

December 9, 2015

God's Divine Procurement

2 Peter 1:3c (NASB), **“through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”**

We have learned that God has given us **“divine power”** and He has also **“granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness.”** The logical question then becomes: “How does a person experience or obtain those to the fullest extent?” In today’s passage from 2 Peter 1:3 we see that the apostle Peter answers that question: **“through the true knowledge of Him.”** **“Knowledge”** is the Greek word *epignosis* which refers to a knowledge that is deep and genuine. The word sometimes is used interchangeably with the more basic term *gnosis*, which means simply knowledge. But Peter is referring to more than a superficial knowledge of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Christ Himself warned of the peril of having an inadequate knowledge of Him, even for those who minister in His name.

In Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus said, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”**

Personal saving knowledge of the Lord is the obvious beginning for believers, and as with everything else in the Christian life, it comes from only one source and that source is **“Him who called”** them. John 3:27 says, **“A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.”** Theologically, God’s call comprises two aspects: the general call and the effectual call.

The *general call* is a call which comes through the proclamation of the gospel: it is a call which urges sinners to accept salvation. John 7:37 says, **“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.’”**

This message, the message of the gospel is in the Greek called *kerygma*, is to be proclaimed with boldness, with authority and it is not to be optionally debated, contains three essential elements: (1) It is a story of historical occurrences: Christ died, was buried, and rose from the dead. (2) It is an authoritative interpretation of these events – a theological evaluation. Christ died for our sins. (3) It is an offer to **“whosoever will”** – an ethical summons. It is the call to repent and to believe!

The general call is to be freely and universally given. In Matthew 28:18-19 Jesus said, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”**

The effectual call is efficacious; that is, it *always* results in salvation. This is a creative calling which comes alongside the external proclamation of the gospel; it has the power to deliver one to the divinely intended destination. John Murray wrote in *Redemption-Accomplished and Applied* “It is very striking that in the New Testament the terms for calling, when used specifically with reference to salvation, are almost uniformly applied, not to the universal call of the gospel, but to the call that ushers men into a state of salvation and is therefore effectual.”

Romans 8:30 is the vital passage in reference to the effectual call. **“And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.”** The efficacious call is immutable, this means that it insures our perseverance. Romans 11:29 says, **“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”**

As in all appearances of this call in the epistles, Peter’s use of **“called”** here clearly refers to the effectual and irresistible call to salvation.

God effects His saving call through the revealed majesty of His own Son Jesus Christ. Sinners are drawn **“by”** the **“glory and excellence”** of Jesus Christ. In Scripture **“glory”** always belongs to God alone. Therefore when sinners see the glory of Christ they are witnessing His deity. Unless through the preaching of the gospel they realize who Christ is, and thereby understand their need for repentance, so as to come to Him in faith, pleading for salvation, sinners cannot escape hell and enter heaven.

So, when God draws a sinner to Himself, they see not only Christ’s glory as God, but also His **“excellence”** as a man. All salvation blessings, power, and provision come only to those who see and believe the words and acts of the sinless God/Man.