

“The Lord Calls”

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Luke 13:31-35

February 7, 2010

I am glad that you are here this morning - I could use your help. I received an email this past week that I don't know what to do with. So as not to prejudice your thinking I think I will just read it to you just as I received it.

Greetings from the Lord:

I am Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Yahweh. Recently you were explained My Most Holy Re-arrival unto you. You were identified as Church Leaders, contacted twice by Me personally, and now explained Our Most Holy Task. We have been tasked with assembling an emergency elect of International Church Leaders from amongst the Twelve Tribes totaling twenty-four Elect. I demand your immediate response concerning this offer to you personally. There is much at stake so immediately respond. You can send Me any information you like; however, you are to address Me as "My Lord."

Thank you and Love, Isa al-Masih de Allah [aka Jesus Christ de Yahweh

P.S. I demand you respond back to Me as soon as humanly possible.

P.S. Two. I am sorry at the delay in reaching out to you. We, the Holy Spirit and I, are trying and are doing Our Level Best to serve you.

So, there you have it. Let's take a vote. How many of you think that Jesus has taken to using e-mail? And how many would, without a second thought, delete the email and shake your head over the fact that there are a lot of nuts out there on the world wide web?

When I first received the email, there was no question which camp I was in. I snickered at the whole thing and wondered again how I manage to get on the list of some of those weird folk out there.

But then I started to think about our scriptures for today. Abram is confused. He has believed that there is one God. He has believed that this God has come to him and called him to follow - leaving his home in Ur and traveling to Canaan. He has believed that God has spoken to him ... And he has listened and obeyed so that his response to God was counted as righteousness. ----- I wonder how Abram would respond to this email?

Now Abram has some questions. After having done everything he has understood God has asked him to do, he still finds himself growing older and without an heir to receive the promises of God. But God speaks again. God makes promises. It all seems too weird to believe. When God tells an old man that he will have descendants as numerous as the stars All right! But start telling someone to cut animals in half that's just too weird! Do you listen to the voice of God or not? Do you pay attention to the details of God's word or not?

God calls. We do believe that God continues to speak to us. But do we listen or respond? I think of Jesus in the gospel text today. Clearly, he is no longer the one that everyone wants

around. The ruling authority of the land is out to get him. But Jesus is not afraid of him. Harold is not a roaring lion with all of the power and authority associated with that powerful image Herod is just a fox - a pretender - nothing to really worry about. Still, the reality is that Herod's rejection of Jesus only serves to mirror the position of so many. The people ... The very people of God that He had come to save had turned their backs on Him. He has called them and they have not listened. He sees the dangers and wants to protect them - but they run in the other direction. "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem ... How I have longed to gather you under my wings ... But you would not.

Our Lord calls to His people But will we listen or run away from the outstretched wings.

It is interesting that Jesus uses this image as He thinks of the rejection He has encountered from the people of God. It was a familiar image for the people. The hymns of the Jewish people had long reflected that image. To read through some of the Psalms, one will find many examples. I wonder how many times the people would have sung Psalm 17:8 "Hide me in the shadow of thy wings." Or Psalm 57:1 ... "In the shadow of thy wings I will take refuge till the storms of destruction pass by." Or maybe Ps. 61:4 ... "Oh to be safe under the shelter of thy wings." And there is Ps. 63:7 ... "In the shadow of thy wings I sing for joy." Or Psalm 91:4 ... "Under his wings you will find refuge." And just so you don't give way to the thought that it was just some ancient people that would ever sing anything like that, take a look at hymn # 412 in the Blue Hymnal sometime "Under His Wings I am safely abiding Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings, under His wings, Safely abide forever." We can sing the songs with the best of God's people throughout time but when the email comes in, will we listen?

Yes, under His wings, safely abiding forever. It is a nice thought but the reality is that we little chicks do a lot of questioning of the need to be under those out stretched wings. Sometimes it just feels like we can take care of ourselves. Sometimes it seems as though the expectations are a little crazy or inappropriate. But Abram cut the animals in half and waited for God to fulfill the promise. We have been reading the ancient Didache document during our Lenten worship times. Some of it seems old, out dated, unnecessary. It would be easy to dismiss it all. Often we read the word of God in the same way and are quick to explain why so much does not apply ... so we run out from under His wings ... we do not respond to His call.

I enjoyed reading an article this week about the rock band Van Halen. The article noted that many of the really big name music groups were notorious for making weird demands of the concert promoters with whom they booked a performance. Van Halen was no exception. It seemed that every contract that they sent out prior to a performance was huge and detailed covering every aspect of what they required. And in every contract, buried in one of the riders was the requirement that a bowl of M&M's be waiting for them in their dressing room when they arrived ... and most importantly the bowl of M&M's had to have every brown M&M removed. The contract stated that if even one M&M was found in the bowl, Van Halen had every right to cancel the concert while still receiving their full fee.

Ridiculous, huh? Ridiculous sometimes we feel that way about the word of God and just walk away. What was interesting about the article concerning Van Halen was that there was actually good rational behind the M&M requirement. The group included that expectation knowing that they could walk into their dressing room and know immediately if those setting up for their arrival had payed attention to the minor details of the contract. Because of the size and weight of their equipment, if the details had not been followed there was a great risk of tragedy.

And so God calls. Will we respond? Sometimes it all seems a little strange or unnecessary.

Will we still believe and follow? Know this. Our Lord Jesus longs for us to come under His wings!

AMEN