

The Necessity of the External Call

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[0 : 00] Now, whether you remembered or not, we've been working through the Ordo Salutis, Latin for Order of Salvation.

! And I actually wrote it, although not very neatly, on the board.! I was trailing off here at the end. But this is the Ordo Salutis, and we started nine weeks ago, actually, with the decrees of God. Went from there to predestination and election. Tonight, we're going to start on the call of God, or the call. And we're going to be in there for the rest of December, because it's in two parts, which we'll discuss.

And then in January, we'll move into the second part of that. And then the rest is conversion, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification. So we'll spend... I know we're going to fill out this year, which ends in May, but we may even go beyond that.

And we've been calling this salvation God's way. I kind of like that title. But like I said, we've already looked at the decrees of God, and we moved into predestination and election.

[1 : 26] Tonight, we begin on the call, what I call the call. Within the Ordo Salutis, the call refers to the effectual call of God that He extends to His people.

The effectual call. The effectual call. It is referred to as regeneration. It is referred to in the Bible as being born again.

It is referred to in the Bible as being born from above. And even mentioning those tonight, we're way ahead of ourselves. We're not going to be talking about those tonight.

Because there's actually two calls. Technically speaking, the initial call is not a part of the order of salvation.

It doesn't have to happen, although it usually does. But it's not essential to the Ordo Salutis. Only the second call fits that category.

[2 : 41] And we'll be talking about that starting in January. Probably for the rest of January on just that one topic. But it is necessary for us to study both calls in order to have a clear understanding of what God is doing and how He uses these calls for His elect children.

And theologians have given these calls names by which we can identify them. One is called the external call.

And one is referred to as the internal call. And I was looking at some very old books and some of the old Puritans and old Reformers and they even referenced it that way going back hundreds of years ago.

So, we're going to be spending a considerable amount of time on the internal call. But like I say, that won't happen tonight or even this month.

Before we get there, it's going to be necessary to spend some time examining, to an extent, the external call.

[3 : 50] And that's what we're going to talk about tonight. So, I want to look at the external call. The external call is the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

God raises up men to proclaim the gospel. And these men preach the gospel to saved, to unsaved, to people that are one day going to be saved, to people that are never going to be saved.

It's a general call. And it's what the theologians call an external call. So, we're going to be talking about the proclamation of the gospel.

Now, Paul speaks of the call or the called of God several times in the book of Romans. In Romans 8.30, he says, And those whom he predestined, he also called.

And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified.

Obviously, that's the internal call.

[5 : 04] Those folks go get saved. Paul also says, For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?

So, faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. That's Romans chapter 10, verses 13 to 17. So, here Paul has reference again to the internal call by which God saves a sinner. Now, in Matthew, in the Gospels, we read these inspired words, Matthew 22, 14, For many are called, but few are chosen.

[6 : 19] That is the general call. That's the external call. There's a lot of people getting called. Not everybody's answering. They don't pick up the phone.

So, as a general rule, generally speaking, when we read about the call in the epistles, we're examining the call by which God saves his people.

So, that's the internal, effectual call of God. In the Gospels, though, we see a call, an external call, that goes out to people everywhere.

People everywhere. This external call refers to the verbal proclamation of the gospel of Christ by which sinners, and that's every human that ever lived or ever will live, are called upon to turn from their sin and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

And let me say this. The Lord Jesus Himself engaged many times in the external call.

[7 : 37] He proclaimed the gospel. The gospel was about Him. And He proclaimed it. Think of the rich young ruler. I mean, that's like fishing in a barrel.

Kid comes to him and says, how can I get saved? John MacArthur once said he was on an airplane. A guy sat down next to him. Hadn't even taken off yet. And the guy starts crying. And this guy says, and John says, are you okay?

And he said, no, I'm really not. Do you know how I can be saved and go to heaven someday? He's asking John MacArthur. I'm going, this is fishing in a barrel.

Well, the rich young ruler went away. Sad. Unsaved. Christ Jesus Himself witnessed to him and gave him that call.

So the Lord, I mean, think of the feeding of the 5,000, which is really 20,000 when you factor in women and children. That was not mass evangelism.

[8 : 43] Most of them didn't respond to the call. They responded to the food. They kept showing up. They even told Jesus one time, said, Moses fed us for 38 years.

You only gave us one meal. Can you imagine talking to the Creator like that? You only gave us one meal. Moses fed us for 38 years. Jesus quickly said, Moses didn't give you one morsel of food. My Father in Heaven provided that food. Jesus told him, my Father fed you. Let me mention some other people who engage in the external proclamation of the Gospel as has been commanded by the Lord.

Pastor Mike. Think about it. He preached to thousands of people. Preached 50 weeks a year. We got 100 people in there. That's 5,000 right there.

I'm not saying they're not repeats. Pastor Willard devoted his life to preaching the Gospel of Christ. Now, I'm fishing in a barrel here because I've already talked to these guys, but my question for both of them is, how many people under your preaching of the Gospel have you saved?

[10 : 00] Zero. Ditto. Same answer. Yeah. I remember on Larry King once, Larry King asked Billy Graham, he said, you've been preaching now since 1947, mass evangelists, millions of people.

How many people you know for certain have been saved? And he said, one. He said, probably two. I'm pretty sure on Ruth. And if I was him, I would have been pretty sure on Ruth myself.

But he said, I don't know a person's heart. I know my heart. I know my heart. But these men, and all of us really, have been called to proclaim the Gospel.

If you're a believer, you know, maybe one-on-one with somebody, but you're to share the Gospel.

Now, for our purposes in this study, there is a distinction between the call of God, which is internal, and the call of the preacher, which is external.

The internal call of the Spirit of God is given to the elect. And we're going to see that in January. And it's going to be exciting to go through. I've already started studying all that.

[11 : 14] And when that happens, it results in the salvation of a soul. It's an amazing thing to behold. Amazing.

That's why the Reformers referred to this as the effectual call. And they used a word also, the efficacious call.

I kind of like that after I looked it up. Efficacious means effectual. And there's a number of words that will describe efficacious.

Successful, productive, beneficial, valuable, useful, and there's some others. But you get the idea here.

When the Holy Spirit issues that call, it's effective, it's efficacious. because God is behind, He's behind it, and the internal call always has the effect He purposed.

[12 : 21] He purposed it. And the operative word there is always. But tonight, we're going to contrast this internal call with the external call.

The external call is given to all people without distinction and is often, or we can say probably usually, rejected. I've been privileged to share the gospel with a lot of people.

I've shared it with Muslims. I've shared it with a guy in Turkey. I asked a guy in Turkey one time if he was a Christian or a Muslim. He said, I'm both.

I said, I don't think so, but I didn't. You know, we're to share this gospel, proclaim the gospel. But this is, it often is rejected.

And that's one of the reasons the external call is not included in the order ordo salutis. That is where people are truly saved and that only occurs in the internal call.

[13 : 29] We're going to see that with vigor, as President Katie used to say, in January. But, and this is an important but, God can use the external call, such as the preaching of the gospel, as a means by which he can summon his children, summon his elect children to a place of redemption, to a place of regeneration.

so it's going to be important for us to study both of these. So again, let me, let me read you this in chapter 10 of Romans again, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Everyone. And how are they going to call on him if they haven't believed? You've got to believe.

How are they going to believe if they've never heard? How are they going to hear if we don't send them a preacher?

How are they going to preach unless they are sent? We've got to send them. And he goes on, so faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. And as this text indicates, the proclaiming of the gospel is essential to people being saved.

They have to hear the gospel. The proclamation has been made necessary because of the sin nature of all humans since Adam in the garden.

[15 : 05] That's what makes the proclamation of the gospel crucial. All people everywhere are sinners by choice and sinners by nature.

It's in all of us. Prior to our salvation, the Bible says, first of all, we were dead in trespasses and sin. That's a spiritual death.

We lived in spiritual darkness and in spiritual death. The Bible speaks of our human corruption. It speaks of our bondage to sin.

sin. If you get a copy of the lesson tonight, this is bandage, just ignore that. Our bondage, maybe we do need a bandage, our bondage to sin. In regard to spiritual things, the Bible describes humans as blind.

They're blind. We've been blinded by the spirit of this age. Christ, the light bearer, he is the light. The light of Christ came and shined in the darkness.

[16 : 15] The darkness of human sin did not comprehend it. He came to his own people and they rejected him. This is all in John.

And John's the great revealer of all this, the gospel of John. Paul, in the epistle, said he came to turn men from darkness to light by the gospel.

And it really struck me because remember how Paul's ministry started? A light blinded him. He saw that light from heaven and he couldn't see. He was blinded.

He had scales over his eyes. And he heard that voice. He heard that voice. Spiritual darkness and spiritual death mean there is a bondage of the will to sin.

and we call that spiritual inability. And remember we talked about that a few weeks ago. Our innate inability.

[17 : 21] We looked at that. Lost men are not only in bondage to sin but are willing participants to it and in it. Willing participants.

God's. Let me read some inspired passages that speak of this. Romans 8 7. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God for it does not submit to God's law.

Indeed it cannot. It's impossible for the flesh to submit to the laws of God. 1 Corinthians 2 14 We probably all have it memorized.

The natural person that's the unsaved person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They are foolishness to him and he is not able to understand them because they have to be spiritually discerned.

Only the Holy Spirit can open our minds in our hearts to the truth of the gospel. Only the Spirit of God can do that. And the natural man it sounds like gibberish.

[18 : 39] When I was a new believer I assumed that if you had a degree a doctorate in religion and taught at a state or private university you had to be saved.

I found out that wasn't true. I started listening to some of these guys. They were as far from saved as saved can be. They reject all that. Pretty amazing.

Paul wrote in Ephesians chapter 2 1 to 3 and you were dead. We talked about that. Dead. The inability to do anything. Can't do anything. Can't ask for help.

Can't roll over. Can't ask for a drink of water. Can't breathe. You were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh carrying out the desires of the body and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

What an indictment. I mean Paul just indicted basically the human race. Pretty much what he did. I think I got one more.

[20 : 05] In Ephesians 4. Now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds.

They are darkened in their understanding alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to their hardness of heart.

Alienated. So we see in these scriptures the sin nature of the lost man. And it just it's gripping and all that started in the garden when our parents chose the path of disobedience.

It poisoned the well head. Everything that flowed from that well has been tainted with sin.

Everything. I mean face it what's the first thing our parents did when they sinned?

They hid from God. I've said this many times. Where do you go to hide from God? Show me that place quick. It doesn't exist.

[21 : 14] Look at Jonah. He said well I'll go down to the bottom of the ocean. He won't be there. He was there. He was there. So our parents they fled and they created human religion so they could work their way back to God.

Fig leaf religion. They sewed fig leaves together. Now we're acceptable God. We won't be standing naked before Him. They didn't realize they were naked before Him in their sinfulness.

They were exposed. So we see in these scriptures the sin nature of the lost man. And we talked about Lazarus and how God raised him and we're going to be getting into that in January more depth.

God gave a revelation of Himself to all men and women everywhere concerning Himself in the first chapter of the book of Romans.

And I wish the whole world could just come in here right now. I really do. Romans 1 verses 18 to 21 1 for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

[22 : 44] For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. for His invisible attributes namely His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. They're without excuse. For although they knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

God has revealed Himself to every human through creation. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The heavens declare it. The firmament. It declares His glory. And yet what has man done? What has modern man done? This is really the reason for the staunch arguments against allowing any teaching of creation in our public schools.

I mean the ACLU and people like that will fight that to the death. Goes right back to Romans 1 because they know.

[24 : 16] Deep down every human knows. That didn't just happen. I mean Darwin, father of evolutionary thought, so-called, but there were guys before him. Even Darwin said, you know, he said, I'm a staunch believer in evolution but I cannot for the life of me explain the human eye.

And when I went to Dr. Lee, well I still do, it's Leslie now, he had a chart up there of the human eye. And it had thousands of pieces, all essential to sight.

And I made a comment to Dr. Lee about that and referenced, you know, Darwin's. He said, you know, you can take any one of those and do another chart over here of just that little thing.

The other thing about Darwin, he thought the human cell was like a ping pong ball, hollow, maybe with some gelatin. We now, with our level of technology right now, can recreate one cell with a cube 25 feet by 25 feet by 25 feet and filled with marbles.

that's the level of our technology right now and the complexity of the one cell which supposedly occurred when lightning hit a pool of mud and there were some amino acids created and it took off from there.

[25 : 46] I remember one female evolutionist at Harvard and they tracked it and there's like 19 billion things that have to happen for there to be a living protein cell.

And she said, boy, if I were an evolutionist, I almost think that was created. That was her comment. I'd almost think there's a creator behind that and intelligence. So, and in Darwin's in the cube now filled with marbles, our technology one day could potentially be you take one marble out and make another cube over here 25 by 25 by 25 filled on just that one part of that cell.

the further down we drill, we still see the fingerprints of God. We still see His fingerprints. God has revealed Himself in His creation to the point that men and women are without excuse for not believing in Him or seeking more light concerning Him.

I always remember they made contact with a tribe, I can't remember Africa or Asia, and this missionary befriended the chief and this tribe had been uncontacted and took a lengthy process to build trust and whatever.

Finally, he got bold enough to tell him specifically about Jesus. He learned the language and this chief said something I thought very pointed. He said, I always knew He was there but I didn't know His name.

[27 : 24] But I'd go out at night and I'd look up and I knew He was there but I didn't know what to call Him and now I do. Pretty amazing revelation. And again, the psalmist said the heavens declare the glory of God but this revelation of God is only sufficient to make men inexcusably guilty before God.

They have no excuse when they stand. Nobody's going to stand there and say, you didn't tell me about yourself. Really? Did you ever see the moon? Did you ever see the sun?

Did you ever see the Milky Way? Man is without excuse if he ever tries to tell God he had no revelation of Him.

looking at the heavens should convict men. They know God is there. They're not going to tell you that but they know God is there.

Theologians call that the God shaped void present in a man's life. And you know, I tell you in law enforcement, in the service or whatever, there's a lot of guys that claim I don't believe in God.

[28 : 41] When the bullets start, they start crying out to God. How many times have you seen that? I've pulled dying people out of wrecks that are as far from God as they can be but they're calling out His name.

God help me out of this. You know? That's what we turn to when, and then when it's all over it's like, well, I don't need Him now. I don't need Him now.

There is a God shaped void in the life of every man. But, and here we have another important but, looking at the created order and natural revelation, though important, is insufficient to overcome man's damning spiritual condition.

Our sin nature, inherited from Adam, is so strong that only God can overcome that condition by revealing to the lost man and lost woman the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It takes the Spirit of God to do that. And what is that message? It is the message of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God who was sent from heaven to save sinners.

[30 : 06] That's what we proclaim, and that's what the Holy Spirit does when He saves the soul. It is done by grace through faith. It is apart from any works on the part of the sinner.

This is the message that must be proclaimed to all men. And then let the Holy Spirit do His work. Spurgeon used to say, I witness to every creature.

When one of them gets saved, I say, boy, he's one of the elect. Look what the Spirit of God just did. The lost man can do nothing on his own to gain the attention of God, to make a move toward God, to get God on track with him.

He's not only unable to do that, spiritually, he's dead. He's dead. He's a corpse. Put him in a coffin. Listen to what Paul had to say to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. Have you ever run into that with people? I don't want to hear that.

[31 : 28] I'm not interested in that. But to those of us being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.

Where's the one who is wise? Where's the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly, word for foolishness, of what we preach to save those who believe.

But to the majority of the world, what we do, total foolishness. Now to summarize what we've been discussing here tonight, and I'll apologize in advance, I knew this was going to be a short lesson.

To summarize though, we've been discussing tonight the necessity of the external call. God commands people, men, to proclaim the gospel.

God reveals himself through creation. God reveals himself through conscience. Because deep down there's a God-shaped void, and when we're in trouble, who do we turn to?

[32 : 47] And when we're not in trouble, we go back to the pig sty. And he reveals us through Christ. Creation, conscience, and Christ.

Three C's. Haven't you been to seminary? Three C's. But neither creation nor conscience are sufficient to save a man.

And we shall see in the coming weeks that takes the Spirit of God breathing life into that corpse. The Spirit of God must breathe life into that dead man.

The Spirit of God has got to recreate those brain waves and get that blood coursing through the dead man, spiritually dead man's veins. And I'll give you a hint.

We call that being born again. More accurately, I think, in the Greek language, the word anōthen, born from above. It's a spiritual birth which comes down from God.

[33 : 51] We're going to talk about that at great length. But we're not there yet. Now, I feel really bad, but I'm going to end at this point. Because we're going to move in next time into the elements of the external call and the characteristics of the external call.

And if I start on the elements tonight, we'll get about 5% in and then we got 95% to make up. And all of this is just our journey to discuss at some length what we need to be talking about God.

And that's the internal call, part of the ordo salutis, the internal call of God by which a man is effectually and eternally saved.

And many of you and I hope all of you are here tonight that have been touched by the Spirit of God, regenerated by the Spirit of God.

It's what the Spirit of God does. And no one will spend eternity with God that has not been regenerated. You've got to be regenerated. We were generated once, we've got to be regenerated once.

[35 : 16] And that's where we're going to head when we get into January. But we'll conclude this month with the elements and the characteristics of the external call. Thank you.