do I know my life has been interrupted, disturbed, and that God has intervened?
5. Do I have a sense of my having been apprehended by God, even at my resistance?
6. Have I/am I convicted in the very pleasures of sin?
7. Have I been made to see the “whore” I so loved before?
8. Am I absolutely certain that God’s word is sure even when I am in adversity?

9. Have I seen my utter helplessness and complete unworthiness in the eyes of God?
 - i. Or do I still believe I “invited Him,” or “gave my heart to Him”
10. Have I seen Christ’s complete sufficiency for me in everything?
 - i. Even when I am denied things I want?
11. Am I aware of the continual “calling” of God?
12. Do I desire more of Him (Matt 5:6, 1 Pet 2:2)
13. Have I seen God working all things for my eternal good?
14. Do I know God is dealing with me in grace?
 - i. Even when like an interfering parent at times
15. Have I found I cannot be happy in sin?
 - i. Not simply a fear of judgment, but a sincere unhappiness with my disobedience
16. Have I experienced the good of His chastisement?
 - i. Can I say like David: “It is good for me that I have been afflicted” by God?
 - ii. Can I say like Job: “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him”