

Call On The Lord

It was a seemingly normal day that has had everlasting effects on our planet, on human history, and on the eternal world to come.

Genesis 4:25-26 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.

Life was going on as usual ... and then, at some point, for some reason, men and women began to call out to God. That has had a more profound influence on our world than anything else you can imagine.

Cain and his descendants had become wicked, self-sufficient, independent of God – and that ungodly seed was about to dominate history. So God raised up a godly seed in Seth, who had a son named Enos. And then, without any of the tools, methods, techniques, music, or understanding we currently use to get in touch with God, people got a revelation that God was not just their Creator. Somehow, through some kind of trouble – we don't know what – they found out that if you are in trouble and you call on the Lord, He will answer you! He will intervene in your situation! And the only way He will do this is if you call on Him!

It starts at this point, and it is a theme that runs through the entire Bible. The word for “call” means “to cry out, to entreat, to call out to, to beseech, to beg, to plead, to call out with all of your heart.” Later, the word developed another meaning – “to praise, to worship, to extol with your voice, to exalt, to honor, to celebrate.” And eventually, the word developed this meaning – “to tell abroad, to call out and communicate with another person, to tell somebody else.”

The first people in the Bible who were called God's people were not called Christians or Jews. The first people who ever belonged to God were called “those who call on the name of the Lord.” The origin and root of everything we are doing today began with people calling on God. And then, as God responded, they began to praise Him with all of their heart. And then, they began to go to other people and say, “Have you heard about the God who answers when you call on Him?” “Well, we believe that there is a Creator.” “No, the Creator is a God who actually hears you when you call on Him – and He can do something about your situation!”

1 Chronicles 4:10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

It doesn't matter what your situation is; throughout the Bible God continually says, CALL ON ME AND I WILL ANSWER YOU! He is entreating us to entreat Him; He is calling on us to call on Him!

Forget North American Christianity! Forget the religion you were raised in! Forget what you've learned by hanging around a Pentecostal church! There's some meat there, but there's a lot of bones as well. This original episode is the benchmark, the plumbline, the pattern for a relationship with God – CALL ON ME AND I WILL ANSWER YOU! When you don't know what to do, I'll tell you what to do! When you're ready to throw up your hands, throw them up to Me and call on Me – and I will help you! That is how religion began ... and God has never changed!

Look at the patriarchs in the Old Testament ... Abraham built an altar and called on the name of the Lord (Genesis 12:7). Isaac built an altar and called on the name of the Lord (Genesis 26:25). Jacob built an altar and called on the name of the Lord (Genesis 35:7). Long before Moses was given the pattern for the tabernacle, the Ten Commandments, the law, or the Old Testament pattern of worship, men and women were calling on the name of the Lord!

When Abraham went down to Egypt unwisely, he ran back to that altar where he first called on the name of the Lord (Genesis 13:4). That's the way it is when we backslide – you always have to get back to that altar where you first started calling on the name of the Lord.

This became the distinguishing mark of God's people everywhere. That's why Moses, in his great sermon in the book of Deuteronomy, said this:

Deut. 4:7 For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?

Other nations might have had better weapons of warfare, but they didn't have what Israel had – a God who heard them when they called!

Psalm 18:3 I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

Psalm 18:6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Psalm 55:16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.

Psalm 86:5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Psalms 86:7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

Psalms 116:2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Psalms 118:5 I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

Have you discovered it yet? God draws near to you when you call on Him! You may be in the worst trouble you can imagine; you may have messed up in your life; you may have backslidden in your relationship with God ... but the moment you call Him, He's right there!

Psalms 145:18 The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

No wonder this has become Satan's entire strategy to deceive the human race for 6000 years – don't call, don't cry! Be clever, be organized, plan a lot, depend on talent and technology, but don't call! The devil is not the least bit afraid of our best human efforts, but what he really gets scared of is when we lift up our hands, our hearts and our voices to call on the name of the Lord.

It has always been the sign of God's people that they call on the Lord and He answers. But all bets are off if we don't call on the Lord! There's not a promise in the Bible that works if we don't call on the Lord!

This was the way the Old Testament prophets operated – remember Elijah and the prophets of the false god Baal? Not only does it matter THAT you call, it matters WHO you call on! What proved that God was God? The fact that He answered when Elijah called!

1 Kings 18:24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

David was a man way ahead of his time; it was like his heart was in the New Testament, but his body was stuck in the Old Testament! He was a man after God's own heart. Here is what he said:

Psalms 4:3 But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

Who are the godly? Those who call on the name of the Lord! David said, "You can do anything you want to me. Fight against me. Talk about me. Persecute me. But when I call on my God, look out! Because my God hears me when I call!" Who are the ungodly? The very definition of evil doers in the Bible is those who DON'T call on the name of the Lord!

Psalms 14:4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.

Isaiah 64:6-7 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

Sinners will do a lot of good things, but they will not humble themselves, they will not recognize God's lordship over their lives, and they will not call upon the name of the Lord. But that's not the way it is with us!

Psalms 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

God wants "fresh praise" from our lives, and He gets that when we call upon Him in our times of trouble. Have you ever noticed that, when we start to backslide and forget to call on the Lord, He tends to send us more trouble so we can see just how smart we really are? Trouble is one of God's greatest servants; it reminds us how much we need the Lord.

HERE IS THE BIBLE'S DEFINITION OF REVIVAL:

Psalms 80:18 So will not we go back from thee: **quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.**

If we're not calling on the name of the Lord, it's not revival – no matter what else we're doing! Revival happens when we get sick of the status quo and CALL! The Holy Spirit IS the spirit of prayer – when we have Him in our hearts, we will call on the name of the Lord continuously! Prayer is better caught than taught! Revival is better caught than taught! Evangelism is better caught than taught! We have to call on the Lord! God will not adapt Himself to our culture, our customs or our comfort zone. We still have to call on the name of the Lord!

Jeremiah 29:11-13 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

THE CHURCH WAS BORN IN A PRAYER MEETING! Why? Because God will never change! Because He still wants us to call on His name! Does it bother anyone that the church was born in a prayer meeting, and today prayer meeting is the worst attended service in most churches – if they even have a prayer meeting?!

We have parents who get all upset because they don't allow prayer in schools, but they never bring their kids to prayer meeting at church! They didn't have prayer in first century Roman schools – but the church called on the name of the Lord! The political figures of the first century were more corrupt than anything you can imagine today, and yet you don't see Paul wringing his hands in worry – the church just called on the Lord! How can anything stop God's purpose when the church calls on Him?!

You know why we blame all these external situations for our problems? Because we are trying to divert attention from our weak prayer lives! There is no worry about the world in the pages of the New Testament – the church was commissioned to CHANGE the world! How can anything stop God when His people let Him loose in His church?

God is not interested in our excuses; all He wants to know is, “Are you going to continue the long line of people calling on the name of God?” Do you long to see God let loose in His church? Do you love the presence of God? If not, why would God ever let you go to Heaven? That's all there is in Heaven! If you don't crave the presence of God, it doesn't matter what doctrine you believe, you are not a New Testament Christian!

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

The New Testament Christians did all of this by instinct; if we don't have the same inborn instincts, we may be a club but we're not a church! God's people call on the name of the Lord! If we are to build the church God wants to have in Fredericton, it's “Holy Ghost or bust!”

Our mistake is that we TALK about our problems to each other when we should PRAY about them to God! CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD!

In Peter's message on Pentecost, he summed up the last days with one verse (and then defined “call on the name of the Lord” in Acts 2:38):

Acts 2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.