

I will be speaking on Unconditional Election. This is a continuation of my last sermon on the Doctrines of Grace- a collection of teachings that emphasizes that from start to finish salvation is the work of God alone. For those of you who weren't here, a brief recap.

In my last sermon I introduced the Doctrines of Grace. I spoke on Total Depravity, the doctrine that teaches that all mankind is comprehensively corrupted with no moral ability to seek God on his own. I said the doctrines of Grace are often remembered by the acrostic **TULIP** which stands for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and the Perseverance of the saints. The **main views** of on the subject of Original Sin can be summed up as:

**Pelagianism (Arminian)** – Man is morally capable of obeying God perfectly if he chooses. He can be saved if he wants to w/o any need for God's intervention. This view was condemned.

**Semi-Pelagianism** – Man is fallen, he needs the grace and quickening of God to respond to God's offer of salvation but he can cooperate with the grace of God. This is actually what most Christians seem to believe.

**Augustinian** – Man is hopelessly corrupt. Only by the Spirit regenerating his spirit can he come to God and receive salvation. **This is the correct view** and the official doctrinal position of the church.

### Unconditional Election

This is the doctrine that from all eternity God has chosen a select few to receive his salvation. God chooses some people according to the secret counsel of His will to be saved. Because God does the choosing it is also referred to as Sovereign Election. Closely related to this is the doctrine of Reprobation which is the idea that God chooses to pass over certain people leaving them in their sin so they will not be saved. They will go to hell. Election implies sinners like you and I end up receiving what we don't deserve- the grace and mercy of God. Reprobation implies those who are not saved receive His justice. This is a controversial doctrine which not every Christian believes in. The Arminians say God does not predestine some people to heaven and some people to hell. Why do they say this? They say everyone has free will, therefore everyone has the ability to be saved. This is the same view Pelagius had in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. They point to scriptures like this:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of **the world**! [John 1:29](#)

For God so loved **the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. [John 3:16](#)

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If **anyone** eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the **world**." [John 6:51](#)

that God was reconciling **the world** to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. [2 Corinthians 5:19](#).

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the **whole world**. [1 John 2:2](#)

who gave himself as a ransom for **all** people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. [1 Timothy 2:6](#).

But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death **for everyone**. [Hebrews 2:9](#)

This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants **all** people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. [1 Timothy 2:3-4](#)

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but **everyone** to come to repentance. [2 Peter 3:9](#).

And **everyone** who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. [Acts 2:21](#).

For my Father's will is that **everyone** who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.' [John 6:40](#)

Team Arminius wins? Does this mean that all, anyone, everyone, the whole world can be saved if they chose? No. I have already said from the doctrine of Total Depravity that no one can be saved because left to their own devices no one would ever come to Jesus to be saved. But the main problem with this view is that in the final analysis it reduces salvation to our personal choice. Therefore, we can also decide to turn away from Him and lose our salvation. Where then is the assurance of the Christian? These verses speak generally of God's will and provision for our salvation but they say nothing about our ability to come to Him on His own terms. For instance, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16. God has provided a way for men to be saved – believe in Jesus and you are guaranteed eternal life. What it doesn't say is that you can come on your own. In fact, Jesus explicitly said we cannot come to him on our own.

Position two is that God predestines some to salvation (Election). Others are not chosen and they will go to hell (Reprobation). Scriptures in favour of Election

He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them." **John 6:65**

For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love. **Ephesians 1:4**

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. **Ephesians 1:11**

But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased ..... **Galatians 1:15**

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. **Romans 8:29-30**. We don't talk like this in everyday colloquial English so with the help of the NLT these verses read like this **Romans 8:29-30 NLT**.

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.

Reprobation

The LORD works out everything to its proper end— even the wicked for a day of disaster. **Proverbs 16:4**

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," <sup>8</sup> and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." **1 Peter 2:7-8**

For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people..... **Jude 4**. They were marked out or ordained for condemnation.

Perhaps no other scripture explains these doctrines as clearly as Romans 9:10-23.

And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." **Romans 9:10-13**

---God makes it clear here that it was His choice alone to bless Jacob and hate Esau. It had nothing to do with anything the children had done or would have done later in life. They were not even born yet.

**<sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on human will or exertion,<sup>[a]</sup> but on God, who has mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this**

**very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. Romans 9:14-18**

What if a millionaire walks up the aisle and says everyone sitting on my right hand, I am giving you a million pounds each and will pay for you to have an all-expenses paid holiday to wherever you go? But to those on his left he says to them, well sorry, I have no more money so you get nothing. Is he being unfair? Of course not. It is his money to spend as he chooses. Likewise, God is under no obligation to show mercy to anyone. According to the secret counsel of His will he decides who will receive His mercy. To all others he hardens their hearts so they refuse Him and receive His justice. When the Bible says God hardens the hearts of whomever He wills it doesn't mean that he takes an innocent soul and compels him to become evil. There is no such thing as an innocent person (For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory). God hardens hearts by leaving them in their sin, leaving them to do what they have always wanted to do in the first place.

**<sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— Romans 9:19-23**

What right then has God to lay the blame for their sins on people whose heart He hardens as described earlier? Paul does not fully explain why God does this in these verses but he does point out God has every right as the potter to preserve some people for himself and others are intended for destruction. God does these things in part to demonstrate His hatred for sin. He also does it to show the greatness

of His glory and character- his goodness, patience, mercy and love towards those He has forgiven.

## Conclusion and Summary

17. **Predestination and Election** Predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he has consistently decreed by his counsel which is hidden from us to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen in Christ out of mankind and to bring them through Christ to eternal salvation as vessels made for honour. Hence those granted such an excellent benefit by God are called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working at the appropriate time. By grace they obey the calling; they are freely justified, are made sons of God by adoption, are made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, they walk faithfully in good works and at the last by God's mercy attain eternal happiness. The reverent consideration of this subject of predestination and of our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and inexpressible comfort to the godly and to those who feel within themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, putting to death the deeds of the sinful and earthly nature and lifting their minds up to high and heavenly things. This consideration establishes and confirms their belief in the eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ and kindles a fervent love towards God. But for inquisitive and unspiritual persons who lack the Spirit of Christ to have the sentence of God's predestination continually before their eyes is a dangerous snare which the devil uses to drive them either into desperation or into recklessly immoral living (a state no less perilous than desperation). Furthermore we need to receive God's promises in the manner in which they are generally set out to us in Holy Scripture, and in our actions we need to follow that will of God which is clearly declared to us in the Word of God. Amen.

In my next message I will continue on the Doctrines of Grace speaking about Limited Atonement.