

Lesson #4

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

I called upon Jehovah, who is worthy of praise...

2 Samuel 22:4

- I. Calling on the Name of the Lord**
- II. Calling on the Name of the Lord in the Old Testament**
- III. Practiced by the New Testament Believers**
- IV. The Purpose of Calling**

Calling on the Name of the Lord

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

What is the meaning of calling on the name of the Lord? Some Christians think that calling on the Lord is the same as praying to Him. Yes, calling is a kind of prayer, but it is not merely praying. The Hebrew word for call means to call out to, to cry unto, to cry out. The Greek word for call means to invoke a person, to call a person by name. In other words, it is to call a person by naming him audibly. Although prayer may be silent, calling must be audible.

Two Old Testament prophets help us to see what is meant by calling on the Lord. Jeremiah tells us that to call on the Lord means to cry to Him and to experience spiritual breathing. "I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, from the lowest pit. You have heard my voice; do not hide Your ear at my breathing, at my cry" (Lam. 3:55-56). Isaiah also tells us that our calling on the Lord is our crying to Him. "God is now my salvation; I will trust and not dread; for Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. Therefore you will draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation, and you will say in that day, Praise Jehovah; call upon His name!...Sing to Jehovah...Cry out and give a ringing shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 12:2-6). How may God become our salvation, our strength, and our song? How can we draw water with rejoicing from the springs of salvation? The way is to call on His name, to praise the Lord, to sing a hymn, and to cry out and shout. All of these match the calling mentioned in verse 4!

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Calling on the Lord began in the third generation of the human race with Enosh, the son of Seth (Gen. 4:26). The history of calling

on the Lord's name continued throughout the Bible with Abraham (Gen. 12:8), Isaac (Gen. 26:25), Moses (Deut. 4:7), Job (Job 12:4), Jabez (1 Chron. 4:10), Samson (Judg. 16:28), Samuel (1 Sam. 12:18), David (2 Sam. 22:4), Jonah (Jonah 1:6), Elijah (1 Kings 18:24), and Jeremiah (Lam. 3:55). Not only did the Old Testament saints call on the Lord, they even prophesied that others would call on His name (Joel 2:32; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9). Although many are familiar with Joel's prophecy regarding the Holy Spirit, not many have paid attention to the fact that receiving the outpoured Holy Spirit requires our calling on the name of the Lord. On the one hand, Joel prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit; on the other hand, he prophesied that people would call on the name of the Lord. This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17a, 21). God's outpouring needs the cooperation of our calling on Him.

PRACTICED BY NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS

Calling on the name of the Lord was practiced by the New Testament believers beginning on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:21). While Stephen was being stoned to death, he was calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 7:59). The New Testament believers practiced calling on the Lord (Acts 9:14; 22:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22). Saul of Tarsus received authority from the chief priests to bind all that called on the name of the Lord (Acts 9:14). This indicates that all the early saints were Jesus-callers. Their calling on the name of the Lord was a sign, a mark, that they were Christians. If we become those who call on the name of the Lord, our calling will mark us out as Christians.

Paul the apostle stressed the matter of calling when he wrote the book of Romans. He said, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him; for whoever

Verses

Genesis 4:26

And to Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time [men] began to call upon the name of Jehovah.

Deuteronomy 4:7

For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Jehovah our God is whenever we call upon Him?

2 Samuel 22:4

I called upon Jehovah, who is worthy of praise, / And from my enemies I was saved.

Zephaniah 3:9

For then I will change [the language] of the peoples / Into a pure language / That they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, / To serve Him with one accord.

Acts 2:21

... And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Acts 7:59

And they stoned Stephen as he called upon [the Lord] and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!

Acts 9:14

And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Your name.

2 Timothy 2:22

But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:12-13). Paul also spoke of calling on the Lord in 1 Corinthians when he wrote the words, "With all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2). Furthermore, in 2 Timothy he told Timothy to pursue spiritual things with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2:22). By all of these verses we can see that in the first century the Christians practiced calling on the name of the Lord very much. Therefore, throughout the Old Testament as well as in the early days of the Christian age, the saints called on the Lord's name. How regrettable that it has been neglected by most Christians for so long a time. We believe that today the Lord wants to recover calling on His name and to have us practice it so that we may enjoy the riches of His life.

THE PURPOSE OF CALLING

Why do we need to call on the name of the Lord? Men need to call on the name of the Lord in order to be saved (Rom. 10:13). The way of praying quietly does help people to be saved, but not so richly. The way of calling loudly helps people to be saved in a richer and more thorough way. Thus, we need to encourage people to open themselves and to call on the name of the Lord Jesus. Psalm 116 tells us that we may partake of the Lord's salvation by calling on Him: "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (v. 13). In this one Psalm, calling on the Lord is mentioned four times (vv. 2, 4, 13, 17). As we have seen earlier, the way to draw water from the springs of salvation is to call upon the name of the Lord (Isa. 12:2-4). Many Christians have never called upon the Lord. If you have never called, even shouted before the Lord, it is doubtful that you have enjoyed the Lord in a rich way. "Call upon His name!...Cry out and give a ringing shout" (Isa. 12:4, 6). Try shouting before Him. If you have never shouted about what the Lord is to you, try it. The more you shout, "O Lord Jesus, You are so good to me!" the more you will be released from your self and filled with the Lord. Thousands of saints have been

released and enriched through calling on the name of the Lord.

Also, by calling on the name of the Lord, we can stir ourselves up. Isaiah 64:7 says, "And there is no one who calls upon Your name, who stirs himself up to lay hold of You." When we feel that we are down or low, we can lift and stir ourselves up by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus.

Another reason for calling on the Lord is to be rescued from distress (Psa. 18:6; 118:5), from trouble (Psa. 50:15; 86:7; 81:7), and from sorrow and pain (Psa. 116:3-4). People who have argued against calling on the Lord have found themselves calling on Him when they were subject to a certain trouble or illness. When our lives are free from trouble, we may -argue against calling on the Lord. However, when trouble comes, no one will need to tell us to call on Him; we will call spontaneously...

Romans 10:12 says that the Lord of all is rich to all who call upon Him. The way to enjoy the riches of the Lord is to call upon Him. The Lord is not only rich, but also near and available, because He is the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b). As the Spirit, He is omnipresent. We may call on His name at any time and in any place. When we call on Him, He comes to us as the Spirit, and we enjoy His riches.

First Corinthians is a book on the enjoyment of Christ. In chapter twelve, Paul tells us how to enjoy Him. The way to enjoy the Lord is to call on His name (12:3; 1:2). Whenever we call "Lord Jesus," He comes as the Spirit, and we drink of Him (12:13), the life-giving Spirit. If I call a person's name, and if he is real, living, and present, that person will come to me. The Lord Jesus is real, living, and present! He is always available. Whenever we call on Him, He comes. Do you want to enjoy the Lord's presence with all His riches? The best way to experience His presence with all His riches is to call on His name. Call on Him while you are driving on the freeway or while you are at work. Anywhere and anytime you may call. The Lord is near and rich to you.

-(extracted from *Calling upon on the Lord*)

Romans 10:12-13

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord [is] [Lord] of all [and] rich to all who call upon Him;

13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Psalm 18:6

In my distress I called upon Jehovah / And cried out to my God. / He heard my voice from His temple, / And my cry before Him came to His ears.

Psalm 50:15

And call upon Me in the day of trouble: / I will deliver you, and you will glorify Me.

Psalm 116:3-4

3 The bonds of death encompassed me, / And the distresses of Sheol fell upon me; / I fell upon trouble and sorrow.

4 But I called upon the name of Jehovah. / O Jehovah, I pray, deliver my soul.

1 Corinthians 15:45

So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam [became] a life-giving Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:3

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus [is] accursed; and no one can say, Jesus [is] Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.
