

The Calling of God's People

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[0 : 00] I'd like you to open your Bibles up to Romans chapter 9.

! We've been in Romans chapter 9 for a few weeks now, and we're returning here this morning. We're going to jump in in verse 24, which is going to seem sort of strange to you because of the way that the English Standard Version punctuates this paragraph.

Verse 24 is coming in in the middle of a sentence, but bear with me, it'll be okay. We can jump in in the middle of the sentence, and we'll read down to verse 29. So if you guys would, as you find your place there, if you would stand with me in honor of God's Word, we'll begin in the middle of this sentence in verse 24, where Paul writes, Even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles, as indeed, he says in Hosea, Those who are not my people I will call my people, and her who was not beloved I will call beloved.

And in the very place where it was said to them, You are not my people, they will be called sons of the living God. And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.

For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay. And as Isaiah predicted, If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

[1 : 38] Father, we thank you for these words. We thank you for Paul and for the inspiration of your spirit, so that he wrote these words for our edification this morning.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. One of my favorite television characters, I think, probably of all time, just a guest character on a television show, but who I think is just as hilarious as the Soup Nazi from Seinfeld.

I don't know if anybody remembers the Soup Nazi from Seinfeld, but he served soup, and if you wanted soup, you had to do everything correctly as you came through his line. I mean, he's selling it, and you're paying for it, but if you did anything to offend him, if you didn't treat his soup with the way that he wanted you to treat it or follow the rules of the line, he would take your soup away from you.

No soup for you, he would say, and you didn't get any soup, and so they nicknamed him as they did almost everyone on that show. He was called the Soup Nazi, and as soon as you hear his name, his title that they've given him sort of close to the beginning of that episode, you know that this guy is going to be bad, because if you attach the word Nazi to anything or anybody, that tells you immediately, this is evil, this is bad, this is going to be malicious.

That's why today you have editorialists and politicians, they love to label their opponents, they love to label the targets of their articles, either they're like Hitler or they're like the Nazis.

[3 : 05] They love to throw those labels out there, because as soon as you say that someone is in any way comparable to Hitler or to the Nazis, you've immediately painted them into a corner, and now they're evil and bad, and that's just who they are.

Well, when you turn to the pages of Scripture, you find that the biblical writers also had their own historical referent that they could bring in if they wanted to really highlight someone's sinfulness, the evil of someone's actions, or the darkness of someone's heart.

All they simply needed to do was to mention the cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. It's all you have to do. You just have to compare someone to one or both of those cities, and immediately you know that's a dead giveaway.

These people are messed up. They have problems. They are wayward. They are evil, and they deserve God's judgment. We know that story because it occurs in the book of Genesis, but did you realize that outside of Genesis, just in the Old Testament, Sodom is mentioned 17 more times, and

Gomorrah is mentioned 10 more times in the Old Testament.

And they're not just rehashing the story most of the times when they mention those cities. They're labeling someone to be like Sodom or like Gomorrah. In the New Testament, even Jesus gets on in the action of using this terminology to really point out how bad and how wicked and how evil some people are.

[4 : 31] In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus decides to send out His disciples. He tells them He wants them to go out and preach the Gospel. And in Matthew chapter 10, He begins to warn them that they're going to be rejected by some people.

Some people will not want to hear their message. And I want you to listen to Jesus' words from Matthew 10 verse 15. He says, When that happens, Truly I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

That's bad. Jesus says, The judgment will be more bearable for these terrible, wicked cities that received God's judgment in the Old Testament if they reject the Gospel message that He sends His disciples out to proclaim.

More liable, more deserving of judgment than even these two cities. And these two cities were wicked, evil cities. I mean, God didn't send in an army to destroy them.

He didn't send in a judge or a prophet to destroy their leaders. God simply rained down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah and wiped them out and reduced them to a burned pile of rubble Himself.

[5 : 36] He didn't use an intermediary. He Himself destroyed these cities. They were so worthy of the judgment that they were going to receive. And now Jesus is able to say that their others were even more worthy of God's judgment.

What's really shocking though is that in our passage that we're looking at this morning is we see that the Apostle Paul, as he's drawing on Isaiah who does it first, Paul and Isaiah actually say that Israel herself is as bad as Sodom and Gomorrah and just as worthy of judgment.

Look at the end of our passage at verse 29 where Paul quotes from Isaiah. He said, And as Isaiah had predicted, If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

That's a quote from Isaiah chapter 1. In fact, I want you to hold your place in Romans 9 and turn all the way back to Isaiah chapter 1 because I want you to see this in its context.

I want you to see and know just how heavily Isaiah, God through Isaiah, is condemning the people of Israel at this point in time in their history. In verse 2 of Isaiah chapter 1 we read this just to give you some context.

[6 : 51] It says, Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken. And here's what God says, Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.

The ox knows its owner, the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, and my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation!

A people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly, they have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.

And then you move down to verse 9. If the Lord of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

Isaiah says very clearly, if God Himself had not intervened, if God Himself had not spared some of us, then we would have been no more.

[7 : 50] We would have been judged, we would have been condemned, just as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were. And for Paul's context, Paul is saying that if God did not intervene, that because of their rejection of the Messiah, because on the whole, at the point in time in which Paul is writing the book of Romans, on the whole, the Jewish people as a whole, with a few exceptions, have rejected Christ.

They have rejected God's Messiah. Because of that, Paul says, they are deserving of judgment.

They would have become like Sodom and Gomorrah if it were not for God's mercy in preserving a few of them, those that He calls a remnant.

Just look up a couple of verses in verse 27 where Paul quotes from Isaiah chapter 10. In Romans 9 he says, Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.

Only a remnant, only a select few will be saved, Paul says. And Paul is seeing that come to fruition in his own life and in his own ministry as he travels and preaches the gospel in city after city.

He goes to the synagogues. A handful of Jews are won over before he is rejected and the gospel is rejected and he turns to the Gentiles where many of the Gentiles receive and believe in the gospel. [9 : 15] But what Paul has seen now with his own eyes is he has seen the words of Isaiah originally intended for the people of Israel as God sent Assyria both against Judah in the south and Israel in the north and judged both of those two kingdoms originally meant for them.

Paul is now seeing the same thing played out as the people of Israel are rejecting Christ. He has seen it and he knows it firsthand. But what he also knows firsthand is that there is a remnant. He is well aware of the fact that though the vast majority of his what he calls his kinsmen according to the flesh though the vast majority of them have rejected Jesus and the gospel he knows that there is a remnant.

He includes himself later on as a part of the remnant. He says, I am one of them. I am an Israelite. He's a part of the remnant so that he knows that God in the midst of this widespread rejection of Christ God has preserved a few Paul included among them.

God has reserved a few of the people of Israel for himself so that some have trusted so that some have believed in Christ so that some are now saved though the vast majority are cut off from Christ and as Paul says, objects of wrath.

[10 : 30] Just as God had accepted Isaac and rejected Ishmael just as God had chosen Jacob and rejected Esau now Paul says God has rejected the vast majority of the Jewish people but he has he has chosen he has elected a select few a handful out of the Jewish people there is, Paul says, now a remnant and then he says as we begin our passage this morning he says in verse 24 that about this remnant these who have been chosen who have been elected who have been set apart he says in verse 24 that they have also been called notice even us whom he called not from Jews only so Paul is saying that those whom God has set his electing love upon those whom he has chosen the remnant he has also now called he has called them to faith in Christ so that we see a movement we see a movement from the issue of election or predestination to calling and then we'll see in chapter 9 verse 30 next week to the issue of justification so you move from election to calling to justification which should sound very familiar to us because that's that's the same order of events that we see in chapter 8 in fact you can just glance up if you want it's probably just one page back in your Bibles in chapter 8

Paul says that those whom he predestined he also called and those whom he called he also justified and so we have this progression in chapter 8 and now we have it in chapter 9 from predestination or election to calling and then finally to justification and the link between calling and justification is incredibly important because we know that justification only happens by faith in Christ so we know that all those that are called if they are to be justified and they are they must all trust believe in Christ and his work upon the cross which tells us that the calling of God produces faith because this is not just this is not the outward call of God that we often think of this is not merely the preaching of the gospel this is the powerful inward working of the Holy Spirit that actually brings about life it's life creating it creates life within the heart of those who are spiritually dead so that Paul can say in Ephesians chapter 2 that though we were once dead in our trespasses and sins God has now made us alive this calling actually creates life this calling actually brings faith to bear and brings it into reality into existence in the heart of those who are chosen and that's the order of God's operation that's how God works not just in Romans 8 but in Romans 9 and that's how he consistently works and moves those whom he has chosen he calls all those that he calls trust in Christ and they are justified because this calling this calling is a powerful calling God's not merely inviting people to believe and then hoping that some of them might possibly respond no God is creating life within dead hearts so that they believe just as Jesus did not invite Lazarus to come out of the tomb he commands him and immediately life floods into Lazarus' dead body in the same way when God calls his chosen people to life he creates the life within them and they believe and they trust it's a powerful calling that Paul speaks of here he says those who have been chosen the remnant of Israel the Israel within Israel he says they have been now called and we know that that calling results in faith and justification but that's not even

Paul's main point here in verse 24 that's not even the main point that he's making here he's saying something bigger than that he's saying something more than that because he refers to those who are called not from the Jews or not out of the Jews only but also from or out of the Gentiles Paul wants us to see that God's work is not merely limited to the remnant of Israel that election is not something that merely applies to the Jews within the Jewish people that God has chosen out God

doesn't only call the remnant of Israel that all those who come to have faith in Christ all those who belong to him are first chosen and then called this is the way that God works consistently not merely among the people of Israel but among all those who become a part of his people this is how God saves people this is how he rescues people whether Jew or Gentile this is how he goes about doing this great work which means that much of what Paul has said so far in Romans chapter 9 about Israel and most of what he has said about election and calling so far it doesn't merely apply to Israel it applies to us as well so that when we read that the people of Israel are deserving of judgment we ought to understand that we're not apart from that we're not separate from that if it weren't for God's mercy then we too would become like Sodom and like Gomorrah if it were not for God's life creating call then we too would be objects of wrath what makes the distinction what makes the crucial difference between those who remain objects of God's wrath and those who are rescued out of that is the same for Jew and Gentile it is the mercy giving of God that makes all the difference this is about not merely the Jewish people this is about all of God's people and what's really stunning is that as Paul continues to describe this call he quotes from the book of Hosea now he first quotes if you can look at the way the paragraph! [17:04] is sort of laid out you can see that first in verses 25 and 26 he quotes from Hosea and he quotes Hosea in reference to the calling of Gentiles and then he switches gears in verse 27 and he says Isaiah cries out concerning Israel and he quotes from Isaiah as we've already seen in reference to the calling out of a remnant from within the people of Israel so we have the calling of both Jews and Gentiles mentioned in verse 24 25 and 26 Old Testament quotation applied to the calling of the Gentiles and then verses 27 28 and 29 Old Testament quotations applied to the calling of the remnant within Israel that's how the paragraph is laid out but what is really stunning is that the passage that he quotes from Hosea in its original context was not directed at the Gentiles when he quotes from Hosea both chapters 2 and 1 when he quotes from these he's quoting passages that originally referred to the people of Israel and yet he uses them here as a basis for proving

God's calling of Gentiles some of you may remember the story of Hosea Hosea was the unfortunate prophet that God decided to make his entire life a visible lesson for the people of Israel and so he called Hosea to marry a prostitute and he said that she represented unfaithful Israel and Hosea was to represent God's actions toward unfaithful Israel and so of course she was unfaithful to him and yet he continues to show her mercy and bring her back and in fact she bears two children to Hosea and she names them Lo-Ruhamah and Lo-Ami which means no mercy and not my people those are not good names to give to your children alright it's not good to name your children no mercy it's not good to call your children not my people and yet God says to Hosea this is what you're going to name your children because I want Israel to understand that my judgment is coming upon them and they will be known as not my people they will be known as those who do not receive my mercy now Hosea is prophesying at almost the same time that Isaiah is if you read the first verses of both of those books it identifies the time in which they prophesied and it lists the same kings and so they're prophesying at roughly the same time which means

I think that when Hosea speaks of God's rejection of the people of Israel he's also speaking of the same judgment that Isaiah speaks of in Isaiah chapter 1 and later in Isaiah chapter 10 so there's judgment coming upon the people of Israel God wants them to know and so he tells them you're going to be the people who don't receive mercy from me and you are no longer going to be known as my people you'll be known as not my people but of course Isaiah speaks of God's deliverance as well Isaiah speaks of the remnant Isaiah speaks of those that God delivers out of that and so God comes again through Hosea and he says through Hosea though they have been declared not my people I've brought my judgment upon them there will be a time when I turn and call them my people there will be a time when those who are called no mercy when they will finally receive mercy from me and so Hosea is teaching the people of

Israel that God's judgment is coming he's going to reject you but then gather you to himself or at least the remnant among you he will gather to himself and you will once again be his people and now Paul sees a corollary to that Paul sees an analogy he sees that his preaching of the message of the gospel to the Gentiles and their reception of that message is very much like the mercy that God has shown to Israel at times in their past it's very much like that because the Gentiles were at one time not God's people in any way they did not receive God's mercy but now with the coming of Christ and with the preaching of the gospel all over the Roman world now Paul is seeing a people

who once did not receive mercy he's seeing them receive mercy he's seeing a people who were once not God's people they are now being incorporated into made a part of and called God's people Paul is seeing that happen right before his eyes and so he draws upon this passage from Hosea to teach us and to show us that the Gentiles are now being included while many of the Jewish people are being excluded many of the Gentiles are being included in fact when he comes to chapter 11 he'll use another analogy he'll use analogy of branches being broken off that's the Jewish people broken off the tree or the vine and then Gentiles being grafted in to that tree and Paul says that's exactly what's happening though the Jews as a whole have rejected and only a remnant remain connected and receiving life from the trunk many many Gentiles have now been grafted in and they have now become a part of that great tree which means that there are not two separate peoples of God or two separate ways of salvation there are those who teach that but that's not the case at all [22 : 42] Paul so effortlessly and smoothly is willing to use these Old Testament passages that speak of Israel and apply them to the church because he recognizes!

that the Gentiles who primarily make up the church they are! they are saved because they have now become children of Abraham which is exactly what Paul calls them in Galatians he calls them sons of Abraham this is why when the promises were originally given to Abraham that Abraham was told that it's through your seed and his seed now is concentrated in Jesus the Messiah it is through your seed your offspring that all the nations will be blessed that's why in Romans chapter 4 Paul doesn't say that Abraham and his descendants become heirs of the land of Palestine he says Abraham was an heir of the world it includes people from every nation now being brought together into this one people of God and the only way to be a part of the people of God is to be chosen to be called and to put your faith in

Jesus as a result of that call there's not another way of salvation there's not and if there's not another way of salvation for the Jewish people as opposed to the Gentile way there cannot be another way of salvation for anyone upon the face of the!

only faith and Christ saves and there is no other way to be rescued and saved and delivered and Paul says all those chosen are now the called both from among the Jews and from among the Gentiles and in this quotation from Hosea he lists for us three of the benefits of being called being among those who are rescued and delivered whether of the remnant of Israel or the vast number of Gentiles that are brought in through this calling as well he lists three out of many benefits but he lists three of them together for us right here so I want us to look I want us to zero in on verses 25 and 26 and understand the greatness of the salvation that we have been given I want us to understand how precious!

and powerful it is so let's look real quickly there are three things here he says first of all in verse 25 those who are not my people I will call my people so that's the first one we get to become a part of the people of God and secondly who is not beloved I will call beloved so that's the second you are beloved and then thirdly he says they will be called the sons of the living God so you get to become a part of God's people you can say that you are loved by God or the beloved and you can say that you are sons of the living God now consider for a moment what it means for Paul to apply all of this language not just to the remnant of Israel but to all the Gentiles who are saved by faith in Christ consider what it means for them to be included in the phrase my people now rescued and delivered out of whatever pagan background they may have had in Paul's day now rescued and delivered and made a part of the people of God in fact turn over to 1

[26 : 13] Peter if you would read quickly I want you to see this because it is so similar that I think Peter is actually drawing on the same verses from Hosea that Paul is even though he doesn't quote them directly he paraphrases in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9 he says this and he's speaking to the church here he says you are a chosen race a royal that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light once now notice once you were not a people but now you are God's people once you had not received!

mercy but now you have received mercy do you hear the same kind of language here you were once not a people but now you are a chosen race now you are a!

royal a new kind of nation composed of Jew and Gentiles a new kind of people composed of Jew and Gentiles and yet in some mysterious way the same people grafted into the same tree this is good news this means that no matter what your background is no matter what family you come from or what region you are from or what ethnicity!

none of that counts what matters is whether or nation so that we as followers of Christ we are not first and foremost Americans we're part of a different nation we are not first and foremost Texans we're part of a new people I'm not first and foremost a Trousdale whatever your family background is wherever you come from whatever you look like whatever your ancestors look like whatever may be the case none of that counts the only thing that counts is whether or not you can be said to be God's people his nation his chosen race set apart by him called by him and now trusting in his son are you a part of his people and then secondly he says that those who are a part of his people those who can be called my people are also called beloved now this to me is the most interesting of these three descriptions that we find here because we don't find this phrase in Hosea we don't this is not what Hosea says so Paul changes up he's altering the quotation slightly here from Hosea because of course in Hosea the two children were named no mercy and not my people so that in Hosea it is said that those who once did not receive mercy have now received mercy but Paul trades in the mercy language for love language here and I thought to myself as I was studying this week why would he do that why in the world would he change that I mean he's been talking about mercy so frequently in chapter 9 you would think that he would really want to include the mercy language from Hosea in his quotation why would he move away from that if he's already been emphasizing the great mercy of God and choosing a calling of people for himself why would he change the language up here we can't be sure we can't be certain about why Paul decided to make this change in the quotation but my best guess is that he wants us here to understand the intimate nature of what God has done he doesn't want this to be something distant [30 : 00] I don't think to us he wants us to understand that those who are called and those who are incorporated into the people of God that happens because God sets his covenant saving love upon us he doesn't want this to be distanced from the intimacy involved in when you say you are loved by God yes there is a general sense in which God loves the whole world in which he loves everyone but there is a much more specific sense in which he loves his chosen people he says Jacob I loved Esau I hated and now he brings that love language to the fore and says you are beloved you need to know that you are loved if you belong to God's people you need to know that you know one of the one of the one of the fun things about having a daughter after having three sons is to see just the real difference between the way that she interacts with people and the way that she acts in the ways that my boys do and some of that is chalked up to the fact that they're boys right

I mean they were out in the backyard yesterday with oranges from the neighbor's orange tree don't worry they're old nasty bitter oranges they don't want the oranges but oranges from the neighbor's tree having an orange fight and chunking oranges at each other and seeing who could peg the other one that's normal boy activity around our house and yet so some of the differences that I see are just the difference between boys and girls I suppose but I think some of the things that are different come about because one there's more space between her and the boys the boys are all roughly two years apart but she's four years younger than Eli and she's the youngest and she's the last and so she's treated as a little bit more special by them she gets special attention from all of her grandparents and all these sorts of things there is no doubt that she knows that she is loved she knows it from her brothers they'll do all kinds of stuff for her they'll get stuff for her they'll bring stuff to her they do all kinds of things for her she gets her grandparents will do things for her that maybe they might not be willing to do for the brothers you can get that yourself oh Piper you need that let me get that for you she knows that she's that she's loved you just know

I mean she can still throw her temper tantrums and do all the things that two year olds do but she just kind of knows it and one of the things that I always is that she sings all the time like I've never seen a child sing as much as she sings it's constant I've turned on the monitor when she's in her room all by herself and she's in there singing old McDonald Jesus loves me bingo I mean whatever the song that pops in her she is constantly singing all the time and I think a part of that is she just feels a sense of freedom and being loved and safe and sound and she just knows that and there's a kind of joy that she has that just kind of bubbles up and I was thinking about that this week as I thought about what does it mean to know that to have the safety and security of knowing that you're loved by the one who created all things what kind of safety what kind of sense of security and what kind of rejoicing and singing ought to just bubble up out of us because we know that we're loved we should be exploding with praise we should have difficulty containing it at times sure it's going to come out in different ways for different people because we have different personalities when we sing songs some of you might raise your hands and clap some of you might stand more still but

that's not the point the point is that there ought to be this sense of joy this responsiveness to knowing that you are now among the beloved of God you have been loved with covenant love with unending love with infinite love with saving love that delivers you out of your sin and the judgment that you deserve you have been rescued and now you stand as those beloved by God it's an incredible thing it's an incredible thing because it's so closely connected to the last term that he uses to describe what it means to be called by God he says that those who were once not his people he says there they will be called sons of the living

God sons of the living God that doesn't often hit us the way that it ought to because we've sometimes been fooled by the sentiment that all people are God's children and that's not a biblical concept that you'll find all people are God's creatures all people are made in his image and owe to him worship and devotion and ought to live for his glory but all people are not his children in fact if you look back a page in your bibles to chapter 8 we spent some time on this in chapter 8 if you'll look up to verse 14 of chapter 8 we read this about how we become children of God he says you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry Abba father father he says the spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children then heirs heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ that's who we have become once we have been called by God and responded in faith created by the call we are now his sons and ladies I don't want you to feel like you're being distanced by that terminology of sons because I think Paul's intention is to do the exact opposite because in the ancient world and still in a lot of cultures around the world today it's only sons that receive an inheritance it's not daughters that receive the inheritance in many places and in the biblical world it was sons that were heirs but now Paul says all those who are united to Christ by faith all of them are now heirs along with Christ and so all in a legal sense in the mind of a biblical writer are now reckoned to be counted as God's sons rightful heirs to all that God has because our faith unites us to Christ it makes him our spiritual brother so that now his father becomes our father now because of our union with

[36 : 36] Jesus the only son of God now because of our union with him we can in fact call God our father we are sons of the living God so all that he has and all that his son has earned and is worthy of all of that inheritance he holds out and says it belongs to you my sons my beloved my people this now is in fact yours this is all language that at one point in time was only applied to Israel in the old testament Israel is repeatedly called God's people in the old testament Israel is repeatedly called the son of God sometimes in the plural referring to the people as the children of the sons of God this is language used over and over in the old testament to simply refer to

Israel and yet now Paul says all of these things belong to all those who are called Jew and Gentile and that's it's not something that Paul is inventing it's not a concept that he's making up it's not something that he's that he's saying because it reflects his experience of the gospel being received by Gentiles it's something that comes from Jesus himself if you turn back to John chapter 10 the words are on the screen if you don't want to turn back there but in John chapter 10 Jesus says in verse 14 he says to his disciples I am the good shepherd he says I know my own those who belong to me he knows them I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay my life down for the sheep his sheep know him he knows them these are his people who belong to him but then he says this in verse 16 to his Jewish disciples he says and I have other sheep that are not of this fold that is they're not a part of the people of Israel

I have other sheep that are not of this fold and he says I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice so there will be one flock and one shepherd all the sheep of Christ scattered throughout the world whether Jew or Gentile Jesus says when I call they will hear my voice they will listen they will respond and I will make them all my people so there will be in fact one flock and I will be the one true shepherd over them all so that when you arrive at the end of your New Testament and you hear the song of the angelic creatures in Revelation chapter 5 just listen carefully to how they sing to Jesus Revelation 5 9 says they sang a new song saying worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth Christ's blood poured out for people from every tribe every language every people and every nation so that he could make them into a new kingdom a kingdom of priests to God which means that he creates us and he forms us and fashions us together so we might be people who are continually offering sacrifices of praise up to his great name that's what

he's doing that's what he's in the business of he's creating a people for himself from among every nation from among every ethnic group and he's fashioning and forming them into one people one kingdom of priests to sing his praises for all of eternity and the only thing ultimately that matters in this life is whether or not we get to participate and be a part of that great priestly choir someday for all of eternity the only thing that ultimately matters is whether or not you are among the called so how do you know if you are among the called whether Jew or Gentile whether you're of European descent or African or Asian how do you know whether or not you are among the called Jesus says my sheep know my voice it means if you respond to the gospel message then you know you are among the called if you trust in this great savior and his blood to cover your sins you are among the called so if you know now already that you are among the called if you've trusted in him if you've been justified by faith in him if you know that his blood has covered your sins then you ought to rejoice you should be among those who sense and know that they are loved you should be among those who in whom joy overflows and then to the rest I would simply say respond now to the gospel believe now in [42 : 13] Jesus trust in him and you will be saved and you will turn and look back and you will know you were among the called believe in him rejoice in him seek him with all your heart and you will know you're among the called let's pray voy voy voy!

voy! voy!