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Sermon Notes

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## **Salvation's Ongoing Work: Hearing and Calling**

**Romans 10:13, 17**

### Introduction

Many people have a static view of salvation, as though it were an object that you obtain, and once you have IT, then you've got IT forever!! IT is some inanimate thing, needing no care, making no progress, looking the same to day you die as it was the day you first obtained it

But salvation is a living thing... it can grow and make progress; indeed, it **MUST** grow and make progress

The purpose of this sermon is to help you understand two of the most vital forces at work in your life for the rest of your life, helping your salvation to reach its full completion. These forces are described in two key verses in Romans 10:

*ESV Romans 10:17 ...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

*Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Most Christians think of these two verses as related just to the very beginning of the Christian life... "Getting saved"... actually, God intended these to stay with you for the rest of your journey with Christ here on earth

The two dynamics of the Christian life: Hearing the Word, Calling on the Name of the Lord

In this way, we are able to make progress in our salvation

Let's look a little closer

### I. The Various Parts of Salvation

A. Salvation Comprehensive Scope: Saved from Everything Sin Has Done to Us

1. Christ's mission

2. Saved from sin's penalty
3. Saved from sin's pollution
4. Saved from sin's power
5. Saved from sin's practice
6. Saved from sin's presence

#### B. Salvation's Time Aspects

1. Salvation is past: "We have been saved"... thus there is an instantaneous moment of salvation
2. Salvation is present: "We are being saved"... thus, there is an ongoing work of salvation in our lives NOW every day
3. Salvation is future: "We will be saved"... not only tomorrow and all the rest of the days of our lives, but on that great and final day, JUDGMENT DAY... BOTH are covered in Romans 5:9-10

#### C. Salvation's Portions:

1. Salvation's Beginning: Justification
2. Salvation's Progress: Sanctification
3. Salvation's Completion: Glorification

Key Question: What resources has God made available to sustain us and carry us and energize us and protect us and empower us until this immense salvation work is done in our souls and around the world?

I believe there are two key postures for the individual soul that are essential to the ongoing salvation work God is doing in each Christian

***ESV Romans 10:17 ...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***

***Romans 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

First, our faith must be nurtured if it is to survive and thrive... and that nurture comes through hearing the word of Christ

Second, our trials and tests and struggles and sufferings are so overwhelming, and our opposition so mighty that we will not survive unless we are constantly calling on the name of the Lord in prayer... specifically asking God again and again to show Himself mighty to save us

## II. Faith is Sustained and Grows by Hearing (vs. 17)

*<sup>ESV</sup> Romans 10:17 ...faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

### A. The Origin of Justifying Faith: The Word of Christ

1. When the Gospel of Christ is proclaimed with clarity, faith springs up in the heart
2. The Holy Spirit gives the souls something to latch onto and uses it as the basis of justifying faith
3. They hear the story of Christ's birth by the Virgin Mary, of the miracles that He did: of walking on the water, stilling the storm, healing the paralyzed man after proclaiming that his sins were forgiven, of calling to Lazarus to come forth from the tomb... they hear of Christ's incredible teachings: His astonishing Sermon on the Mount, His "living water" and "bread of life" teachings in John's Gospel; they hear of the events of His death, and all the prophecies He fulfilled by shedding His blood on the cross; they hear of His mighty resurrection from the dead on the third day, how the women saw the angel who proclaimed, "He is not here, He is risen, just as He said." And finally, they hear His appeal, "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" or "Come to me, all you who thirst, and I will give you living water" or "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest..."
4. AND WHILE THEY HEAR ALL THESE TRUTHS FROM THE WORD OF CHRIST, FAITH IS CREATED IN THE DARKNESS OF THEIR HEARTS... faith in Christ, faith in His name, faith in His blood

***2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

### B. The Sustaining Food of Faith: The Word of Christ

1. I am here arguing today that the faith that justified you at the beginning of your Christian life is the exact same faith that will carry you the rest of the way
2. I am arguing here today that that same Word that gave birth to your faith will sustain it till the day you die
3. All living things need FOOD...

Every living thing on Earth needs energy to survive; this energy comes from food. Although some forms of life (like plants) can make their own food, most living things need to eat food to get energy.

Green plants make their own food by photosynthesis... using the sunlight to generate energy and to feed... they combine sunlight, oxygen, carbon dioxide and water to do this... but they need minerals from the earth: nitrates, phosphates, and potassium

All other living creatures must feed on plants or animals in order to survive... this elaborate system of feeding is called the food chain, just one more evidence of the amazing wisdom power of Almighty God, our creator and sustainer

PSALM 104: After the Psalmist celebrates the wide range of diverse life that God has created and sustains every day: everything from whales to rock badgers to lions to man himself

***Psalm 104:27-28 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. <sup>28</sup> When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.***

4. Our faith in Christ is a LIVING THING... it needs the FOOD of the WORD in order to survive and thrive

**Martin Luther :** For some years now I have read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.

**I study my Bible like I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest may fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf. I search the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb - study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings.**

5. Goal of our reading: lively fellowship with Jesus Christ, suitable for the days challenges
6. Is your faith weak? Is it waning? Is it anemic and unable to meet the challenges of your life? FEED FEED FEED on God's Word
  - a. Have you forgotten the beauties of heaven?
  - b. Have you forgotten the purity of God's holy eyes?
  - c. Have you forgotten the blessedness of having God reward you for deeds done by faith?
  - d. Have you forgotten the value of the souls of perishing people around you?
  - e. Have you forgotten the power of prayer to heal the sick and move the hands of presidents and prime ministers?

- f. Have you forgotten the reality of the invisible spiritual world constantly around us? Of angels and demons battling over human souls?
- g. Have you forgotten the perfection of God's holy law? Forgotten that it has been written in your heart and God is moving you to obey it?
- h. Have you forgotten the history of godly men and women who lived their lives as an example to us?
- i. Have you forgotten the warning inherent in the flood of Noah, in Sodom and Gomorrah, in the plagues on Egypt, and the judgments on Jewish unbelievers?
- j. Have you forgotten God: His sovereign power? His tender compassion? His perfect justice? His longsuffering?
- k. Have you forgotten Christ—His blood poured out on the cross? His prayers poured out at the throne?

If you have forgotten all this, your faith is weak and you need food!

Eat the word! Feed on the word!! Read the Bible every day, that your faith may be sustained

Illus. John Piper, "Orange Juice" every day

### C. The Great Threat to our Faith

#### 1. Our faith needs protection

- a. Clear example: Simon Peter the night of Christ's arrest
- b. Jesus warned them of Satan's demand, and of Christ's protection

***Luke 22:31-34 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." <sup>33</sup> But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."***

- c. Notice that Christ prays for Simon's faith, that it will not fail
- d. Notice that Christ prays TO THE FATHER for Simon's faith
- e. Notice also that He warns Peter about the threat to his faith: Satan's demand to sift them like wheat
- f. And notice that He speaks a word to Peter that he WILL deny Christ three times

g. When Peter denied Christ, it was, among other things, Christ's word to him that brought him back

2. Satan still demands to sift us like wheat

a. Satan is the "god of this age"

b. His specialty is blinding hearts against Christ and His word

c. Satan has set us a toxic world system, which is directly opposed to our faith in Christ

d. Therefore, as long as we are in this world, we are in grave danger, as in a war zone

e. YOUR FAITH IS THE DAILY SUBJECT OF THE DEVIL'S ATTACK

***1 Peter 5:8-9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.***

We are in grave danger from Satan while we live in the world

Thus our faith needs ONGOING CONSTANT protection and sustaining

Our faith is a living thing, and it needs to be tended, nourished, fed and bolstered

The same word of Christ which gave birth to our faith is designed to sustain it for the rest of our lives

D. Hearing Christ Speak Today

1. By the Spirit

2. By the Word

3. Two Key Passages

a. Deuteronomy 8:3 [Matthew 4:4]

***Deuteronomy 8:3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.***

i) Scripture hadn't been written yet, at the time of the manna

- ii) Yet, the Israelites were being trained in learning to rely only on the word of God... to be led step by step by God's command
- iii) This, Moses says, was to humble them to teach them that bread is only a means to an end
- iv) We live and move and have our being by the Word of God above all else

b. Hebrews 3:7-8

***Hebrews 3:7-8 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion***

- i) First: The Holy Spirit speaks TODAY
- ii) Second: The Holy Spirit speaks through Scripture
- iii) Third: The Holy Spirit speaks concerning one theme: HEART OBEDIENCE TO SCRIPTURE
- iv) Thus: the word of God is living and active in our lives every day, but especially as we gladly obey its commands
- v) God the Holy Spirit specifically communicates by opening up the Bible's truths to our minds and pressing them into our hearts
- vi) Some people seek immediate guidance by the Spirit apart from the Bible

**George Muller: I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions. If the Holy Spirit guides us, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.**

Bottom line: Feed your faith day after day by the word of God

Study it, Read it, Meditate on it, Memorize it, Obey it

### III. Calling on the Name of the Lord Every Day (vs. 13)

Some Christians think Romans 10:13 is just for the "sinner's prayer"... the beginning of the Christian life

But I am contending here today that "Calling on the Name of the Lord" to save us is the constant state of the Christian for the rest of his or her life

## A. Review: What Does it Mean to Call on the Name of the Lord?

### 1. Name of the Lord

- a. His Character
- b. His History
- c. His Promises
- d. His Son

### 2. Calling on the Name of the Lord

## B. Robinson Crusoe's Text

***Psalm 50:15 call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."***

Charles Spurgeon once preached a sermon on this very topic and called it "Robinson Crusoe's Text." He began like this:

"Robinson Crusoe has been wrecked. He is left on the desert island all alone. His case is a very pitiable one. He goes to his bed, and he is smitten with fever. This fever lasts upon him long, and he has no one to wait upon him—none even to bring him a drink of cold water. He is ready to perish. He had been accustomed to sin, and had all the vices of a sailor; but his hard case brought him to think. He opens a Bible which he finds in his chest, and he lights upon this passage, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." That night he prayed for the first time in his life, and ever after there was in him a hope in God, which marked the birth of the heavenly life."

Spurgeon then applied this powerfully to us in prayer:

"God and the praying man take shares .... First, here is your share: "Call upon me in the day of trouble." Secondly, here is God's share: "I will deliver thee." Again, you take a share—for you shall be delivered. And then again it is the Lord's turn—"Thou shalt glorify me." Here is a compact, a covenant that God enters into with you who pray to him, and whom he helps. He says, "You shall have the deliverance, but I must have the glory...." Here is a delightful partnership: we obtain that which we so greatly need, and all that God getteth is the glory which is due unto his name."

## C. The "Day of Trouble": What We Face the Rest of the Way

***Psalm 50:15 call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."***

***John 16:33 In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."***



1. "Trouble" first for salvation
  - a. You realize the ultimate "day of trouble" is Judgment Day
  - b. You realize that you cannot survive Judgment Day without Christ
  - c. So you call on the name of the Lord for salvation from the guilt of your sins
  - d. BUT THAT IS NOT THE END OF YOUR TROUBLES
  - e. Jesus clearly indicated that trouble still awaited His believing disciples the rest of the time they remained in the world
  - f. So in John 17 He prayed most urgently for the spiritual safety of His disciples who would remain in the world

***John 17:11-12 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-- the name you gave me-- so that they may be one as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.***

***John 17:14-16 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.***

2. "Trouble" in Sanctification: The Struggle with Sin
  - a. One of the greatest struggles and troubles that remains for us is the constant battle with sin
  - b. The flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit wars against the flesh
  - c. Satan launches well-thought-out and well-timed attacks on our souls
  - d. Satan also orchestrates a world-system which constantly appeals to our lusts and our pleasures to drag us into the muck of sin and causes us immeasurable pain
  - e. Thus we must call on the name of the Lord during temptations

Perhaps a man has a habit of looking at internet pornography; in former generations, this deadly images would have been kept in a certain seedy district of only the big cities

Now the miracle of modern technology brings them right into the privacy of people's homes

Once the habit takes root, how can the man escape?

Jesus made the deadly nature of lust so very clear:

***Matthew 5:28-29 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.***

At the moment of truth, when the temptation comes violently seeking to destroy your soul, what can you do but call on the name of the Lord: HELP ME JESUS! KEEP ME SAFE! DELIVER ME! SHOW ME THE WAY OF ESCAPE!

- Perhaps a person is overcome by selfishness and materialism... when they look at the record of their expenditures on the credit card report, they become convicted that they have lived for greed; Before even another dollar is spent on selfishness, the Christian has to fall on their knees and call on the name of the Lord
- Perhaps another person is struggling with depression and loneliness... dark thoughts plague them, thoughts of abandonment and fear; thoughts of the worthlessness of their lives; Satan begins to whisper death by suicide into their ear. They must call on the name of the Lord: HELP ME JESUS!! Satan is attacking NOW
- Perhaps someone is getting lazy in their daily quiet times; the alarm rings early, and they know this will be their best chance to read the Word and pray all day... but the flesh rebels and yearns for more sleep; "I CALL ON YOUR NAME, LORD! SAVE ME FROM LAZINESS AND SINFUL SLEEP! GET ME UP! GET ME MOVING!!"
- Perhaps another person has a habit of anger toward someone in their family—a wife, a husband, a rebellious son or daughter; as life's daily challenges unfold, the person is tempted for the umpteenth time to respond in anger and to display their sin nature; I CALL ON YOUR NAME JESUS!!! HELP ME TO LOVE MY FAMILY! GIVE ME WISDOM AND LOVE!
- Perhaps someone else is weak in evangelism... they are too afraid to speak a word for Christ to their co-worker; the Spirit moves and convicts the Christian: "Today, you must speak to your office-mate about the Lord... no more procrastination—do it TODAY!" Beads of sweat form on their forehead and they begin to feel like a trapped animal! No the office-mate comes in and sits down at his desk... it's lunchtime, and fair opportunity to talk about sports or the upcoming weekend—but the Spirit has a different mission. HELP ME LORD! HELP ME TO BE FAITHFUL AND TO SHARE THE GOSPEL! APART FROM YOU I CAN DO NOTHING... I CALL ON YOU TO CONQUER MY FEAR!
- Perhaps the Lord is calling on you to get involved in a ministry at church, or to give a sizeable donation to support a missionary, or to stay up late at night and pray for a brother or sister in need... but the ugly ogre of selfishness rears its

wretched head once again; the flesh rebels and the battle is joined; HELP ME JESUS! I CALL ON YOUR NAME NOW TO SAVE ME FROM MY SELFISHNESS! WITHOUT YOU I CAN DO NOTHING... MOVE IN ME NOW!

#### D. The Deadly Habit of Self-Reliance

1. Part of sin nature... to trust in yourself
2. Message constantly reinforced in our culture

American Psychological Association put out a pamphlet on raising positive kids in a negative world

**The APA/Time for Kids effort advises children to:**

- \* Have friends and be a friend.
- \* Take charge of your behavior and actions.
- \* Look at the bright side.
- \* Set new goals and make a plan to reach them.

And the key to it all?

**\* Believe in yourself and what you know you can do.**

3. America has always admired the self-reliant
  - a. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century: The mountain man, who could trek in the American West for months alone, facing howling blizzards, raging grizzlies, hostile Indians, and swollen whitewater rivers without ever needing assistance from anyone
  - b. Self-made man or woman... “rags to riches” story of pluck and determination, of looking inward and finding there all the resources you needed
  - c. The settler who travels across a continent to find good farmland for his homestead, and who settles a days’ ride from his nearest neighbor
4. But Scripture consistently opposes this self-reliance when it comes to relating to God
5. God will save us in a way that humbles our pride... so that no one can boast in front of Him

6. Salvation is a long process... therefore EVERY STEP OF THE WAY must be accomplished by humble reliance on God, and thus by calling on the name of the Lord for everything
7. God's hatred of self-reliance was made brutally clear in the issue with the generation of Jews who refused to enter the Promised Land
  - God had promised to give that land to Abraham and his descendents
  - Joshua sent out twelve men to spy out the land
  - When the spies came back, they all reported how beautiful and bountiful the land was... from the Valley of Eschol, they brought back a single cluster of grapes so large that it had to be carried on a pole by two men
  - But the people heard ten faithless spies spread a bad report about the land:

***Deuteronomy 1:27-28 The LORD hates us; so he brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us. <sup>28</sup> Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose heart. They say, 'The people are stronger and taller than we are; the cities are large, with walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites there.'"***

- Then these ten spies made a fatal error: they looked INWARD to see if the resources were there to conquer these awesome adversaries... and they said NO! And they spread a bad report about the land and about the Lord
- Two of the spies, however, Joshua and Caleb, did not look inward for the resources, but rather by faith they looked upward... they were willing to CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD for assistance in fulfilling the promises of the Lord
- These two faith-filled warriors tried to persuade the people to trust in God, but they were unable to overcome the fear spread by the ten unbelieving spies
- The people turned against Joshua and Caleb, against Moses... they spoke of stoning him, and against God
- So God in His anger stated: "Not one of these men who have rebelled against me, who have refused to believe my promises, will enter the Promised Land... but their children will. Now turn around and wander in the desert until every last one of you is dead."

- When the people heard this, they were grieved, and changed their minds... they decided it would actually be easy to go into the Promised Land and conquer the people there
- For the second time, they made the fatal error of looking inward, of trusting in themselves! Only this time, they looked inward and decided they DID have what it took to conquer the Promised Land

***Deuteronomy 1:41-45 Then you replied, "We have sinned against the LORD. We will go up and fight, as the LORD our God commanded us." So every one of you put on his weapons, thinking it easy to go up into the hill country. <sup>42</sup> But the LORD said to me, "Tell them, 'Do not go up and fight, because I will not be with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.'" <sup>43</sup> So I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled against the LORD's command and in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country. <sup>44</sup> The Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you; they chased you like a swarm of bees and beat you down from Seir all the way to Hormah. <sup>45</sup> You came back and wept before the LORD, but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you.***

Friends... the lesson is the same either way: self-reliance is deadly!!

The first kind of self-reliance involves looking inward and NOT seeing the resources you need to succeed... and that leads to DESPAIR

The second kind of self-reliance involves looking inward and SEEING the resources you need to succeed... and that leads to ARROGANCE

Either way, God is left entirely out of the picture... even though He is the center of everything

FAITH learns to turn away from self and to look upward, to CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD and trust in Him to be strong and powerful and faithful to His promises

#### E. Learning Humble Dependence

1. Essence of sin: self-reliance and independence from God
2. Christ's message: total dependence on Him

***John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

3. God's plan of sanctification: put you in situations where you must learn to trust Him totally

***2 Corinthians 1:8-10 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure,***

*far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. <sup>10</sup> He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us*

4. God's intention: call on His name again and again and again!!
5. Understand: We are still in need of salvation

#### IV. Applications

##### A. Concerning Hearing the Word of God

Diagnostic questions:

- 1) How much time do you spend every day in active bible study?
- 2) When was the last time you read through the Bible?
- 3) Is your life characterized by a steady intake of the word of God?
- 4) When you hear the Lord speak to your heart by the word and the Spirit, do you obey Him or harden your heart?
- 5) Do you have a lively sense of the invisible spiritual world around you?
- 6) Do you have a lively sense of the future worlds where people will spend eternity—heaven and hell?
- 7) Do you feel spiritually energetic or spiritually weak?
- 8) Do you ever meditate on God's word, savoring it and working on it to receive maximum benefit?
- 9) Do you ever memorize God's word, a book or passage of the Bible?
- 10) Do you have a strong sense of daily communion with Christ?

##### B. Concerning Calling on God's Name

- 1) Do you have a strong sense of total dependence on Christ for your daily life and your spiritual health?
- 2) Do you frequently call out for Christ to help you in times of temptation and weakness?

- 3) Do you feel confident that certain sins (like lust and greed and laziness and pride and anger) are no problem in your life, or do you fear the damage they can do to you?
- 4) Are you constantly vigilant about them in prayer or do you take for granted that you'll be fine in the end?
- 5) Do you ever use the idea of "Once saved, always saved" as an excuse for laziness in calling to Christ for help in time of need? Do you ever use it as a cover-up for sin in your life?
- 6) Do you ever ask anybody to pray for you concerning a spiritual weakness or struggle in your personal life?
- 7) Do you have a track record of many specific prayer requests for spiritual victories in your life?
- 8) Are you characterized by a quiet humility concerning your battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil?
- 9) Would you say you tend to rely more on yourself than you do on God when it comes to the daily Christian life?
- 10) Have you called on the name of the Lord for salvation from today's sins?