

Call: Distinction Between Invite and Summon

When Jesus tells the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, He uses the word “call” in the context of “to invite.” When Jesus tells the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, He uses the word “call” in the context of “to summon.” What is the distinction?

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call (**kaleō**) the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ (Matt 20:1-8, ESV)

1. Examine God’s call to Jonah. What do you observe? What was Jonah’s task and how did he respond?

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. (Jonah 1:1-3, ESV)



2. What does God do in response to Jonah’s disobedience? Does Jonah have a choice? What ultimately happens?

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Jonah 1:17, ESV)

But I with the voice of thanksgiving
will sacrifice to you;
what I have vowed I will pay.
Salvation belongs to the LORD!”

And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land. (Jonah 2:9-10, ESV)

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days’ journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day’s journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. (Jonah 3:1-5, ESV)

4. In light of the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, what is the difference between invite and summon?

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Teacher Notes

When Jesus tells the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, He uses the word “call” in the context of “to invite.” When Jesus tells the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, He uses the word “call” in the context of “to summon.” What is the distinction?

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Review with the student that the Greek word “kaleō” is the word that the English word “call” is translated from. Notice that the boss is summoning the laborers so that they can receive their wages.

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Ask the student: what did God tell Jonah to do?

Jonah was tasked to confront people’s sins in the city of Nineveh and bring them back to God.

Ask the student: what do you observe of Jonah’s choice of travel direction?

2. What does God do in response to Jonah’s disobedience? Does Jonah have a choice? What ultimately happens?

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Ask the student: did God direct or invite Jonah to witness to Nineveh? What does God appointing a great fish to swallow up Jonah suggest?

Ask the student: did Jonah have a choice? Discuss what would happen if Jonah continued to disobey.

4. In light of the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, what is the difference between invite and summon?

Review with the student a part of the Parable of the Wedding Banquet:

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who held a wedding feast for his son. And he sent his slaves to call (**kaleō**) those who had been invited (**kaleō**) to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited (**kaleō**), "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened cattle are all butchered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast!"' (Matt 22:1-4, NASB)

Ask the student: what kind of people are being called / invited?

Ask the student: when you read the Parable of the Laborers of the Vineyard, what kind of people did the boss call?

The boss was the superior summoning a subordinate employee.

Ask the student: when you read about Jonah, what do you observe of his relationship with God? What kind of person did God call? Discuss the outcome of Jonah's completed task.

Jonah was being summoned to do something for God. When Jonah disobeyed, he faced dire consequences. When Jonah completed His task, he brought glory to God.

Believers serve God. When God / Jesus calls, it is a summon to do something for God.

Non-Believers are alienated from God. When God / Jesus calls, it is an invitation to restore a relationship with God.