Calling on the Name of the Lord

Text: Romans 10:13

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**Readings:** Romans 10:5-13

**Series:** Occasional (Professions of faith and baptisms)

**Theme:** The Apostle Paulsummarises the only means of salvation for all people in the act of calling on the name of the Lord.

**Proposition:** Calling on the name of the Lord does result in salvation for everyone who calls.

We are all familiar with passwords which we use to gain access to our phones, online bank accounts and a myriad of internet websites and applications. Later model devices allow voice activated passcode entry. Just say the right words with the right tone and you’re in!

Have you heard the words “Open Sesame”? They come from the fictional story of [Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Baba_and_the_Forty_Thieves)" in [*One Thousand and One Nights*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Thousand_and_One_Nights) which is a collection of [Middle Eastern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East) folk tales originally compiled in Arabic. “Open Sesame” is the magical phrase which opens the mouth of a cave containing hidden treasure.

Is there a special sequence of words which gain access to all the unfathomable riches of God’s Kingdom? When you read the words of our text in Romans 10:13 “*everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*", you might think, for example that saying “Lord, Lord” would ‘open the door’ to God’s heaven for you.

But, in his ‘sermon on the mount’, Jesus warned that many who have said ‘Lord, Lord’ will not enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 7:21).

Some preachers have told people that just saying a short sinner’s prayer e.g. “Jesus, save me” is sufficient to gain eternal life… “Come to the front after the service, say these words after me and you’re in!” – “open sesame!”

It can be very frustrating when you can’t get into your phone or onto a website because you’ve forgotten your password…This minor irritation is nothing compared to not being allowed into God’s Paradise because you misunderstood the way in.

That’s why it’s so important for us to understand what calling on the name of the Lord means.

We’re going to unpack these words under two headings:

1. Crying out for help
2. Honouring Jesus as Lord
3. **Crying out for help**

I am much more confident being alone in the mountains when I go solo tramping than I was in the past because I always carry a PLB. What’s a PLB? A personal locator beacon. Basically a small device which can send an emergency signal to a satellite. My PLB is very light, a small yellow box with a big red button. In one word, what is the message my PLB sends out if I hit the ‘panic button’? …HELP!

That’s the first aspect of calling on the name of the Lord ...to do so is to call out for help, for rescue, for deliverance.

We see this in many of the psalms e.g. 116 which we sang earlier:

*The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.* ***Then I called on the name of the LORD****: "O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!" (Ps 116:3-4)*

**“***my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day* ***I call upon you****, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you”. (Ps 88:9)*

Also in the OT prophets:

"*Seek the LORD while he may be found;* ***call upon him*** *while he is near*”. (Isa 55:6)

*"****I called on your name****, O LORD, from the depths of the pit”. (Lam 3:55)*

In his letter to the Romans, Paul quotes from the prophet Joel (2:32) who prophesies of a future time when God, in His great mercy, will rescue His people. “*And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved*”.

In all the OT the cry for help is made to the LORD, Jehovah, YHWH, the name of the covenant God of Israel…

Here in our text: the ‘Lord’ is Jesus Christ. He is the person who rescues, delivers, provides help. He is God the Son, same in substance, power and glory as God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

The crucified, resurrected Christ has been highly exalted by God the Father and has the name that is above every name (Phil 2:9). Jesus alone has the power, authority, mercy and compassion to provide you with all the help you need…you just have to call on Him! – as [Name] and [Name] have.

[Name] and [Name]’s lives are very different, and both have wonderful testimonies of how the Lord has answered their cry for help when they too called upon the name of the Lord.

How about you? {Pause} Have you ‘hit the red button’ yet?

At our last men’s breakfast meeting we were reminded that everyone, yes, every single human being, shares two things in common:

1. Everyone is a sinner. Nobody perfectly loves God, or their neighbour.
2. Everyone is a sufferer. Distress is unavoidable in a broken world.

Therefore, everybody needs help.

That’s why so many people consume excessive food, drink, take drugs, watch porn, cheat on their husband or wife, greedily accumulate more money than they need. So many people look for help in all the wrong places.

 “There’s a better way”, actually there is really only **one** way to get the help that you and I need and that is to: Call on the name of the Lord in order to be saved.

OK…if that doesn’t mean saying some magical phrase, how exactly does someone do this?

Turn back with me to Acts 2 – from v14. The Apostle Peter is preaching a sermon on the day of Pentecost. He is demonstrating to his listeners that their sin, their rebellion against God, resulted in Jesus being crucified. When they realise that they themselves are responsible for the death of Jesus who God has made Lord and Christ, they were “*cut to the heart*”, literally pierced, stabbed. They became painfully aware of their guilt – they were ‘conscience-stricken’.

Their heartfelt response (v37) – “what shall we do?”

The answer:

"*Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*”.

To call on the name of the Lord is to **repent** – to turn from your sin, your rebellion against God, to change your mind and to depend on Christ Jesus alone for help, not on anything or anybody else… ‘Calling on the name of the Lord’ means believing in your heart that Jesus died for your sins in your place on a cross and that God raised Him from the dead – you can see this in Romans 10:9-10.

Back to Acts 2 – we see that those who call on the name of the Lord are to be baptised…We witnessed [Name]’s adult baptism a short time ago because she has called on the name of the Lord for help. You might wonder why [Name] wasn’t baptised…The reason is that this took place when he was a small baby and the Bible teaches that baptism is only to be administered once for each person…We can see why [Name] was baptised as a baby and why [Child] and [Child] were baptised as boys from the next verse in Acts 2:

“*For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself*".

We believe as a church that the children of a believing parent or parents ought to be baptised because God makes a promise to families, not necessarily to save every family member, but to bless the children of believers, calling them holy. (1 Cor 7.14b)

There was no guarantee that [Name] would one day call on the name of the Lord when he was baptised, but his parents and his church had a Biblically-based hope and expectation that one day he would – based on God’s promise, first made to Abraham, the ‘father of faith’. (Rom 4.11)

“*And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you*”. (Gen 17:7)

God wasn’t promising that he would enter into a living relationship with every single descendant of Abraham (ref. Mal 1.2-3; Rom 9). He was saying that all those who were part of the community of Israel (Abraham’s descendants) had the privilege of hearing about Him and growing up in a group of people who followed Him.

That is why [Child] and [Child] received the sacrament of baptism today. This does not necessarily mean that [Child] and [Child] have themselves called on the name of the Lord and been saved from their sins as yet. This **does not mean** that [Child] and [Child] will automatically become believers in Jesus Christ later in their lives…but **It does mean** that [Child] and [Child] are ‘set apart’ for God; **It does mean** that [Child] and [Child] are very much a part, as members, of this church; **It does mean** that [Name] has promised, in reliance on the Holy Spirit, to do all in her power to instruct [Child] and [Child] in the truth of the Christian Faith and to lead them by her example as she imitates the character of Jesus Christ.

**It does mean** that we, as a church, are charged to pray for [Child] and [Child], to help care for their instruction in the faith and to encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers here. **It does mean** that we hope and pray expectantly that the Lord would bring [Child] and [Child] to saving faith so that they too may willingly hit the ‘help button’ by calling on the name of the Lord.

How about you, have you cried out for help to the Lord Jesus?

He invites you to do so today with His Words:

**“***Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*”. (Matt 11:28)

*Pause to sing the first verse of 319 ‘Jesus is Lord’.*

1. **Honouring Jesus as Lord**

God has created us all – as creatures we are all dependent upon him (whether we admit it or not) – that’s why everybody looks for help from somewhere. God has also made us to be worshippers – to respond in adoration and devotion to Him – that’s why everybody worships someone or something.

If we do not worship God then we respond in adoration and devotion to someone or something else – a false god, an idol. False gods come in many different forms.

Paul begins his letter to the Romans by writing about the false worship of those who suppress the truth about God, he says:

**Rom 1:21-23** *For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*

*As well as a cry for help “calling on the name of the Lord*" also means worshipping the Lord, responding to His person and work in adoration and devotion…let me show you from the Bible: When God first made his covenant promise to Abraham in Gen 12, the response of this man of faith was worship:

“*He built an altar to the LORD and* ***called upon the name of the LORD***”.

We opened this service with a reading from Psalm 105, where we heard: (v1-4)

*Oh give thanks to the LORD;* ***call upon his name****; make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!*

In the OT times, the covenant God of Israel, YHWH was worshipped as LORD. In the NT we see a difference: Jesus is the Lord who is worshipped.

That’s what Paul has been writing about in chapter 10 of Romans:

**“***If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved*”. (Rom 10.9)

Then he writes "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Everyone who honours Jesus as their Lord will be saved.

Today we have witnessed [Name] and [Name] making their confession of Christ public before us all.

Notice the word ‘everyone’ in our text. It was not only the physical descendants of Abraham – the Jews, who could seek help from the Lord and worship Him, it was peoples from all the nations:

He writes: v12

“*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him*”.

The Lord Jesus here has given His wealth to [Name] and [Name] and to everyone else who calls on the name of the Lord. To **call on the name of the Lord** is to worship Christ, because God the Father has raised Him up to the highest status:

*“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so* ***that at the name of Jesus*** *every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”. (Phil 2:9-11)*

Every single person **who calls on the name** of the Lord honours Jesus as their personal Lord. What does that mean?

We know that a ‘Lord’ is a person who has authority, power and control over another. To call on the name of the Lord is to willingly place yourself under the authority, power and control of Jesus Christ. It is to echo the words of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane just before he willingly went to this death saying to God:

"*Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will but yours, be done*”.

All of us today are sufferers, we all need help. The question for us is not only to whom will we look for rescue, but what do we desire for ourselves in the midst of our suffering.

Jesus wanted to do His Father’s will because He loved God the Father. When a person honours Jesus as their personal Lord, they call on His name, they want to do His will.

Jesus put it this way: "*If you love Me, you will keep My commandments*”. (John 14.15)

Jesus is not only the most powerful Lord of all, He is also the kindest and gentlest Lord of all. That’s why He said:

“*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light*." (Matt 11.29-30

Soon we plan to worship Jesus together in the sacrament of Lord’s Supper as we remember His sacrifice of himself for us and we rejoice in the victory that he has won over sin and death.

When we worship together we are **collectively calling** on the name of the Lord. In preparation for preaching this sermon I’ve studied the meaning of **calling on the name of the Lord**, but more importantly, more mercifully, the Lord Jesus has enabled me to live it out.

Over the past few months I have been experiencing a tiredness, a fatigue, an exhaustion which I have never known before in my life. It has been a painful, difficult gift from God, but in my estimation one of the best He has ever given to me…why? Because I have needed to cry out for help…to hit the red button…Because I have needed to seek his will afresh, as my Lord.

You see, calling on the name of the Lord is **not only a one-off call** for help when we first realise that: Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life and we understand that no one comes to God the Father except through Him. (John 14.6)

It is also an **ongoing call** as we continue both to sin and to suffer in our lives on this earth as those who have been saved by God’s grace. To be saved is **not only** to be rescued from the fatal power of sin and death. It is **also** to be delivered and preserved by Jesus as we honour Him as Lord in every moment and circumstance of our lives.

Will you call on the name of the Lord today and be saved? There’s nobody else but Jesus you can go to for the help you need. There’s nobody else but Jesus who is worthy of your complete adoration, devotion, praise and thanksgiving.

“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4.12)

AMEN