

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON # 20 (Q2LES7) – EFFECTUAL CALLING QUESTIONS # 31 & 32

1. Prayer

2. **Bible reading:** Ephesians 1: 1 – 18

3. **Review:** In our last lesson we began our look at the application of Redemption to believers. We learned that we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ by the effectual application of it to us by God's Holy Spirit. We learned that God's Spirit applies redemption to us by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling. We also learned about God's visible and invisible church. God's invisible church is all of His elect, from all times. God's visible church all who profess belief in the true God. Members of the visible church may or may not be saved.

4. **Introduction:** In this lesson we will learn about "effectual calling". Effectual calling is introduced in SC q30, and the discussion of it continues through the next 6 questions. Today we will look at SC questions 31 and 32, which deal with what effectual calling is, and the benefits which the elect receive from it in this life.

5. Questions:

Question 31: What is effectual calling?

Answer: Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Question 32: What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

Answer: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

6. Effectual Calling, a Look at the Words

- a. Effectual calling sounds like a fancy name for something. What is “effectual calling”? Let’s see what my trusty Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary has to say about it:
- b. Effectual. Anyone like to take a shot at it? “effectual” “effectively, efficaciously; in a manner to produce the intended effect...”
- c. Calling. Any takers on this one?
 - “The act of one who, or that which calls”

The second definition was more interesting.

 - “Divine summons, state of being divinely called”
- d. So, just from the definition of the words, we could interpret “effectual calling” as “an effective summons from God” Not to bad of a start, but there is more to it than that.
- e. The dictionary actually had a definition of “effectual calling”. It defines effectual calling as “in Calvinism, the agency of the Holy Ghost, through Christ, in the scheme of salvation.” It’s much more than that also.

7. EFFECTUAL CALLING

- a. Remember where we start, from an estate of sin & misery (SCq17)
- b. The SC q31 says effectual calling is, *“the work of God’s Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.”*
- c. The LC has a much expanded definition. It says, *“Effectual calling is the work of God’s almighty power and grace, whereby (out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he doth, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his word and Spirit; savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.”*
- d. Whose work is effectual calling? Let’s look at what these two definition are telling us:

- The SC says EC is the work of God's Spirit. (2 Thes 2:13 ***"But 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:"***)
- The LC says EC is the work of God's almighty power and grace. (1 Peter 5:10 ***"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."***)

The SC says the work of God's Spirit. The LC says the work of God. Is this a contradiction?

No. The LC is dealing in a more general sense (power & grace), while the SC, intended for a not so intelligent an audience, applies the "work" directly to the Holy Spirit.

- e. The LC reminds us here that it is God's gift because of His "free and special love", and not from anything we do which moves God toward this special gift.

It is a gift from God because of His love for us, and not because anything we do, any work we perform, can make us worthy of this gift.

The WCF, c10p2 says, *"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."*

- f. It also notes that God does this "in his accepted time". What does this indicate?

- It will happen when God wants it to.
- It is not instantaneous, it is a gradual evolution.

- g. What are the two factors at work which draw us to Christ?

- God's Holy Spirit
- God's Word

(2 Thes 2: 13 - 14 ⁽¹³⁾*"But 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:*⁽¹⁴⁾*Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*)

- h. How do these factors work within us?

- Convincing us of our sin and misery. Give us clear sight and full persuasion of our guilt, and feeling of apprehension of God's wrath. Has anyone here ever met anyone who was convinced they were pretty good people, and God would save them by their good deeds? (**Acts 2:37** *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*)
- Enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ. **By the use of the Word**, the Spirit enlightens us: That Christ **only** can save, and that he is all sufficient to do so. That Christ is willing to save all that come to him. (**1 Cor 2: 10-12** ⁽¹⁰⁾*But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.* ⁽¹¹⁾*For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him: even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.* ⁽¹²⁾*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*)

h. "Renewing our wills"

- Remember what we have learned about our wills. Back in lesson 9, when we discussed Question 13, we talked about three types of will. We determined that man, after the fall had only the will to do evil.

Without Christ, man has the will to do only evil.

- What effect do the efforts of God's Spirit and the effect of God's Word have on our will?

LC q 67 says, in part, *"renewing and powerfully determining their wills,"*

WCF, c9 (Of Free Will) p4 says, *"When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth no perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil."*

So, by the work of God's Spirit, and the effect of God's Word, our wills are renewed, until, at that time when God's calling becomes effective, that time which God determines, we once again have received the will to do good, and can answer God's call.

- i. WCF, c10, (Of Effectual Calling) p 1 says of effectual calling: **"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out**

of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His Grace.”

8. Ineffectual Calling

a. Since there is effectual calling, is there ineffectual calling?

- The WCF, Chapt 10, para 4 say in part: “Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved:...”
- TV says - “Ineffectual calling is the bare external call of the word, whereby all sinners are freely invited unto Christ, that they may have life and salvation by him, but in itself is insufficient to persuade and enable them to come to him.”

and....

- “Effectual calling is the internal call of the Spirit accompanying the external call of the word, whereby we are not only invited unto Christ, but also enabled and persuaded to embrace him as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.”

a. LC q 68 deals with this, asking, “*Are the elect only effectually called?*”

The answer to LC q68 says, *All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their willful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.*”

9. Benefits of Effectual Calling.

a. The SC asks “*what are the benefits of effectual calling.*” (q32). The LC asks “*What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?*” (q69). The answers are basically the same.

- Justification
- Adoption
- Sanctification
- The several benefits which accompany, or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification.

10. Effectual Calling is a process. By the working of God's Spirit, and the effect of His Word, we come to understand our sin and misery, and the blessing of God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ; our wills are renewed, and, at some time of God's choosing, His calling to us becomes effective. At that point, we become justified. Justification, and the associated adoption are the topics we will discuss in our next lesson.