

## He Called You By Our Gospel

Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 1988

### 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

*“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

I'd like you to turn in your Bible for our Scripture reading today, to Second Thessalonians Chapter 2: verses 13 and 14. While you are finding the Scripture let me announce my subject; I'm preaching on the subject: "HE CALLED YOU BY OUR GOSPEL."

In Second Thessalonians 2:13, Paul writes; *“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto He called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

I like nothing better when I try to preach the Gospel than to set forth in the introduction some things that are certain, sure and as positive as the very throne of God. I'm going to give you in the introduction to this message, four things that are as certain, and are as sure, as the Bible is the Word of God, as certain as God reigns in heaven and earth.

These things are sure! You take note and if you would like to, jot them down. Here is the first one: I am confident, very confident, that the Scripture teaches that salvation is the gift of God. Do you have any doubt about that? Salvation and redemption are the gifts of God. That glorious blessing lifts a man from the dunghill and washes him. That glorious blessing sanctifies him and makes him a new creature and takes him to the presence of God perfectly conformed to the blessed image of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation and redemption are the very gifts of God Almighty. That is what the Bible says.

In Romans 6:23, the Scripture says; *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* In First John 5:10, the apostle John rebukes men for calling God a liar. You say, “There are men who call God a liar”? Certainly, John said; *“When we do not believe the record that God hath given concerning His Son, we make God a liar.”*

He says in the next verse, *“This is the record that God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

Our Lord Jesus said on one occasion, *“My sheep hear My voice and I give them eternal life.”* He didn’t say, “I sell it to them, or I lend it to them, or I will let them have it for a certain length of time and take it back.” He said, *“I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all. No man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are One. My sheep hear My voice; they follow Me and I give them eternal life.”*

You see, *“A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above.”* Paul said this, *“Who maketh thee to differ? What do you have that you did not receive?”* From whom did you receive it? You received it from God. How did you receive it? You didn’t work for it, and you didn’t earn it. You certainly didn’t deserve it. You received it as a gift of God. *“A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above and who maketh thee to differ? What hast thou that thou dost not receive? Now, if you just receive it; why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”*

My friends, to be perfectly frank with you, repentance itself is the gift of God. The Scripture says, *“God hath granted repentance to the Gentiles.”* God hath granted repentance. Another Scripture says, *“It is the goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance.”*

If I have felt a godly sorrow because of my sins, if I have wept before God because of my sins, if I have genuinely repented before God over my sins, then that is the gift of God. That is the work of the Spirit of God within me that made me willing to confess my sins and follow Christ.

I will tell you this, *“Faith is the gift of God,”* not only repentance, but faith. These are inseparable. You can’t have genuine repentance without faith, and you can’t have genuine faith without repentance.

If a man turns to God, he will turn from his idols. If he turns from his idols, he must turn to the living God because any other God would be an idol. So, faith itself is the gift of God; *“For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast.”*

Faith is not a flower that blooms in the natural heart of men. *“Faith is the gift of God.”* So, this indeed is the truth according to the Word of God that *“Faith is the gift of God,*

*repentance is the gift of God, and all of salvation from beginning to end is verily the gift of Almighty God.”*

The Scripture of Scriptures regarding our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the blessings, spiritual blessings that we have in Him, led the apostles to declare, *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift (for His incomprehensible gift). “Thanks be unto God!”* All right, that was the first one and is beyond question that salvation is the gift of God.

Second: According to the Scriptures, this salvation and this redemption is the gift of God. A lost sinner is lifted from a spiritual grave. He is lifted from a grave of inability and unwillingness, corruption, defilement and depravity and is translated into the kingdom of God. He is made like the Son of God. The whole of that work is of the Lord and of Him only. That glorious work of salvation is purposed by God in Christ, before the world began.

Now, that is what I just read to you from Second Thessalonians 2:13. Paul said, *“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.”*

Someone said, “Well, I’ve heard of election and that is Presbyterian doctrine or Primitive Baptists’ doctrine or hard-shell Baptist doctrine or some other kind of Baptist doctrine.” No, my friends, no sir; election and sovereignty are not Presbyterian doctrines, Baptist doctrines or hard-shell doctrines; this is the Word of God.

*“What saith the Scriptures?”* Look at Second Timothy 1:8. The apostle Paul is sitting in prison and is writing to a young minister called Timothy and he says, *“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God.”*

Paul is saying to Timothy, “Don’t you be ashamed of the Gospel of our Lord; don’t be ashamed of the offense of the Gospel, the hated Gospel, the Gospel of God’s glory. Don’t you be ashamed of it and don’t you be ashamed of me, His prisoner.”

He says, “Timothy; you be ready yourself to bear the afflictions, and persecutions, and harassments that come from preaching the Gospel. You be ready to do that.” He says; *“The Gospel is of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath saved us and called us with a Holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Jesus Christ before the world began.”* That is what the Scripture says.

This salvation which is the gift of God, was decreed, purposed, and planned by Almighty God before the world began. That is what that is saying. In Ephesians 1:3, read this with me; Paul said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, according as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.”*

*“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.”* God said, *“I declare the end from the beginning.”* God said, *“I purposed it; I’ll do it. I’ve spoken it and I will bring it to pass.”* I’m saying that whatever takes place in time in reference to God, and Christ in salvation and His people and kingdom, whatever takes place in time was decreed, and purposed, and foreordained from all eternity. That is what the Word of God teaches.

You see; His covenant is an everlasting covenant. These are the dying words of the Psalmist of Israel, King David, when he was talking about his hope and salvation. He didn’t base it on what he had done for God. He didn’t base it on the Psalms he had written, the victories he had won, the battles he had won, the battles he had fought or the nations he had conquered.

When old David was dying after all those years of walking with God, a man after God’s own heart, these were his words; He said, *“All though it be not so with my house, God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and this is all my salvation, and all my desire although He make it not to grow.”*

Here is David resting his hope and confidence of eternal happiness on a Covenant, an Everlasting Covenant that God made with him, and for him, and in Christ. In Hebrews 13, he said, *“God who brought again from the dead, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.”*

His Book of Life is the Book of the *“Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”* That is what the Scripture says, these people’s names were not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

His elect are chosen in Christ *“From the foundation of the world.”* The glory of the Redeemer is eternal. When He prayed in Gethsemane’s Garden, in John 17, He said; *“Father glorify Me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”* He was our Redeemer, our Lamb, our Surety, and our Substitute before the world was. Before there was a sinner, there was a Saviour, chosen by God, ordained by God, and anointed by God.

His Kingdom is from the beginning. At that great day He will say to those on His right hand, *“Come ye blessed; enter into the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.”* This is in Matthew 25:34. I will tell you this; this is as certain as God reigns, as certain as the Bible is the Word of God, *“Salvation is the gift of God.”* Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, totally and completely from beginning to end.

Not only that, but this salvation, this gift of God was purposed, decreed, and planned before the world began. Now, listen carefully, according to the Scriptures these are truths. This is so; *“Salvation is a gift of God.”* Salvation is decreed, designed, and purposed from all eternity.

Third: According to the Scriptures, salvation is sure and certain. It is just as certain and sure as God’s promise. That’s right! I hear men arguing about being *“Once saved, always saved.”* They like to argue about that. They like to argue about eternal security. They like to argue about *“Once in grace, always in grace.”*

Listen to me, that is all a wasted effort. Let me tell you something, now listen to me; the security of God’s sheep, the security of God’s people, the security of every person in the Kingdom of God is inseparably, always inseparably, connected with God’s purpose and God’s grace in Christ Jesus.

I’ll show you that in the Scripture. Listen to Romans 8:28, Paul said; *“I know, and we know that all things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to His purpose: For, whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: And whom He did predestinate, He called, and whom He called, He glorified and whom He justified, He glorified.”* So, whom the Lord purposed to save, He called. Whom He purposed to save, He justified. Whom He purposed to save, He glorified.

Those who are glorified are those whom God purposed to redeem. The glorification of God’s people is inseparably joined to God’s purpose. Listen to John 6:37, the Lord says this; *“All that My Father giveth Me, shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.”*

In other words, those who truly come to Christ will never be cast out because the Father gave them to Him. He said, *“I came down from heaven not to do My will, but the will of Him that sent Me and this is the will of Him that sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me; I will lose nothing: But, I will raise him up again at the last day.”*

Paul, writing to the church of Philippi in Chapter 1:6 said; *“I’m confident, (fully persuaded), that He which hath begun a good work in you, shall perfect it, shall perform it, (complete it and finish it) in the day of Jesus Christ.”* In Malachi 3:6, He said, *“I am the Lord; I change not.”*

He doesn’t change in His purpose, in His plans or in His callings. *“The gifts and calling of God are without change.”* That is what Romans 11:29 says, *“The gifts and calling of God are without change.”* He said in Malachi, *“I am the Lord; I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed.”*

What are you saying preacher? I am saying this, God purposed to save those whom He gave to Christ. He purposed to save those for whom Christ suffered, bled, and died. God purposed to save those whom the Holy Spirit calls and regenerates. He makes new creatures in Christ and brings them to a saving faith and they shall never perish. They will never perish. *“My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.”*

*“No man is able to pluck them out of My hand.”* No creature, or no power can pluck them out of His hand. *“My Father gave them to Me.”* You see, the security of God’s sheep is always inseparably connected with the fact that God gave them to Him. He said, *“My Father gave them to Me, and no man can pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”*

He is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, and the Chief Shepherd. I will tell you this; the Shepherd will never lose His sheep. If He lost a sheep, He wouldn’t be the Great Shepherd. If He lost a sheep, He wouldn’t be the Good Shepherd, nor would He be the Chief Shepherd.

My friend, these things are true. This is according to Scripture. Salvation is the gift of God. Salvation is eternally planned, purposed, and decreed by Almighty God. He cannot fail. Christ cannot fail. This salvation is sure and certain.

Fourth: According to Scripture, the God of salvation, the Eternal God of salvation purposed to have a people. He chose us in Christ Jesus from every tribe, kindred, nation, and tongue under heaven. He sent His Son to be our surety. He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and He will call you, if you are His sheep. He will call you by His Gospel.

I read that in the text, *“Beloved; He said, “I give thanks to God for you because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; Whereunto He called you by our gospel.”*

Do you remember when I read Romans 8:29? It says, *“To whom He did foreknow, He did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son and whom He predestinated, He called.”*

In Second Timothy 1:8-9; He said, *“Don’t be ashamed of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath saved us and called us with a Holy calling not according to our works but according to His own purpose in Christ Jesus given us before the world began.”*

In Galatians 1:15, Paul said this; *“When it pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace.”* Don’t be mistaken, God will cross your path. He will call you, if you are one of His own.

Election is not salvation, it is unto salvation. You see; when the Bible talks about election, (I’ll give you some clues here); and when the apostles wrote, talked or preached about election, it was with thanksgiving. Here in our text He said, *“I’m bound to give thanks for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you.”* I give thanks.

In Ephesians 1: when Paul wrote about the election of God’s people said, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath chosen us before the foundation of the world in Christ.”* Bless God!

One day our Lord Jesus Christ was contending with the Pharisees, and Sadducees, and the Sanhedrin. They were trying to trap Him in His talk, and trying to turn the people’s hearts away from Him. Our Lord finally lifted His eyes to heaven; that is what Matthew 11: says, *“He lifted His eyes to heaven and He said; ‘I thank you Father, Lord of heaven and earth because you hid these things from the wise and prudent, and You have revealed them to babes. I thank you Father.’”*

Thank God for His elective grace. Thank God for His predestinating purpose. Thank God that Jesus Christ was given to us. Thank God, He loved us. We never would have loved Him, *“Herein is love not that we love God; He loved us.”* If He hadn’t of chosen us, we would have never chosen Him.

Tis not that I did choose Thee,  
For Lord that could not be.

This heart of mine would refuse Thee,  
But Thou hast chosen me.

He loved me and He called me. He called you if you are one of His sheep. Thanks be unto God!

Election is a doctrine of thanksgiving; it is a doctrine of love, *“Beloved of the Lord.”* Election is an object of His affection, an object of His mercy. It is a doctrine of eternal grace; it is from the beginning. It is a doctrine of salvation, unto salvation.

It is a doctrine of means *“Through sanctification of the Spirit.”* The Holy Spirit regenerates; the Holy Spirit quickens. The Holy Spirit gives ears to hear, a heart to believe, and eyes to see the glory of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that awakens a dead sinner. *“You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.”*

The Holy Spirit sets us apart and takes the seed of the Word which is the truth and grants unto us faith in that truth, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. A man must hear the Gospel. Election is unto salvation; *“Whereunto He called you by our gospel.”*

*“He must needs go through Samaria.”* Why must He go through Samaria? There is one of His sheep there. *“The Son of Man must be lifted up. Other sheep I have, them I must bring. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”*

*“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* This *“Whosoever”* that is awakened by God, is troubled and convicted by the Holy Spirit through hearing the Word of God. This *“Whosoever”* that shall call out of his misery, out of his inability, out of his sin, out of his depths, *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.”* Whosoever shall call upon His redemptive name, His glorious name, His saving name, shall be saved.

Paul says in Romans 10: *“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, but how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How are they going to believe in Him of whom they have not heard? How are they going to hear without a preacher? How are they going to preach except they be sent?”*

You may be a young lad listening to me there just like Timothy. Timothy learned the Gospel sitting at the knee of his mother and grandmother. That is what Paul said, *“From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures that are able to make thee wise unto salvation.”* Timothy learned the message of the Scriptures from his grandmother Eunice, and his mother Lois.

You may be a religious teacher like Saul, a Pharisee, a legalist, a moralist who didn't know God. God sent him a preacher. Ananias said, *"God of our fathers have chosen thee Saul, that thou mightest know His will and see the Just one."*

You may be a businesswoman like Lydia, who traveled from Thyatira to Philippi. She wandered down there by the riverside and met God's preacher, and God opened her heart, and she attended to the things spoken by the apostle Paul.

You may be an important official like the Eunuch traveling down from Jerusalem to Ethiopia. God passed his path with Phillip, and preached the Gospel to him.

You may be a runaway slave like Onesimus. You may be a jailor like the man in Philippi. I will tell you this, you will and you must hear the Gospel. Ephesians 1:13 says, *"In whom you trusted, after you heard the Word of Truth."*

We're not just talking about hearing something religious. I am talking about hearing the Word of Truth. You have to hear who God is, what happened in the garden, and who Jesus Christ is. You have to know what He did, why He did it and where He is now. *"How can God be Just and justify? How can He be clean that is born of a woman? Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in His Holy place? If Thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity, who would stand?"*

If a man sins, who is going to stand for him? *"Who shall deliver me from this body of death? If a man dies, shall he live again?"* I tell you, there are so many questions. There are so many vital issues. *"In whom you trusted (in Christ) after you heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom after you believed you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."*

You might say, "Preacher, what can a sinner do; what can a lost sinner do?" Let me give you about four things:

First of all: He can seek the Lord. Cornelius did. You have to hear the Gospel and hear the truth, the Word of God and seek the Lord; Cornelius did.

Second: You can read the Bible; the Eunuch did. He was sitting there in a chair reading the Bible. He didn't understand what he was reading, so God sent him someone to show him. He believed on Christ, and God met him.

I will tell you something else, you can go where the Gospel is preached, Onesimus did. He ran away from Philemon, but he ran right into the arms of the apostle Paul in Rome, in jail. He sat at his feet and heard him preach the Gospel.

What can a sinner do? He can cry for mercy, the publican did. *“God be merciful to me the sinner.”* The thief on the cross did. *“Lord, you’re not going to stay dead, you are coming into your Kingdom. Remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”*

Oh, God chose His people. He chose them from eternity to salvation, but through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, *“Whereunto He called you by our gospel.”*

Have you heard, have you heard God speak through His Word?