

God Calls You to Proclaim the Forgiveness of Sins

Acts 10:34–43

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I've talked a lot about being called by God. Other people talk about following their calling in life. Some folks will say they've been called to be singers, or artists and they are following their passion. There are those who are called to be doctors, nurses, teachers, or firefighters.

Too often we think of calling as a career. But, God's calling is places you right where He wants you, doing exactly what He wants you to do. One of my sons has been called into law enforcement. He knew it from childhood. My other son has been called by God to be a good husband, dad, step dad, and step granddad. He is very good at it.

You may have been called to work in an office or a factory or on a street crew or a construction site or to the military. Can you see that where you are and what you are doing in life is part of God's plans and purposes? As you seek God's will for your life you will find that you are exactly where God wants you and you are doing exactly what God wants you to do.

Acts 10:34–36 (NLT) Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

The Good News is unpretentious, anyone can be at peace with God. Peter had only been reaching out to Jews, but quickly he proclaimed Jesus to non-Jews. Peter had received a vision from God. It was a strange vision to us and it was also to Peter. In the vision God revealed to Peter through images of food that things once forbidden are now acceptable to God. This was because Jesus had removed the barrier that sin had created. In the vision Peter realized that non-Jewish people can also be forgiven by calling upon the name of Jesus.

Then Peter went to a man named Cornelis who is a non-Jew or what they called Gentiles. He proclaimed the Gospel, then the people believed in the name of Jesus. That is praise the Lord, thank you Jesus stuff. God has crossed over the racial, ethnic, and culture differences. There are no barriers to God's love. There are no walls to God's grace. There is no stopping the mercy of God.

God demonstrates that He wants to be at peace with everyone. Even though we started the war by sinning against God, His desire is to restore the relationship. Our lack of peace with God is our overwhelming desire to live without Him. When we choose our cravings over God's love, then a battle breaks out within us. We are continuously pushing to get away from God, while He is constantly calling us back to Him. Who's the one who's fighting, and who's the who's trying to make peace?

Can you see all the people around you need to be at peace with God? Just think about yourself and the conflict you create with God. Praise the Lord, if you've been saved by the name of Jesus. With your own awareness of sin, rebellion, and disobedience you are also able to see how others are at war with God. It explains the thought patterns and attitudes of lots of people. We can understand why people do what they do: they're at war with God. They are seeking to live without God. They are caught up in all the ideas about personal satisfaction, selfishness, and their own desires.

Not much has changed since the Garden of Eden when the serpent told Adam and Eve that they could be like God. They would know good and evil. What happened was they liked the short-term effects of their own desires, but despised the long-term impact on their bodies, minds, and spirits. They knew evil and it excited their desires. But they regretted the consequences of their decisions and actions. There's a battle if I ever heard of one.

We all know many folks who get excited about Satan's temptations. He makes them look so good that we can't resist on our own power. Then we suffer the consequences with regret. You see it, right?

Acts 10:37–38 (NLT) You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

I know and you know, but the world needs to know Jesus. Jesus is working out good things in your life and he is healing you. If you've been saved you know the first good thing Jesus did was forgive your sins. You may have never been a really bad person: a bank robber, but you've justified taking something that didn't belong to you as being okay. You may have never done anything truly terrible: flying into a rage and killing someone because they took your lawn ornaments. You may not have sold drugs to a young person: but you won't stop swearing, cursing, ridiculing, mocking, criticizing people.

Jesus forgave all those sins, and in God's eyes you've been washed clean by His blood shed on the cross. The nails driven through His hands and feet, the crown of thorns that stabbed His head, the spear that pierced His side all caused blood to be shed. His blood, His body, His death was the only sacrifice that would take away our sin, our guilt, and our shame from our life of sin.

When you believe in Jesus' name as your Savior and Lord you are forgiven. You are made clean. You are forgiven and welcomed into God's family. This is the good work of God.

Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, continues to work in your life. Christians aren't forgiven then left alone to sin over and over again. Christians receive a new life that is at peace with God. All the old wounds produced by sin are healed by Jesus. All the bad thoughts and attitudes are healed in Jesus' name. All the desires to push away from God are healed in the name of Jesus. This is God's perfect plan for my life and your life.

Every Christian, those who have called upon the name of Jesus, are empowered by the Holy Spirit. Our desire to seek our own desires, to hunt down pleasure giving activities, is overcome in Jesus' name by the Holy Spirit. You are victorious. You are filled with the Holy Spirit. You are a child of God.

Too often we're caught up in our world and can't see how Jesus can work through us to help others. As Christians we may not always see Jesus at work in our lives, but we want to believe it. We may not even see the troubles others are experiencing. But, the same God who raised Jesus from the dead, has brought life to every believer. This same God is victorious over sin and evil in every nation, every culture, every race, and every community.

Jesus can speak into the heart of your family members. Jesus can tear down the walls around your friends. Jesus can open the window into the lives of your neighbors and co-workers. The healing every Christian has received can heal every sinner. The hope that has entered the lives of every

Christian can live within every sinner. The power that is transforming the lives of believers can change the lives of sinners.

This same Jesus can make anyone victorious. Jesus will send His Holy Spirit to anyone who confesses His name. The Holy Spirit will empower all who call upon Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Acts 10:39–41 (NLT) “And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Our witness is just as important as the witness of the apostles, Jesus has forgiven all of us. The heart of the Gospel is Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead to give us new life. As a Christian you are a witness to that new life. You have died to your sins. You were buried with sin in baptism and raised to a new life in Jesus Christ. This is your witness, the new life you have in Jesus Christ.

Peter was a changed man. All his life was about him, fishing, and making a living. Does that sound familiar? Does that sound like the people in your family, your neighborhood, your workplace? Of course it does because that is how most people live their lives. Day after day people are going through the motions at work. They have some hobby that might be fishing or watching TV. Whatever it is, life is about them, what they do and what happens to them.

The Holy Spirit is speaking to you. He is and has been teaching you about Jesus and all that He wants you to do. The Holy Spirit is empowering you through the temptations and the challenges of daily of life. You are living as a person in the midst of a spiritual transition. You are not the same today that you were yesterday, last week, or twenty years ago. You have new desires, even though the old sinful stuff keeps coming back. You have heard the Holy Spirit speak to you, or nudge you and you have responded. You are living out the truth that you read in the Bible. You are seeking to live as a missionary in this community.

Since we are born again, saved, redeemed, delivered and renewed we are witnesses of Jesus' forgiving grace. But we take it too lightly. We don't think we have much to say to the horrors of the world we live in. We don't believe that our experiences can speak into the lives of sinners. We hold back as if we are less than those who have come through great trials.

Your salvation is unique to you because you are unique. God created you with distinct personality traits. You have characteristics that are unlike any other person. Your sin is your sin. Every person sins. Each individual is responsible for their own sin. You are not responsible for my sin, and I'm not responsible for yours. I can't pay the penalty for your sin.

The way Jesus saved you is unique to you. Jesus saved everyone who believes in Him. Jesus saw your sins He died and rose from the dead for you to be forgiven. Jesus has seen the sins of every person. He will save each one from their specific sins.

My unique salvation and your unique salvation form our testimony of forgiveness. My salvation is not at risk. The Holy Spirit has guaranteed it. Your salvation is not at risk. The Holy Spirit has guaranteed it. But our testimony includes the moment we gave our lives to Jesus and every moment since then.

We can all speak about God's grace in our daily lives. We can all talk about how His grace has lifted us up, and carried us through every temptation and every challenge in life.

Acts 10:42–43 (NLT) And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”

Follow orders and tell everyone they can be forgiven in Jesus' name. You are called by God to share His grace, the forgiveness of sins. We've been called out of the corruption of this generation to live as a witness of God's grace. This is the decision to see our sin and its destructive nature in our lives. This is the choice to confess and repent of our sins. We've been called by God to share His scriptures, letting them speak the truth into the hearts of those who hear.

Your daily life is driven by a few different passages of scripture. They form your new way of thinking and acting as you walk through each day. These passages lead you to other Bible verses about the power of Jesus to save sinners from the penalty of sin. You can speak these words during your day.

Now God gives you orders, assigns you a job, gives you a mission. That mission is tell others who are caught by sin that Jesus will forgive them for making war with God. Jesus will also empower them to live without sin in this world.

Where you live, where you work, where interact with people are all part of God's plans. If you believe that God created this world, then you can believe that God will put you where you can give a testimony of His blessings. Everyone of us is in this community because this is were God wants us. Your past experiences have made it possible for you to see God's guiding hand upon your life. Through God's grace you and I have the opportunity to live each day for God's glory. We have the opportunity to go about our activities with the light of Jesus shining through us. We will meet people everyday. In those encounters the Holy Spirit will prompt us to be silent or to speak. You and I need to follow the orders of the Holy Spirit.

I know that God has prepared you for His mission. He has given you everything you need in the past. He will give you everything you need in the future. You will be filled with love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. I have prayed for these things be seen in your life. I will continue to pray for these things to come out of your mouths.

Jesus is inviting you to follow Him. He is calling you to put aside your sin, your selfishness, your battles with God. He knows that you are a sinner. He wants to save you from the eternal punishment of the battles you have had with God. He doesn't want you be separated from God forever, but to be at peace with God. He is waiting for you to admit your sin. He is waiting for you to turn away from your sin. He is waiting for you to turn to Him. Today, make that confession, repent, and turn to Jesus.