

### God's Asking "Where Are You?"

Perhaps though, the most profound question asked in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:9, where we find Adam and Eve after they had eaten the forbidden fruit, hiding from God in the Garden. *And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "Where are you?"* It does not mean that God did not know where Adam was. After all, God knows all things. Adam was hiding because of his sin and rebellion, and God was asking the question, so that Adam might know where he was in His relationship with His Lord, spiritually. Adam had been given the responsibility to tend the Garden. He was also given a wife whom he was to guide and protect. God had told him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but to trust in God. So, when Adam sinned, he was not taking care of his responsibility given to him by God in the Garden properly. He was not guiding or protecting, and he was not trusting in God. So, he had rebelled against God, and his sin caused a separation between him and God, and rejects his calling. (Isaiah 59:2) The disobedience brought spiritual and physical death to the human race—just as God had warned!

Now God is asking you, "Where are you?" How are you doing spiritually? He wants you to realize where you are and what you're doing. And He is asking this question because He loves you too much to let you stay put in your faith and become either sinful or stagnant. It is a question that is important to us all because we need to know where we are in relationship to God. The Lord is asking that you do some earnest and honest soul searching. And challenging you to quit playing church and get serious about the work He has for you. Why? Why is this soul searching needed? Why do you need to get serious with the Lord? The answer is that Jesus is Coming Soon! *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* (ROM 13:11)

Knowing the time, is there any doubt that we are in the end times? All of today's signs are indicating that the time is at hand! It is high time to awake out of sleep. In Matthew 25:5, speaking of the 10 virgins in the parable is a picture of the body of believers today. *"But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept."* The body of believers today is asleep and call of the Lord is going out to awake out of sleep and do some soul searching for the answer to the question of the Lord to Adam. "Where are you?" Where are you in your relationship with the Lord in your spiritual walk? It is important to wake up because of resurrection of the dead and God's judgment. (Heb.6:2) In Rom13:11, salvation is nearer speaking of final salvation which takes place at the time of the Rapture of overcomers. It is the salvation, changing of this corruptible, mortal physical body into one that is incorruptible and immortal. In fact it is right at the door! Are you pressing on in your spiritual walk, reaching forth for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The prize is being of overcomers when the Lord returns for His bride before the Tribulation.

How do you stand before God and in the light of eternity? What is your spiritual condition?' The circumstances are clearly outlined in Genesis 3:1-19, and the fact that it is God Himself who asks the question makes it important that we face up to it, and answer it honestly. Genesis 3:7-10 tells us of the efforts that Adam and Eve made to hide from God. The fig leaves which Adam and Eve sewed together speak of our own righteousness which is never acceptable before God. So the question must be asked - are you dressed in fig leaves, trusting in your own merit for acceptance before God, or are you dressed in garments of skin, which speak of God's gracious provision and righteousness provided in the gift of His Son? "Where are you?" Of course, no-one can hide from Him. All over the world people are trying to hide from God - to hide behind excuses for not loving Him and for not serving Him, but no excuse, nothing can hide us from the all-seeing eye of God. (Hebrews 4:13) How are you going to answer Him? Are you walking right beside Him? or Are you hiding somewhere behind the "bushes" of denial and blame-shifting? or Afraid of God, because of sin in your life? Maybe you're trying to cover your sin with fig leaves of your good works. Perhaps, like Jonah, you are one of God's servants, and yet you are running from His purpose for your life. You have sin you have not confessed to Him. Your guilt may make you think that God is after you to punish you. The Bible says, God is after you to save you from the judgment your sin deserves. He is graciously calling, Where are you? If you will come to Him and confess your sin, He will deliver you from Satan's domain of darkness and transfer you to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom you will have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col.1:13)

Look at the God who loves and seeks you asking, Where are you? and listen for the tenderness, the compassion and the concern in this question that God asks of His children. In this question there is a three-fold proof of God's love. First, He proves His love to us in that He dealt with Adam's sin. Again, His love is proved in that He at once promised to send a Savior; that promise in Genesis 3:15 where we read of the seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. God did this by sending his son in the form of man as Jesus and dying for our sins? *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Rom6:23) When Jesus came it was to live the life that we have failed to live, to die the death that we deserved to die, and to rise again as the head of a new creation.

Lord didn't create us to be like robots or puppets. The freedom to choose is a precious gift. Throughout our life, God sets choices before us. He gladly reveals His will, we have power to make our own decisions. So ask yourself today, how intimate of a relationship with God would you like to have? Walking with God is a decision. The choice is yours!

God's calling is His invitation to have a relationship with Him. Have you been called? If so, how should you respond to God's calling? Every Christian is called by God to a specific purpose. The consecrated ministry is a divine call of the Lord and it should be pursued with prayer. God is using you in a profound way for His glory. God's invitation for a relationship extends beyond the personal level. He invited the nation of ancient Israel into a relationship with Him.

What is the meaning of God's relationship with man? If so, what is basis and purpose of that relationship? The word "call" is used most often to refer to God's initiative to bring people to Christ and to participate in his redemptive work in the world. *you, too, are invited by Jesus Christ to be God's very own*(Rom.1:6) [God] desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we beg you on Christ's behalf, receive the love he offers you—be reconciled to God.*(2Cor.5:17-20)

Understanding God's call on our lives-God calls us to know him. We are called by the gospel.(2Th. 2:14) The call of the gospel is God's sovereign will.(Rom8:30) God calls people out of darkness into His marvelous light.(1Pet. 2:9) Christians have been delivered from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13) God calls people "into the fellowship of his Son"(1Cor.1:9) We are called "saints"(Rom1:7) We can now live in peace, freedom, holiness, patiently wait with endurance.(1Pet.2:21) We must press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.(Phi3:14) We must be diligent to make our calling and election sure.(2Pe.1:10)

What are we called out of? *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*(1Pet.2:9) Darkness and blindness are symbolic of this darkened and deceived world ruled by Satan.(Ephesians.2:2; Rev.12:9)

Why are people blinded from understanding God's truth? But the Good News we preach is hidden to anyone, it is hidden to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel, or do not understand the message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.(2Co4:3) Satan, our adversary, blinds human minds from understanding God's good news in his attempt to thwart God's plan.

Are you being called now? But the natural (non-spiritual) man does not accept teachings of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he is incapable of knowing them because they are spiritually discerned.(1Cor.2:14) God's calling is His personal invitation to us to have a close relationship with Him. God must first call or to invite us and open our eyes to see the way to Christ. He does this by opening our minds to a basic understanding of Scriptures and our need to repent. The primary basis for the relationship between God and us is love. God's dealing with us are motivated by His love—His care, His concern and even His correction—so we can receive His gift of eternal life as members of His family. God demonstrates His love through His many promises that relate to our receiving salvation and eternal life. *For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him to me, and I will raise him up from the dead at the last day.*(John 6:44) God has a plan that will eventually extend His invitation to everyone! Jesus came not to call and invite the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with God), but sinners (the erring ones and all those not free from sin) to repentance.(Mat.9:13) To be called now is to be given a responsibility to help preach gospel. But, no reason to boast; Because of his kindness, you have been saved through trusting Christ. 2 Pet1:10-11 encourages us to "walk worthy of the calling" and to be "diligent to make your call" sure. So, you see the need to change your life and obey God's commandments from the heart, God is working with you. He is drawing you toward Him. Our loving, all-powerful God has great plans in store for us—if only we will respond to His calling!

So what's the solution? Well, sin created a separation between man and God. It prevents us from having a true relationship with him. The only way to reach God is for God to build a bridge. All you have to do to be saved is accept it. Ask for it. God says everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. You can have the real, loving relationship with God that He always wanted. Just call on His name...Jesus. Don't wait any longer to join Him in this everlasting relationship. Pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I thank You for dying on the Cross for me. I confess with my mouth. I believe in my heart that You are the Son of God. I believe You are the Lord and that God raised You from the dead. Please, forgive me of my sins. Wash my heart clean. Come live in my life. Be the Lord of my life. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Teach me to walk with You and live for You the rest of my life. Thank You for saving me and for giving me the gift of eternal life in Heaven with You. Amen.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"*(2Cor.5:17) The "old" refers to everything that is part of our old nature—natural pride, love of sin, reliance on works, and our former opinions, habits and passions. The word "therefore" refers that all believers have died with Christ and no longer live for themselves. Our lives are no longer worldly; they are now spiritual. Our "death" is that of the old sin nature which was nailed to the cross with Christ. It was buried with Him, and just as He was raised up by the Father, so are we raised up to "walk in newness of life". That new person that was raised up is what as the new creation.(see14-16) Along with the old passing away, "the new has come!" created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

What is "the high calling" or "upward calling." of God in Jesus Christ? And what is "prize" of that high calling? Apostle Paul said he intended to "forget those things which were behind -- both good and bad -- and reach forward to those things which are ahead. He then told us what was toward Him. He said, *I press toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* (Phi3:13-14) Paul, tells us that this high calling is his reason for living. And there is a great prize he is pressing toward or pursuit in that high calling. That resurrection out of death is his calling. *"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection out of the dead.* (Phi3:10-11) What Paul was saying, I want to know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings, otherwise I will not reign with Him. I want to know the power of His resurrection in my life, so that one day I can attain the resurrection from among the dead that is going to take place. Paul knew that he was saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And yet, he knew that there was this high calling to which he was not guaranteed. Paul saying he is trying to qualify for "high calling" of God which he can obtain by living daily for Christ. That resurrection is the prize which is waiting for him at the end of the race. It is the goal and purpose of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. This is analogous to a runner in a race. Every participant strives to do his or her best in the hope of winning top prize. No one is assured of that prize; everyone strives to be the winner. In a race, there is always the possibility of stumbling or falling. The runner may not even be able to finish the race. Understand spiritual life is a growth to attain, a task to accomplish, a race to run, a course to finish-all triumphantly.

In Phi 3:4-6, Paul lists all of his credentials -- all of those things which could possibly commend him to God. Then, in verses 7-8, despite his excellent spiritual heritage, he counts it as nothing before God: *But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as dung, that I may win Christ.* They are all of the things which he was using to try to establish his own righteousness. All that accrued as result of law-keeping. He was neglecting to carry it forth. It is detachment from old life; new life in Christ must grow and perfect.

But how about the things about ourselves over which we take pride--especially spiritual pride? There are many things about each one of us which we subtly use to commend ourselves to God: Our works, spiritual growth, talents, gifts, and other religious accomplishments puffed up with pride. But God says, you must suffer the loss of these. They cannot help you win Christ. You must refuse to allow it to govern, hinder, and move from walk in Christ. Note that "Winning Christ" is conditioned upon suffering the loss of all things. What Paul means: *and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;* (v.9) You have to be stripped of every religious facade and be exposed for who you are before God. Then you will embrace His righteousness by faith. Then there are results to that: Knowing Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings experience. It means to "win Christ." I must lose my life in order to find it in Him. I must lose my righteousness and fully rest in His. This is the gospel of grace. (ACT20:24)

Have you ever thought that to "win Christ" you had to be *being conformed to His death,*?" We are baptized into His death. We are planted together with Him in His death. Now all of that is a process. Paul was given resurrection life at salvation. But he only began race at that point. He had not yet finished. He still had to attain to all that this resurrection life held. Paul says: *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.* (v12) We must earn or qualify or worthy for the resurrection out of the dead. We must be matured in order to lay hold of it. We must focus to be purely on Christ. We ought to look forward, to an eternity with the Lord. *let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset us, or holds us back and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,* (HEB12)

We must press forward, endure as a runner running a race toward the goal. First, we suffer loss. Then we forget that which is behind, those things we suffered loss of to make progress. This is complete surrender to God, A consecrated life that is giving of life to God to do His will instead of my own, ie. I present my body to Him as living sacrifice. It is needful our present thinking, legalistic tradition/Sect-denomination party Spirit is held, being faithful servant of God who is trustworthy and reliable. It is a divine calling out of love relationship. We forget old life that we no longer carry it's effects, even it's benefits. Therefore forgetting what is behind, means to die, lose your life for Christ. We must press forward in a progressive resurrection towards the prize. And winning Christ will result being conformed to His death.

Those mature in Christ will leave behind their life in the hand of faithful God. Upward call of God in Christ Jesus is to attain through power of the Holy Spirit. This upward calling is a call to resurrection out of death. We have been called upward to take our possession. *so that you may know the hope of His calling, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints!* Redemption of body is the rapture. Final salvation will takes place at the time of last trumpet, resurrection of "Overcomers"(victorious). We begin that race that upward journey, now by live for God. The end of the race the prize of upward call is first resurrection of the 'dead in Christ' as 'blessed and holy' at the Lord's return and be with Him always!