

# *The Flower of God's Grace*



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**P**

**Total Depravity**

**Unconditional  
Election**

**Limited Atonement**

**Irrestible Grace**

**Perseverance of the  
Saints.**

# **The Doctrines of Grace**

In Sermon Outline Format

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# The Doctrines of Grace

## Text: Roman 3: 1-31

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that

believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

## **Introduction:**

- A. Calvinism otherwise known as the Doctrines of Grace and Arminianism are two opposite systems of theology concerning the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility in the matter of salvation.
  1. “Calvinism” is named after the French theologian John Calvin, who lived from 1509-1564.
  2. However, the Doctrines of Grace were taught as Biblical truth from 99% of the pulpits in the world long before Calvin gave them the acronym of T.U.L.I.P.
    - And this he did to counter Arminius’s five points of Arminianism.
    - It was Arminius who was contesting Biblical truth not Calvin or his predecessors.

3. Some point out that the Apostle Paul taught the Doctrines of Grace very clearly in the Epistles (Which is true).
  4. However, I would quickly point out that the Lord Jesus Christ taught these precious truths while He was on the earth.
    - Thus they are not Calvin's or Paul's truths – they are the Lord's or Biblical truth.
- B. Arminianism is named after Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who lived from 1560-1609.
1. He was particularly at odds with John Calvin's emphasis on unconditional election and irresistible grace.
  2. Arminius hated the truths of which are now called the Doctrines of Grace – particularly unconditional election and irresistible grace.
  3. Again, it is important to point out that 99% of pastors of Arminius day strongly held to those truths known as "the Doctrines of Grace" as Bible truth.
  4. It was Arminius that was at variance with the Bible not Calvin.
- C. This is seen in the fact that the Doctrines of Grace were written down as articles by the Synod of Dort in 1610.
- D. These five articles underline the vitally important truth that:
1. God is in control of all things, not man;
  2. God is the source of salvation; and that men and women can do nothing to save themselves.

3. They (these truths) glorify God, not man, and emphasize our total dependence as guilty sinners on the mercy and grace of God for salvation.
- E. It is the belief of this pastor and church that they form the foundation of true biblical Christianity.
- F. We believe that all five of the doctrines of grace are derived directly from the Scripture and that the acronym TULIP accurately describes the Bible's teaching on soteriology - the doctrine of salvation.
- G. The following is a brief description of each of the letters in the acronym TULIP.
  1. Total Depravity
    - The Scriptures clearly teach that the effects of sin have extended to all parts of our being, rendering us incapable of spiritual understanding and love towards God.
    - Despite the heading of this first article, it does *not* indicate that all people are as wicked as they could possibly be in all areas of belief and practice.
    - However, sin has so fully and deeply affected our lives that, spiritually speaking, we are in a totally hopeless condition, unable to do anything to get ourselves out of this fallen state.
    - Our natural spiritual incapacity prevents us from being able to respond by our own strength to the call of the gospel message, yet this does not remove our guilt.
    - We choose to follow the natural inclinations of our depraved hearts because when left to ourselves that is all we want to do.

- Scripture references: Ephesians 4:18; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 1:30; John 15:25; Luke 19:14; John 5:40; Isaiah 5:20; Titus 1:15; Deuteronomy 32:18; Hebrews 2:1; John 12:39; John 6:44+65; John 3:18.

## 2. Unconditional Election

- God has shown us in his Word that from eternity past he has elected some sinners to be saved from the condemnation that is justly deserved by all, purely on account of his gracious mercy and love, not because of any foreseen merits in those sinners.
- Because of the fact of total depravity, salvation **must** originate with God, and we read in the Bible that it is God's sovereign will alone that has determined the recipients of that salvation.
- This doctrine does not render God unjust, for **all** are guilty and **all** deserve to suffer God's judgement. Rather, it emphasizes the grace of God by the fact that he has chosen some for salvation.

Scripture references: Psalm 65:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 9:11; Ephesians 1:4,5,9,11; Romans 11:5; Romans 9:15,23; Psalm 103:11; 1 Peter 1:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Jonah 2:9.

## 3. Particular Redemption (or Limited Atonement)

- Put simply, Christ died only to save the elect, securing with absolute certainty their salvation.
- This is **not** to teach that there is anything lacking in the power of God, perhaps

suggesting that he is not able to save all men.

- Rather, God's Word indicates that it was the Father's intention that his Son was to suffer and die only for his chosen people, atoning for their sins alone.
- Christ's atonement was limited only in extent, not in power, according to the sovereign will of God.
- In the Bible we read that the Lord's servant (Jesus) would see the results of his work (his atoning sacrifice) and "**be satisfied**" (Isaiah 53:11).
- But also, Jesus stated plainly that there are many who are heading for eternal destruction (Matthew 7:13).
- We can only reconcile these two statements if we understand that Christ died only for a limited number of people - for God's elect.

Scripture references: Acts 20:28; John 3:14+15; Galatians 1:4+5; Revelation 13:8; John 6:38+39; John 17:9,10+24; John 10:11; 1 Peter 2:21; Romans 5:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 8:33+34; Luke 1:68; Revelation 5:9; Isaiah 53:11.

#### 4. Irresistible Grace

- When the gospel is preached, an invitation is issued by the Lord to all people to come to him for salvation.
- However, as the first article clearly states, the natural state of all people renders them incapable of responding to this invitation, except to reject it.

- So when God calls an elect sinner to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus, he does so by sending his Holy Spirit to work a great change in that sinner's heart, enabling them to see their sin and their need of a savior and leading them to put their faith in Christ alone for salvation.
- The Lord, by his Spirit, irresistibly draws his elect to himself, raising them to spiritual life and making them willing to trust in Jesus.

Scripture references: Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37; Matthew 23:37; John 5:40; Ephesians 1:12,19; Ezekiel 11:19+20; Psalm 110:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

## 5. Perseverance of the Saints

- Once God has saved elect sinners, he continues to keep and preserve them by his power and grace and will *never* let them go.
- Thus, they persevere to the end and can never be lost.
- If God did not do this, we would inevitably turn back again to the world, because of the sin that is around us and within us.
- Thus God enables his children to continue in faith and obedience throughout their earthly lives, then to pass into God's presence forever.
- This doctrine is *not* to be taken as a license to go on sinning, as if the believer is free to act in any way he chooses now that he is eternally secure in Christ Jesus.

- The true believer will show signs of a growing desire for holiness and an increasing loathing of sin.
- The one who attempts to use the grace of God as an excuse for sinful living is in all probability not a true believer, for where there is spiritual life, the fruit of the Spirit will become evident.
- Scripture references: 1 Peter 1:5; James 4:6; Philippians 1:6+19; John 6:39; John 10:28+29; Romans 8:38+39; Romans 8:8; Galatians 5:13-26.

H. We have briefly stated each truth. At this point I want us to examine them individually and in more detail.

## I. **Total Depravity**

- A. We must start with the truth of “total depravity.”
  1. The person who is right on this truth has a good start on correctly understanding the other truths correctly.
  2. He who is wrong on this truth will be wrong on all the other truths.
- B. The Definition of the Doctrine of Total Depravity
  1. Depraved comes from the Latin word “depravo.” It means “crooked,” “perverse,” or “wicked.”
  2. Total depravity means, that man is thoroughly crooked, wicked, and sinful by nature in himself, and by position before God.
  3. This corrupt nature he received in Adam's fall into sin, and from Adam, and is evidenced in

every man's choice and practice of sin, in which he is like Adam.

### C. What Total Depravity is Not:

1. In order that we not be misunderstood or misrepresented, it is important that we state, first of all, what we do not mean by total depravity.
  - 2. First, we do not mean that man does not have a conscience.
    - After Adam sinned he hid himself from Jehovah God (Gen. 3:8).
    - Adam would not have done this had he not had a guilty conscience.
    - Likewise, though totally depraved, the accusers of the adulterous woman were "convicted by their own conscience" as Christ wrote on the ground and challenged the sinless one to cast the first stone (John 8:9).
  - 3. Secondly, we do not mean that the unregenerate may not perform outward works of charity and moral goodness.
    - However, the unsaved cannot and will not do these works for the glory of God, but for selfish reasons.
    - "He bringeth forth fruit unto himself" (Hos. 10:1).
    - "A ruined temple may have beautiful fragments of fluted columns, but it is no proper habitation for the god for whose worship it was built" (A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 638).

4. Thirdly, we do not mean that the sinner does all the wickedness that he is capable of doing.

- This is often misconstrued by those who disagree with us.
- This is **important** - It is not strictly what the sinner does, but what he is.
- The Pharisees did not omit paying tithes of mint, anise, and cummin (Matt. 23:23), and of all that they possessed (Luke 18:12), **but** they omitted the weightier matters of the law such as judgment, mercy and faith (which they should have done).

#### D. So what is Total Depravity?

1. First, total depravity means that the sinner lacks love for God.

- In John 5:42, Christ said to unbelievers:

"But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."

- Those who are "Christless" may have a "form of godliness" (outward religion),
- But they are: "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."
- Instead of love to God, the unsaved are enmity to God! **Why?**

Romans 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

- The carnal mind is "enmity against God."
- It is not only an enemy, but enmity itself.

- In his commentary Matthew Henry said, "An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot."
  - I John 1:5, says that "God is Light" – But the natural man loves "darkness rather than light" (John 3:19).
2. Secondly, even though sinners possess all their moral faculties – they are disordered and defiled in every faculty.

Titus 1:15, " Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; **but even their mind and conscience is defiled.**"

- A. A. Hodge said, "The inability has its ground, not in the want of any faculty, but in the corrupt moral state of the faculties" (Outline of Theology, p. 342).
- "The depravity which sin has produced in human nature extends to the whole of it.
- There is no part of man's nature which is unaffected by it.
- When the conscience is violated by disobedience to the will of God, the moral understanding is darkened, and the will is enfeebled.
- Denny said, "We are not constituted in water-tight compartments, one of which might be ruined while the others remained intact."
- A drop of ink in a glass of water discolors the whole.

- Therefore, even an apostle had to say in Romans 7:18,

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."

- The whole of the old nature (carnal nature) is affected.

#### E. Total Depravity is clearly declared in the Scripture.

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."

1. This gives us man's **position** before God.

"There is none that understandeth."

2. Here is the natural man's **perception**. He has **none**.

"There is none that seeketh after God."

3. Here we see mans **pursuit** after God. In himself it **does not exist**.

" They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

4. These verses, Romans 3:10-12, clearly reveal the natural man's practice as God sees it.

5. By position and practice, man is rotten to the core, in God's sight.

6. A. H. Strong said, "Cloth is first dyed in the wool, and then dyed again after the weaving. Man is a 'double-dyed villain.' He is corrupted by nature and afterwards by practice."

7. The sinner is beyond the reach of **cultivation**:

"There is none righteous, no, not one."

- You cannot cultivate a rotten apple into a good one.

8. The natural man is beyond the reach of **education**:

"There is none that understandeth."

9. He is beyond the reach of **inspiration**:

"There is none that seeketh after God."

Inspiring music and preaching, apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, means nothing.

10. He is beyond the reach of occupation:

"There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

- Singing in the choir, serving in a office in the church will not make the natural man a lover of God.

11. Every man "by nature" is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3), a child of the Devil (Matt. 13:38; John 8:44), drinks iniquity like water (Job 15:16), is depraved in mind (Eph. 4:17), blinded in heart (Eph. 4:18), cannot hear the words of Christ (John 8:43-44), cannot know the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14), cannot please God (Rom. 8:8), a slave to Satan (2 Tim. 2:26).

12. The very being of the natural man is obnoxious to a Holy God, who says of man:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

13. The Holy Scripture very clearly reveals that every single person is **totally depraved**.

## F. The Resulting Damage.

1. Since man is totally depraved he is totally deprived of all ability to please God.
2. This is seen in the truth that the sinner is:
  - **Spiritually dead.** He is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).
  - A dead person cannot do anything in the realm in which he is dead, and the sinner is spiritually dead to God.
  - Thus he cannot repent of his sin, believe the Gospel, come to Jesus Christ, nor live for Him.

One writer said, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him."

3. Secondly, the sinner is **defiled**.
  - He is defiled in heart and mind.
  - This we see in the days of Noah – Genesis 6:5

"And that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

- Have sinners improved since then? **No!**
- The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul says that the unbelievers in this age,

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18).

4. Thirdly, the sinner cannot save himself, and will not turn to Christ for salvation until he is born again by the Spirit of God. (John 1:13, 6:63).

- When some hear the statement above they immediately reply, "But, what about man's free will? Can he not will to come to Christ?"
- The Lord said, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."
- Man's will is motivated and controlled by his nature (Eph. 2:3).
- He is free to turn to Christ, but not able.
- I am free to make a million dollars, but so far it seems that I am not able.
- Turning to Christ is a spiritual act, and the sinner is spiritually dead.

"There is none that seeketh after God" (Romans 3:11).

"Whosoever will" may come! (Revelation 22:17). But none will, "except the Father draw" them (John 6:44).

5. It follows then that the salvation of the sinner is wholly and solely of grace, Dei Gratia!
6. The truth is all men have sinned and God could justly send all men to eternal damnation.
7. But God is free within the perfection of His nature to save none, a few, many, or all, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His will.

#### G. The Deliverance from total depravity.

1. God chose a certain number (though innumerable to man) to be saved.

2. That choice is an eternal one, made before the foundation of the world.
3. Then the Son of God came, took the sins of the elect upon Himself, died for their sins, and them
4. In God's time the Holy Spirit gives the new birth (John 1:13, 6:63) and eternal life to these dead sinners.

God working in them "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

5. Thus Christ comes to live in their hearts (Ephesians 3:17) and they are born of God: **not by their own will, but by the will of God** (John 1:12-13).
6. The assurance that this has happened to you, is that you found yourself sincerely troubled and burdened with your sins and your lost condition, thus seeing your great need of Jesus Christ as your Savior;
7. Then you were graciously led to believe in the Lord Jesus alone for eternal salvation, and you now know that you "Passed from death unto life." (John 5:24).

# **Unconditional Election**

## **Scriptural Support:**

Deuteronomy 7:6-10, 15, 9:5, 29:4; Psalm 65:4; Isaiah 45:4; Mark 13:20; John 1:13, 6:44, 65, 15:16, 17:2; Acts 2:39, 9:1-18, 11:17, 16:14, 18:27; Romans 8:28-30, 9:10-26, 10:20, 11:5; Ephesians 1:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 1:29; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9, 2:10, 19, 25; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:15; James 1:18; Jude 1.

## **Introduction:**

- A. Because man is total depraved and spiritually dead, God, of necessity, in eternity past chose certain people to be saved.
  - 1. All Bible students, even those who are not Sovereign Grace, admit that election is a Bible doctrine.
  - 2. They must because of the mass of evidence that is presented in both Old and New Testaments.
  - 3. However, these same Bible students sharply and radically divide over the nature of election.
  - 4. First, it is clearly revealed in Scripture that divine election is **to salvation**, and not merely to service (2 Thessalonians 2:13) as some say; although, service is included in salvation (Ephesians 2:1-10).
  - 5. It is also clearly revealed that individuals are elected to salvation, and that election is not merely a plan of redemption.

Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

6. Thus we see that the radical difference between Bible students revolves around the question, "Who **chooses** whom?"
7. Or plainly stated, Does God or man do the choosing?
8. One group believe that God chose individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world and that His decision was solely because of causes within Himself. They were not based upon the foreseen faith, character, or good works in the recipients of that salvation.
  - In this view, God is sovereign and acts in a independent manner and chooses whom He will sovereign grace.
  - This is known as **unconditional election**.
  - Scripture clearly reveals that this is what our Lord taught his disciples, the Apostle taught during their ministries, what the early church taught.
9. In the laste 1500's and early 1600's Jacob Arminius (1560-1609) promoted what is now known as Armenianism.
10. Armenianism erroneously states that God, in His omniscience (which covers all time) foresaw that certain people would exercise faith through their own sovereign free will, and thereupon He adjusted His purposes accordingly, thus electing these individuals on the basis of their known (future) election of Him.
  - So, in essence, Armenian's believe that God gives indispensable **help** in salvation, but that ultimately it is **the free will of man which decides the issue**.

- Arminius has written five articles. After his death his followers continued to promote his belief system.
- After a period of sharp theological controversy the Dutch government convened a National Synod of leading churchmen, which met in Dordrecht in the years 1618-19.
- At this "Synod of Dort" the members adopted five articles in direct opposition to the five articles of the Arminians.
- The articles of Dort have come to be known as the "five points of Calvinism."
- The Armenian view says that, God seeing (or foreseeing) whether each individual would respond to the Gospel or not. Then upon that persons decision, God either elected them to salvation or passed them by on the basis of their foreknown choice.
- This system was devised in an attempt to "protect" man's free will and is known as conditional election.

11. Obviously either God or man is the original elector or first cause.
12. Since all time is eradicated in God's omniscience, it does not matter whether one event is prior or subsequent to the other.
13. The only thing that matters is the fact that one is the initiator and the other responds, irrespective of time.
14. Therefore, those who believe in conditional election (Those who believe that God's election of individuals to salvation was contingent upon

His knowledge of what these individuals would do with the Gospel when they heard it) **as well as** those who hold to unconditional election must **test** their doctrine by the teachings of our Lord.

15. Therefore, what sayeth the Scripture concerning this doctrine?

- The Lord Jesus Christ made many direct statements about man's natural condition, and his total inability to come to God.
- These statements clearly show the truth of unconditional election.
- If man **cannot** come (and he cannot) then God must take the initiative.

16. The Doctrines of Grace stand or fall together.

- It is utterly pointless for one to say that they believe in total human depravity yet reject the doctrine of unconditional election.
- B. So in unconditional election in those chosen there was nothing inherently better or different about them that caused God to elect them.
- C. God was totally free in His decision to show grace and mercy to some sinners who deserved nothing but His wrath.
- D. This is, in essence, the doctrine of Unconditional Election.

## I. **The Basis of God's election:**

- A. The basis of God's election is a mystery only known to God.

- B. We may not understand how it can be that He is able to elect some while passing by others.
- C. But rest assured, everything that God has decided to do is perfect and righteous because He makes no mistakes.
- D. Some say that this paints a picture of a God as capricious and unjust.
  - 1. But this view overlooks the fact that if all humanity received what is just from God, then all would be condemned to eternal death in hell.
  - 2. God is under no obligation to save anyone.
  - 3. His shows mercy by choosing to save some that are already condemned to death.

## I. **The Necessity of Election:**

- A. God's election is necessary because of the total depravity of human nature.
- B. Every son and daughter of Adam is an ungodly sinner; and an enemy of God.
- C. None of us have within our nature the desire to choose good and reject evil.
- D. All stand guilty before God, deserving of His wrath.
- E. But God, in His infinite wisdom and grace chose to elect certain rebellious sinners to be saved.
  - 1. Once He elected these sinners to be saved, He then predestined them to be saved.
  - 2. To elect means to choose; to predestine means to decide the outcome beforehand.

3. The difference between election and predestination is similar to the difference between choice and power.
  - A man could elect another to be saved, but he would not have the power to carry out the results of his choice.
  - In contrast, not only has God made the choice, but He has the power to carry out that choice.
- F. Election and predestination are two different activities of God, but they are inseparable activities.
  1. When God elects, He also predestines; when He decides something should happen, He sees to it that it will happen.
  2. Election is God's sovereign choice unto salvation.
    - The sinner is chosen to be saved but is not yet saved.
    - The elect person remains an ungodly sinner until the Father draws him to the Son through regeneration.
    - So the choice of the person's salvation is made in eternity past, but the actual salvation occurs within the lifetime of the person.
    - This is important because it reminds us that we cannot sit back and allow election to run its course.
    - Sinners must still be evangelized and witnessed to, and the Holy Spirit must still convert them.

## **II. The Means of Election:**

- A. God has not only determined those who will be saved, but has also chosen the means.
- B. Regenerate men are saved by grace through faith.

Ephesians 2:8, " For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Romans 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

- 1. Romans 1:16-17 tells us that the gospel must be preached, first of all, because God commanded believers to do so.
  - 2. And secondly and secondly because it is the means by which God saves His elect according to Matthew 28:19-20.
- C. **Some** people **say** that God elected people to salvation on the basis of His foreknowledge.
- 1. They define God's foreknowledge as His ability to read, or predict, the future.
  - 2. This view claims that God, using His foreknowledge, knew who would choose to place their faith in Jesus Christ, and elected these people to salvation.
  - 3. This view claims that **faith** is the **cause** of election, **rather than the result**.
- D. This view assumes that human beings have within themselves the ability to have faith in Jesus Christ without God causing that faith.
- 1. But due to the total depravity of mankind we know that **no one is capable** of any good thought or action, including faith.

2. **Faith is a gift** from God.
  3. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that if God had not foreordained to give the gift of faith to a person, that person would never come to faith in God.
- E. There is an important problem with this view of God's foreknowledge:
1. The Bible does not teach that God foresees faith.
- Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."
2. Those whom He foreknew indicates that God foreknows people, not their actions.
  3. Ephesians 1:3-14 is perhaps the best place in that describes the nature of election.
- Verse 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."
- God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world.
  - He chose us before we were created, before Adam was created.
  - In fact, He chose us before the world was created.
  - We were elected to be saved before we ever had done anything good or bad, before we had the opportunity to choose or reject God.
4. He chose us to be holy and blameless in His sight.

- Some people say that He chose us because He knew that we would be holy and blameless.
- But this verse tells us that our being holy and blameless **is** a result of His choice, **not** the cause of His choice.

Verses 5, 6, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

- "Having chosen us (Verse 4), He also predestined us (Verse 5).
- His choice and predestination are in accordance with His pleasure and will.

John 1:13, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, **nor of the will of man, but of God.**"

- The source of election is God's good pleasure.
  - Salvation is determined by God's will, not man's will.
5. The realization of our election by God should humble us.
- It excludes all self-accreditation, since we had absolutely nothing to do with determining our own salvation.
  - It should lead us to praise His glorious grace.

### **III. Grace is the unmerited favor of God.**

The doctrines of election and predestination drive home the fact that God's favor is totally unearned.

- A. It is solely God's free choice to elect or not elect, not ours.
- B. God's grace emphasizes the fact that salvation is not the result of human endeavor.

Ephesians 1: 11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated **according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.**"

- 1. We are made heirs in Christ because God made it so.
  - 2. We have been predestined to this by God.
  - 3. God's plan is not determined by our will, but by His own will.
  - 4. It is very clear from Ephesians 1 that God has freely chosen certain sinners to be saved; and that He made this choice before the foundation of the world.
- C. However, Ephesians 1 is not the only place that teaches this truth.

It is taught in many other passages as well:

Matthew 22:14, "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Luke 18:7, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

John 6:65, "And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were **given unto him of my Father.**"

Acts 13:48, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.**"

Romans 8:29-30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Romans 9:11-12, "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the **purpose of God according to election** might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger."

Romans 11:7, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."

1 Corinthians 1:27-29, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

2 Thessalonians 2:13, "But we are bound to give thanks alway 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."

2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, **not according to our works**, but **according to his own purpose and grace**, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

1 Peter 1:1-2, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia,

Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father**, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

#### **IV. Unconditional Election Is Confirmed in the Saviour Prayer (John 17).**

- A. Nowhere is the nature of election made more plain than in the record of our Lord's high-priestly prayer.
  1. It is of importance to observe that this particular account, and in the discourse on the Bread of Life (constituting, as they do, some of the strongest evidences for the truth of unconditional election), appear nowhere else in the New Testament than in the "Whosoever Gospel" of John!
  2. The evidence of this truth are both overwhelming and inescapable. We note:
    - That Believers Are a Gift from the Father to the Son.
    - Seven times in the prayer our Lord refers to the believers as those who have been given to Him by the Father.
      - "As many as thou hast given him" (v. 2)
      - "The men which thou gavest me" (v. 6)
      - "Thou gavest them me" (v. 6)
      - "Them which thou hast given me" (v. 9)
      - "Those whom thou hast given me" (v. 9)
      - "Those that thou gavest me" (v. 12)
      - "They also, whom thou hast given me" (v. 24)
  3. One does not therefore give himself, or give his heart, to the Lord in the sense of salvation.

- The ones who belong to Christ were given to Him by the Father.
  - Our relationship to the Saviour is **not established** upon the basis of anything that we can do, **but upon** what has already been done by another.
  - In all of this we are completely passive. A gift has no initiatory volition about who gives it to whom.
  - This is decided, not by the object, but by its owner. The right of possession is key here.
- B. The Believers Were Originally the Father's Possession (v. 6).
1. In John 17:6 above states that they were the Fathers possession, "Thine they were" and then they Father gave them to Christ as a gift.
  2. Since the entire passage has a redemptive setting and the believers are seen as separate from the world throughout, the reference could not be to the Father's ownership in the sense of creation.
  3. This would encompass all mankind and the statement would be without meaning in such a context.
  4. The only reasonable explanation of these words is that the believers belonged to the Father by election.
  5. This is viewed as an absolute right - so much so that they may be given as specific individuals in the form of gifts from the Father to the Son.
  6. Observe that this is personal and individual,

rather than corporate election. This is indicated by the repetition of the personal pronouns.

## **Conclusions:**

- A. Election is a free and gracious gift of the Lord.
- B. A person is saved only because God chose that person to be His child.
- C. You are born again to newness of life, not according to your will, but according to God's will.
- D. Your heart should be overflowing with humility, praise, and thanksgiving to God for your salvation.
- E. Not even in the least bit can you claim any credit for your salvation.
- F. Apart from the elective and regenerative intervention of God, salvation would be impossible.
- G. We would be justly and eternally condemned for our sins.

# **Limited Atonement**

(Particular Redemption)

## **Introduction:**

**Text:** John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

### Scriptural Support:

Exodus 4:21, 14:4, 8, 17; Deuteronomy 2:30, 9:4-7, 29:4; Joshua 11:19; 1 Samuel 2:25, 3:14; 2 Samuel 17:14; Psalm 105:25; Proverbs 15:8, 26, 28:9; Isaiah 53:11; Jeremiah 24:7; Matthew 1:21, 11:25-27, 13:10-15, 44-46, 15:13, 20:28, 22:14, 24:22; Luke 8:15, 13:23, 19:42; John 5:21, 6:37, 44, 65, 8:42-47, 10:11, 14, 26-28, 11:49-53, 12:37-41, 13:1, 18, 15:16, 17:2, 6, 9, 18:9, 37; Acts 2:39, 13:48, 18:27, 19:9; Romans 9:10-26, 11:5-10; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, 2:14; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, 4:3; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-14; 2 Timothy 2:20, 25; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 1:3, 14, 2:9, 16 (cp. Galatians 3:29, 4:28-31), 9:28; 1 Peter 2:8; 2 Peter 2:7; 1 John 4:6; Jude 1, 14; Revelation 13:8, 17:8, 15-18, 21:27.

- A. The doctrine of a limited atonement is the most misunderstood and controversial of all the doctrines of grace.
  - 1. The doctrine of Limited Atonement resembles the Trinity in that while it is revealed as biblical true, yet no fully satisfactory explanation can ever be set forth which does not have some problems for the human mind.
- B. When we consider the atonement we first see "the importance of the atonement."
  - 1. The atonement is the central theme of Christianity.

2. Everything that precedes it looks forward to it, and everything that follows looks backward to it.
3. Christianity is the only religion with atonement.
4. At the Parliament of Religion held in 1893 at the World Fair in Chicago:
  - Practically every known religion was represented.
  - During one session, Dr. Joseph Cook, of Boston, suddenly rose and said:

“Gentlemen, I beg to introduce to you a woman with a great sorrow. Bloodstains are on her hands, and nothing she has tried will remove them. The blood is that of murder. She has been driven to desperation in her distress. Is there anything in your religion that will remove her sin and give her peace?” A hush fell upon the gathering. Not one of the company replied.

Raising his eyes heavenwards, Dr. Cook then cried out, “John, can you tell this woman how to get rid of her awful sin?”

The great preacher waited, as if listening for a reply.

Suddenly he cried, “Listen. John speaks: ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sins’ (I John 1:7).”

- No one broke the silence: the representatives of Eastern religions and Western cults sat dumbfounded.
- **In the face of human need, the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone could meet the need.**
- The sin of the race demanded the blood of Calvary.

5. The atonement vindicates the holiness and justice of God.
  - There could be no true holiness and justice in God if He allowed sin to go unpunished.
  - Holiness forbids an encouragement of sin.
  - God's justice demands retribution.
6. It establishes God's law.
  - Without the atonement the salvation of believers would leave the law void.
7. It manifests the greatness of God's love.
8. There is no other way that God could have manifested greater love for His people than by giving His only begotten Son to die in their stead.
9. It proves the divine authority of the Old Testament sacrifices.
  - In Christ's atonement we see the beautiful antitype of Old Testament sacrifices.
  - Each of the sacrifices effective point to the necessity of atonement.
  - Likewise they are types, or a picture of the real atonement that leads those spiritually enlightened to pass through the veil of the shadow to the true light.

## I. The nature (or extent) of the atonement:

- A. There are three theories concerning the extent of the atonement.

1. The **partial general atonement** and the **general atonement**, and a **limited atonement**.
  2. We reject the first two and stand firmly on the doctrine of limited or particular redemption.
- B. The doctrine of Limited Atonement (or Particular Redemption) is:
1. Without doubt the most controversial of the doctrines of grace.
  2. It is also the most difficult doctrine for many believers to accept.
- C. Limited Atonement holds that Christ's died for the elect and for the elect only; and that He actually secured salvation for them.
1. His substitutionary death atoned and put away their sins.
  2. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation; including faith which unites them to Him.
  3. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation.
  4. And lastly, that Christ in no sense whatsoever died for any that shall perish in Hell.

## I. Arguments from Reason.

- A. Limited Atonement it is the only theory that makes the death of Christ absolutely substitutionary.
1. If Christ died for one man as much as for another, which He must have done if He made

salvation possible to all men, then He died for some that will suffer eternally in Hell.

2. In that case the Lord's death, was not truly substitutionary.
3. Limited Atonement is the only theory that is compatible with the justice of God.
  - God's justice demanded that Christ pay the exact penalty of the sins of those who are saved.
  - His justice also demands that He save all whose penalty Christ paid.
  - This is an obvious and scriptural proposition.
  - 1 John 1:9 states that God is "just to forgive our sins."
  - This shows that the forgiveness of our sins is an act of justice toward Christ!
  - The theory of a limited atonement alone leaves any just reason for the condemnation of unrepentant sinners.
  - If a general atonement has been made, then there is no justice in sending any sinner to hell.
  - If it is sufficient for all men, then it demands the acquittal of all.
  - Since the atonement was demanded as a satisfaction of God's justice, its efficiency must equal its sufficiency.
  - The same justice that demands that the penalty of sin be paid, just as emphatically

demands that the sinner be liberated when the payment has been made.

- There is absolutely no ground either in Scripture or reason for making a distinction between the atonement and the application of it, or between atonement and redemption or reconciliation, as to their extent or value.
  - Atonement, redemption, and reconciliation all apply to the objective basis of pardon, and they all alike apply to actual pardon.
4. It is the only theory that gives to the death of Christ any argumentative value in proving the security of the believer.
- The following statement will be recognized, no doubt as a strong argument for the security of the believer by all who believe that doctrine:

"Christ, in His death on the cross, suffered for all the sins of every believer. If the believer should go to Hell, he would suffer for the same sins that Christ suffered for.

Both the believer and Christ would then be paying for the same sins, and God, in punishing two men for the sins of one, would be the most unjust tyrant of the universe.

"Perish the thought! The judge of all the earth must do right!"

- But this argument has no force if Christ died for all, for one just as much as for another, which He must have done if He made salvation possible for all, removing all legal obstacles out of the way of their salvation.
- Moreover, according to this argument, those that affirm that Christ suffered the penalty of

the law for every man make God "the most unjust tyrant of the universe."

## II. Arguments from Scripture:

- A. Isaiah 53:11 the prophet speaking of Christ's sacrifice, says that God,

"Shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

1. That means that the just demands of God, the penalty of the broken law, were satisfied in the death of Christ.

### 2. **But for whom?**

- If He died for **every** son of Adam, then God cannot justly damn any of them to hell.

3. In this passage of Scripture God also says:

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

- This verse does not say "all" it says "many"
- Again, **who's** iniquity does the Lord bear? The **iniquity of the many**.
- So Christ justifies the "many" by bearing "their iniquities."
- Also, we must note that this justification is not made to depend on anything else.
- **Therefore**, if Christ had to bear men's iniquities to justify them,
- **Then** it follows, as the night does the day, that those whose iniquities He bore **must** receive justification.

- By accepting this satisfaction at the hands of Christ, God puts Himself under obligation **to Christ** (not to the sinner) to communicate justification to every one for whom satisfaction is made, which He does by working repentance and faith in their heart.

B. Christ died for His sheep:

1. John 10:2, “But he that entereth in by the door is the **shepherd of the sheep.**”
  - Christ is the shepherd!
  - Who are the “sheep?”
  - The “sheep” are the elect – those for whom Christ died for.

John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd: **the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.**”

John 10:15, “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and **I lay down my life for the sheep.**”

2. John 10:3, “To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and **he calleth his own sheep** by name, and leadeth them out.”
3. John 10:26, “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”
  - The Lord was speaking to the Jewish rulers or leaders (cf: John 1:19).
  - Here we see the second group – those that were **not** the Lord’s sheep.
4. So, John 10 clearly speaks of two groups. The **sheep** and those that **were not** the Lord’s sheep.

C. John 15 as a whole presents the people of God in contrast to the world at large.

John 15:13. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..."

1. The elect people of God are pictured as:

- The branches of the true vine (Vs. 5)
- The friends of the Redeemer (Vss. 13, 14)
- The chosen (elect) ones (Vss. 16, 19)
- The people hated by the world (Vss. 18-21)
- The ones who receive the Holy Spirit (Vss. 26, 27)
- In this series of word pictures the Lord specifically sets His people apart from the world at large.

2. In this chapter the Lord's death is seen to be:

- For the branches,
- For those who would keep His commandments,
- For His friends
- For those whom He had chosen,
- For those identified as persecuted for His Name's sake,
- And for those who receive the Holy Spirit.
- These are all obviously one and the same company – the elect.

3. If Christ laid down His life for every man without exception, then He has the greatest love for

every man; and, consequently, loves those that perish in Hell as much as those He saves.

4. Could Christ ever be satisfied with some of the objects of His great love being in Hell?  
**(Absolutely Not!)**
  5. Moreover, if it were true that Christ loves those that perish as much as He does those that are saved, then we would have to attribute our salvation to ourselves rather than to the love of Christ.
- D. Rom. 8:32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
1. This passage says that God's greatest gift - His Son - guarantees all His lesser gifts.
  2. Hence it follows that God delivered up His Son for none except those to whom He freely gives all other spiritual blessings; **those whom God elects.**
- Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
3. Romans 8:33, 34.

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

- These verses tell us that no charge or condemnation can be brought against the elect.

- God will not charge them, for it is He who justifies; and that Christ will not condemn them, because He died for them.
- This passage would be deprived of all logical force if Christ had died for any that He shall someday condemn in judgment.
- For this reason, He died for none except those, the elect, who escape judgment.

4. II Corinthians 5:14.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died."

- Here there is the undeniable declaration and promise that all for whom Christ died, died representatively in Him.
- Hence death has no power over them, and none of them will suffer it; but all will receive justification and eternal life through faith.
- In commenting on the last three words of this passage in Word Pictures in the New Testament) A. T. Robertson says:

"Logical conclusion, the one died for all and so that all died when he died. All the spiritual death possible for those for whom Christ died."

- Do not fail to note the use of "all" in this passage.

5. II Corinthians 5:19.

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

- This verse tells **what** God was doing in the death of Christ; as well as **how** He was doing it.
  - He was reconciling men to Himself by laying their trespasses on Christ and, therefore, not imputing, reckoning, charging them to those for whom Christ died.
  - Christ, in His death, accomplished full reconciliation for the objects of His death.
  - Which necessitates their being brought to experience subjective reconciliation.
  - The only right conclusion from this passage is that Christ died for those and those only who eventually receive reconciliation.
  - Note the use of the word "world" in this passage.
6. In John 10:15; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25 Christ is said to:
- Have purchased the church, to have given Himself for it.
  - To have laid down His life for the sheep.

In "The Five Points of Calvinism" Parks said, "I know that universal terms are sometimes connected in the Scriptures with the atonement; but if these are to be interpreted in their widest sense, why should the sacred writers have employed the restrictive at all? The universal terms . . . may be readily made to harmonize with the restrictive, but no man can make the restrictive harmonize with the unlimited."

### **III. Scriptures explained.**

A. Explanations of passages used by some to teach unlimited atonement.

1. John 3:16; 1 John 2:2.

- They say that both passages use the word "world" in connection with the saving work of Christ.
- They say that the first speaks of God as loving the "world."
- While the other speaks of Christ as being a propitiation for the sins of the whole "world."

2. We disagree with this interpretation and reply:

- A love that would cause God to give Christ to die for each individual man of Adam's race would also cause Him to save all.
- Why should God discriminate between men in saving them if He loved all of them with the greatest of all love?

Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

3. Therefore, it would not be a real expression of love if God sent a Savior to die vainly for men.

- What kind of God or love would require the Lord Jesus Christ to give His life in an act that would have no real benefit?

4. Next we see that God **does not** love **all** men without exception.

- This is seen in the statement "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" found in Romans 9:13.
  - Did God love Pharaoh? (Romans 10:17).
  - Did He love the Amalekites? (Exodus 17:14).
  - Did He love the Canaanites, whom He commanded to be exterminated without mercy? (Deuteronomy 18:3).
  - Does He love the workers of iniquity? (Psalm 5:5).
  - Does He love the vessels or wrath fitted for destruction, whom He endures with much long-suffering? (Romans 9:22).
5. Finally, the word "world," by no means, alludes to all men without exception in every case in the Scripture.
- For example:
  - "World" is used of unbelievers in distinction from believers (John 7:7; 12:31; 14:17; 15:18, 19; 16:20; 17:14; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 11:32; Ephesians 2:2; Hebrews 11:7; 1 John 3:1; 3:13; 5:19).
  - It is used of Gentiles in distinction from the Jews in Romans 11:12, 15.
  - It is used of the generality of known people in John 12:19.
  - Thus the two passages that we are examining we quickly see that the word "world" does not speak of all men without exception.

- Instead it speaks of all men without distinction; that is, to men of all nations, tribes, and tongues (a cross-section of which we see in Revelation 7:9).
  - So what it is saying is that Christ did not die for the Jews alone, but for Gentiles also, even those in the uttermost parts of the earth.
6. So why did the Lord use the word “world” in these verses?
- The logical reason for the employment of the word "world" in this sense is given by John Gill:

"It was a controversy agitated among the Jewish doctors, whether when the Messiah came, the Gentiles, the world, should have any benefit by him; the majority was exceeding large on the negative of the question, and determined they should not . . . that the most severe judgments and dreadful calamities would befall them; yea, that they should be cast into Hell in the room of the Israelites. This notion the Baptist, Christ, and His apostles oppose, and is the trite reason of the use of this phrase in the Scriptures which speak of Christ's redemption."

- C.D. Cole said,

"As a typical Jew, Nicodemus thought God loved nobody but Jews, but our Lord told him that God so loved the world (Gentile as well as Jew), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever (Gentile or Jew) believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

7. The second word those who teach a unlimited atonement use is the word “all.”
- The word “all” appears in both I Timothy 2:6 and Titus 2:11.

- However a study of the word "all" shows that this word is used in the Scripture in a variety of senses.
- By no means is it always used in the absolute or all inclusive manner.
- Here are a few of its limited uses:
- A great number (Matt. 3:5; 4:24; 14:35).
- All kinds and classes (Matt. 23:47; Luke 2:10; John 12:32; Acts 13:10; Rom. 1:29; 15:14. 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim 6:10).
- All with manifest exceptions (Mark 11:30; Acts 2:46, 47; 1 Cor. 6:18; 8:32; 9:22; 10:33; Titus 1:15).
- All or every one of a certain class (Luke 3:21; Rom. 5:18-last part; 1 Cor. 8:2 compared with vs. 7 and 11; 15:22b; Col. 1:28).
- Thus we can easily see that the meaning of "all" must be determined according to the context and according to the teaching of Scripture.
- Therefore, in view of what has been said about the unscriptural implications of the idea that Christ died for all men without exception, we affirm that "all" in the foregoing passages is used in the second sense listed above, and that the meaning is men of "every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues," a cross section of which we find depicted in Rev. 7:9.
- Again T.P. Simmons said, the "all" for which Christ died is exactly coterminous with the "all" He draws to Him (John 12:31). It is all

without distinction rather than all without exception.

#### 8. I Timothy 2:6

"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

- Many take this verse to mean that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all, or "all men."
- On this verse John Gill states:

But this ransom is 'antilutron huper panton,' a vicarious ransom substituted in the room and stead of all whereby a full price was paid for all, and a plenary satisfaction made for the sins of all which cannot be true of every individual man for then no man could be justly condemned and punished . . . It is better by 'all men' to understand some of all sorts . . ."

#### 9. Hebrews 2:9.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

- In this sentence there is no Greek word for "man."
- The Greek word "pas" that is used here can mean "every one of a certain class or type."
- Thus "every man" fits "every one of a certain class."

#### 10. II Peter 3:9.

- This passage does not mention the atonement, redemption, or reconciliation.

- But because it says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," it is a favorite verse of those who hold to a general atonement.
- But this passage clearly shows that the "any" and the "all" are not the whole race of men.
- It is not an act of longsuffering mercy toward the non-elect for God to withhold the return of Christ.
- Each day the non-elect are adding to their eternal suffering by further despising the gospel (if they have had it preached to them) and by adding to their store of sins.
- Moreover every day the number of accountable sinners in the world is increasing.
- Thus the withholding of Christ's return is but increasing the final population of Hell. "All" is explained by the word "usward."
- It is "all" the elect. God is waiting until, in His sovereign providence and by His Spirit, they are brought to repentance.

# **Irresistible Grace**

## **Effectual Call**

Text: John 6:37-40,

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

### **Introduction:**

- A. Someone once asked the question, “is irresistible grace really irresistible?”
  - 1. If it could be resisted then the obvious answer would be no.
  - 2. However, the word “irresistible” means “that which cannot be resisted.”
- B. Therefore, Irresistible grace is **grace that cannot be resisted and always works in the manner in which God desires.**
- C. Irresistible Grace is a phrase that is used to summarize what the Bible teaches about the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of sinners.
  - 1. It is represented by the “I” in the acronym TULIP that is commonly used to enumerate what are known as the five points of Calvinism or the Doctrines of Grace.

2. The doctrine is also known as “Effectual Calling,” “Efficacious Grace,” “Efficacious Call of the Spirit,” and “Transformed by the Holy Spirit.”
  3. Each of these terms reveals some aspect of what the Bible teaches about the doctrine of irresistible grace.
  4. However what is important is not the name assigned to the doctrine but how accurately the doctrine summarizes what the Bible teaches about the nature and purpose of the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of sinful, spiritually dead men.
  5. No matter which name you use to refer to the doctrine of irresistible grace a thorough study of the Bible will reveal that when properly understood it is an accurate description of what the Bible teaches on this important subject.
- D. There are many verses that are biblical proof of irresistible grace. A few of them are:

John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."

- The verbs “shall come” are in the future indicative mood:
- If the action has occurred, is occurring, or will occur, it will be rendered in the indicative mood.
- The future indicative mood is a simple statement of a fact that is absolutely certain to happen.

John 10:27, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”

- Those who are given the to the Son by the Father have two unmistakable characteristics:

- They hear the Shepherd,
- They follow the Shepherd,
- Only sheep can hear, and they always hear!
- Only sheep can follow and they always follow!

John 5:21, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

- Again the verb “quickeneth” is in the indicative tense.
- Quickeneth is “to cause to live, make alive, give life.”

John 10:16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and **they shall hear my voice**; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

Romans 8:29-30, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and **whom he called, them he also justified**: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Acts 13:48, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.**"

- Would you care to guess what tense the verb “believed” is? – That’s right the “Indicative.”

Ephesians 1:19-20, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who **believe**, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,"

1 Corinthians 4:7, "For who maketh thee to differ from another?"

## I. Grace is underserved:

- A. The doctrine of irresistible grace refers to the biblical truth that whatever God decrees to happen will inevitably come to pass, even in the salvation of individuals.
- B. The Holy Spirit will work in the lives of the elect so that they inevitably will come to faith in Christ.
  - 1. John 6:37-40 and many others Bible passages teach that the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ.
  - 2. At the heart of this doctrine is the answer to the question: "Why does one person believe the Gospel and another does not?"
    - Is it because some are smarter than others?
    - Is it because some people have better reasoning capabilities?
    - Or do they possess a certain characteristic that allows them to realize the importance of the Gospel message?
    - Or is it because God does something unique in the lives of those that He saves?
  - 3. If it is because of what the person who believes does or is, then in a sense they are responsible for their salvation and they have a reason to boast.

Ephesians 2:9, "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

So, it **is not** because man is smart, has a certain reasoning capability, or possesses a certain characteristic, or does something special.

4. A person believes **solely** because the Holy Spirit of God does something unique in the heart of the elect.
5. Titus 3:5 tells us that God saves people "according to His mercy...through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."
6. In other words those who believe the Gospel and are saved do so because they have been transformed by the Holy Spirit.
7. So regeneration results when the Spirit of God applies the work of Christ to the soul.
8. This does not mean that the person is unwilling to be changed because the Spirit of God is "fighting against them", rather **the Spirit changes the heart** of stone to beat as a heart of flesh.
  - The change opens the eyes of the spiritually blind to the work of Christ.
  - It is important to understand that this is an act of the Holy Spirit of God which **precedes** any action of man.
  - Since it is irresistible, the Spirit of God will accomplish His work of changing the sinner's heart.

## **II. The necessity of an irresistible call:**

- A. There are two types of calling upon people. There is a general or external call, and there is the internal or effectual call.

1. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be -- and often is – rejected.
2. Whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion.
3. By means of this special call, the Spirit irresistibly or effectually draws sinners to Christ.
  - He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success.
  - The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ.
  - God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.
  - This describes in a nutshell the doctrine of Irresistible Grace, or the Efficacious Call.
4. The general or external calling is the preaching of the Word, that men might physically hear the Gospel.
  - Thus, the outward general call to salvation is made to everyone who hears the Gospel.
5. The internal or effectual call is a special inward call that the Holy Spirit extends to the elect.
  - The effectual call always brings the elect sinner to salvation; by changing the heart to respond inwardly to the Gospel message.
  - This is the means by which the blood of Christ is applied to the heart and conversion takes place.

- Here is where the Spirit of God alone draws men to Christ.
- The Spirit of God then causes the heart of the sinner to be willing to repent of his sins, believe on the Lord Jesus and come to Christ.

The Puritan writer Christopher Love said, "The internal call is when the Spirit of God accompanies the outward administration of the Word to call a man from ignorance to knowledge, and a state of nature to a state of grace."

Jonathan Edwards said, "That there is such a thing as a spiritual and divine light immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means."

Thomas Adams tells us that "Repentance is a change of the mind, and regeneration is a change of the man."

- B. The second reason that irresistible grace is necessary is the fact that man is totally depraved.
  1. The doctrine of irresistible grace recognizes that the Bible describes natural man as "dead in his trespasses and sins."

Ephesians 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Ephesians 2:5, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."

2. Because man is totally depraved he is spiritually dead - thus he must first be made alive or regenerated in order to understand and respond to the Gospel.
3. A good illustration of this is found in John 11:43 where Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

- The Lord told Lazarus to “come forth” and Lazarus did come forth out of the tomb.
- Something had to happen before Lazarus - who had been dead for several days – could respond to the Lord’s command?
  - He had to be made alive!
  - Because a dead man cannot hear or respond.

4. The same is true spiritually.

- Those who are dead in sin, as the Bible clearly teaches, cannot respond to the Gospel message and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ until they are first made alive.
- John 1:12-13 tell us that being born again is not the result of something we do—“the will of man”—but is a sovereign act of God.
- Just as Lazarus could not bring himself back to life or respond to Jesus’ command without being brought back to life, neither can sinful man.
- Ephesians 2:1-10 makes it very clear that while we are still dead in our trespasses and sin **God makes us alive**.
- The Bible clearly teaches us that the act of being born again or regenerated is a **sovereign act of God**.
- It is something He does which enables us to believe the Gospel message, not something that comes as a result of our belief.

Psalms 110:3, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”

Psalm 3:8, “Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.”

5. So, it is called “irresistible” grace because it comes forth from Sovereign God and always results in the intended outcome, the salvation of the person it is given to.

### **III. Misconceptions about the doctrine of irresistible grace:**

- A. A common misconception about the doctrine of irresistible grace is that it implies men are forced to accept Christ and dragged kicking and screaming into heaven.
  1. Of course this is not an accurate description of the doctrine of irresistible grace.
  2. The heart of irresistible grace is the transforming power of the Holy Spirit whereby He takes a man dead in his trespasses and sins and gives him spiritual life so that he can believe and willingly come to Christ.
- B. A second misconception is this doctrine is that it teaches the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted at all.
  1. That is not true! God’s grace can be resisted and the Holy Spirit’s influence can be resisted even by one of the elect.
  2. However what the doctrine does correctly recognize is:
    - That the Holy Spirit can overcome all such resistance.

- That He will draw the elect with an irresistible grace that makes them want to come to God.
- The doctrine of irresistible grace recognizes that God is sovereign and can overcome all resistance when He wills to.
- What God decrees or determines will come to pass and always does.

## **Conclusions:**

- A. The doctrine of irresistible grace accurately summarizes what the Bible teaches about the nature of saving faith as well as what must happen to overcome man's depraved nature.
- B. Since natural man is dead in his trespasses and sins, it stands to reason that he must be regenerated before he can respond to the outward call of the Gospel.
- C. Until that happens man will resist the gospel message and the grace of God
- D. However, once he has been "born again" and has a heart that is now inclined toward God, the grace of God will irresistibly draw Him to put his faith in Christ and be saved.
- E. These two acts (regeneration and faith) cannot be separated from one another.
- F. They are so closely connected that we often cannot distinguish between them.

# **Perseverance of the Saints**

**Text:** John 6:37-39,

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

## **Introduction:**

- A. Another passage of Scripture that clearly taught the Perseverance of the Saints is John 10: 27, 29.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

- B. This particular aspect of the doctrines of grace is not any different from those previously considered in that it was also clearly taught by our Lord Himself.
  - 1. It is important to note that this doctrine is not entitled "eternal security" but perseverance of the saints.
  - 2. There is a valid and needed distinction between the two.
  - 3. Perseverance includes eternal security, but what the Lord and the Apostles taught encompasses much more.
  - 4. The truth of eternal security places great emphasis on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ **for** the believer.

5. Perseverance of the saints begins here but also goes on to emphasize the work of Christ **in** the believer.
  6. It is certainly true that the sheep receive eternal life, that they shall never perish, and that no one is able to wrestle them out of God's hand. They are eternally secure.
  7. It is also true that the "sheep" hear the voice of the Shepherd and they follow him – both initially and continuously.
  8. This is what marks them as genuine sheep is that they continue to hear and continue to follow.
- C. The same belief is confirmed in those churches who came together and set forth their beliefs in the 1689 London Confession of Faith.
1. **Chapter 17** of this Confession defines the Perseverance of the Saints.
  2. And **chapter 18** defines the Assurance of Grace and Salvation.
  3. Perseverance of the Saints states that all who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.

## I. **Perseverance of the Saints does not mean "once saved always saved" in the sense many use it today.**

- A. This corruption of the doctrine is very popular today, but has never been a true representation of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

- B. "Once saved always saved" should be named "Perseverance of the sinner" instead of "the saint".
- C. This doctrine teaches that man can be saved by Christ and then sin habitually, do whatever he wants, and then still "persevere to the end".
- D. The doctrine of the "Perseverance of the saints" does not teach this!
  - 1. Perseverance of the saints teaches that when God regenerates a sinner the sinner is saved and will never "not" be saved.
  - 2. **And** because he is saved he will **show forth** the **fruits of that salvation**.
  - 3. An elect sinner is saved by Christ and likewise they persevere because of Christ in them.
- E. God saved the individual and He will sanctify him until the end when he is ultimately glorified, and taken into heaven.
- F. This does not mean that man has a license to sin.
  - 1. Those who think they have a license to sin are not changed and saved by grace.
  - 2. They are still in their sin.
  - 3. Those who are saved by grace and changed, desire to show forth the fruits of that salvation.
- G. Thus when properly understood we see that the "Perseverance of the Saints":
  - 1. Does not mean that all those who merely appear to have faith (i.e., said a certain prayer, walked down the church isle, joined a church, were baptized, etc.) will be kept by God and will therefore persevere to the end.

2. There are many people who profess to be believers but then later fall away.
3. Instead, Perseverance of the Saints means that all those who have a genuine faith in Christ will **be kept by God forever** and will persevere to the end.
4. There are many who profess to be Christians that trust in their own works, goodness, merits for their salvation.
5. These people are trusting in their own "righteousness, instead of Jesus' blood, and do not have true faith in Jesus Christ.
  - Then, later on when they may get discouraged they fall away.
  - This **does not prove** that they were saved and then lost their salvation!
  - What it does prove is that they never were regenerated and "said" they had faith when they really did not have genuine faith.
  - The Apostle John clearly described such people in 1 John 2:19.

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

- It is clear from this passage that those who profess faith in Christ, appear to be true believers, and later fall away, were never really a part of God's people in the first place.
- H. There are many proof Scriptures, a few of them are:

John 6:37-39, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."

1. Here we are told that the Father's will for the Son is that the Son loses none of those that were chosen and given to Him.
2. Thus, in order for an elect person to be lost, the Son would either have to disobey the Father's will, or be incapable, in His power, to prevent the loss of those given to Him by the Father!
  - Consequently the only way a believer could be lost is for the Son of God to sin (which is impossible) or for the Lord Jesus Christ be powerless to keep them. Since He has "all power", that will can never happen!

John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

1. Jesus says that "His sheep (the elect) "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."
  - The nature of sheep to follow the Divine Shepherd.
  - Thus, if anyone fails to follow the Shepherd, that person was never really a sheep.
2. He continues in verses 28-29, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my

hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

- There is no one that will argue that nothing can take a believer out of the Father's hand.
- Those who disagree with this doctrine say that "a person might take them self out of the Father's hand.
- However, the verse does not say that the believer is holding tightly to the Father's hand.
- Rather it says that the Father is holding tightly to the believer.

Illustration:

When an earthly father is holding his child's hand while crossing a busy road, he holds on to the child's hand tightly.

Even if the child releases his grip the father does not release his.

Thus the security of that child is not up to the child. He does not merely hold out a stick and tell the child to hold on to the other end of it and just leave it up to the child's decision as to whether to let go and wander into traffic or not.

In the same way, Omnipotent God holds us tightly in His hand. Therefore, we will never be loosed from His grip and perish because He promises that we "will never perish".

How could He make that promise if it were possible for us to get loose from His grip and perish? It is not possible.

3. Note the words of the Apostle Paul in II Timothy 1:12.

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

- In today's world there seems to be no absolute positives.
- There are a lot of "if," "buts," "perhaps," and "we assume."
- How refreshing to read Paul words "I know!"
- Then he adds "I am persuaded"
- This is conviction based on fact!
- The fact that Christ is able to keep him (and you and I)!
- He has assurance of the fact – **faith**.
- And the influence of that fact – Faith rules the heart.
- By faith, he has committed the keeping of his soul to the Lord.
- He understood very clearly that Christians do sin, but that Christ is able to keep them from falling.

II Timothy 4:18, "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen."

I Thessalonians 5:23-24, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray* God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of

our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it.*"

I Peter 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

#### I. Puritan Quotations on Perseverance of the Saints:

"God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' perseverance depends. That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast, that neither sin, death, nor hell, can break it asunder." **Thomas Watson**

"In our first paradise in Eden there was a way to go out but no way to go in again. But as for the heavenly paradise, there is a way to go in, but not a way to go out." **Richard Baxter**

"It may be that we are sinful; but God did not love us for our goodness, neither will he cast us off for our wickedness. Yet this is no encouragement to licentiousness, for God knows how to put us to anguishes and straits and crosses, and yet to reserve everlasting life for us." **John Cotton**

"Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling, yet they are kept from falling altogether." **William Secker.**

"This truth is perceived [perseverance of the saints] and made certain in us in the following ways:

1. First, by a certain spiritual sense in which the grace of God now present becomes known and evident to the believer.
2. Second, by the gift of discernment through which believers distinguish true grace.
3. Third, by the whisper and witness of conscience in which grace and salvation are made fast for believers, just as sin and death for unbelievers.
4. Fourth, the Spirit of God so confirms to believers these ways of perceiving that they have the same certainty as faith itself...This certainty follows upon the perceiving of faith and repentance, where the free covenant of God is rightly understood." William Ames

## **II. This doctrine does not permit believers to live a lazy and rebellious Christian life.**

- A. Opponents of the doctrine of Perseverance of the Saints say that the doctrine teaches a license to sin with an open door to heaven.
- B. This is grossly untrue, and a complete distortion of what Perseverance of the Saints actually teaches.

John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

1. Since a true believer is born again by the Holy Spirit, he loves the Lord Jesus Christ with all his heart and therefore naturally desires to keep His commandments.
2. The change of heart that the Holy Spirit makes in regeneration, as well as the indwelling presence of the Spirit in the believer, ensures that the believer will continue to love Christ.

3. Of course, the amount of love for Christ varies with the individual.
4. Understandably, a more mature Christian will have a deeper love for Christ than a babe in Christ.
5. However, all of God's children love their Savior and will strive to please Him each and every day of their lives.
6. This is not done in order to obtain salvation, or even to maintain salvation, because that would turn salvation by grace into salvation by works.
7. Rather, Christians, or true believers keep His commandments out of love and gratitude for the One who shed His precious blood for their redemption.
8. Those who believe in the Perseverance of the Saints have never said that a Christians can live like any way they want and still expect to get into heaven.
9. They say, "Do you really love Christ? Then keep His commandments!"
10. Even though believers have a great love for the Lord, and strive to obey and please Him, human imperfection and the sinful flesh, causes a believer to fall into sin from time to time. **No one on earth is sinless.**

## Conclusion:

- A. But God will keep His saints.
- B. All those He elected, died for, and regenerated will be glorified.

- C. We are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves, for it is the gift of God, lest anyone should boast.
- D. We have no reason to boast about anything. Not even for making a decision for Christ.
- E. We serve a gracious and merciful God who chose us before the foundation of the world; who shed His precious blood which covered our sins; who changed our hearts so that we would willingly serve Him for all of eternity; who gave us the faith we need; and who holds us in His hand now and forever.
- F. To Him be all glory and praise forever and ever!