

Romans 11:33-36
“Chosen but Free!”
July 15th 2012

Introduction

I was walking across a bridge recently. I spied this guy who looked like he was ready to jump off.

"Don't jump!" I said.

"Why not?" he said. "Nobody loves me."

"God loves you," I said. "You believe in God, don't you?"

"Yes, I believe in God," he said.

"Good," I said. "Are you Christian or Jewish?"

"Christian," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "Protestant or Catholic?"

"Protestant," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "What kind of Protestant?"

"Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "Independent Baptist or Southern Baptist?"

"Independent Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "New Evangelical/Moderate Independent Baptist or Conservative Independent Baptist?"

"Conservative Independent Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist or Lose-Your-Salvation Armenian Conservative Independent Baptist?"

"Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist OR Historical Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist?"

"Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist OR For Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist?"

"Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said.

"Pro-Disney Boycott Pro-Life Unashamed Fundamentalist Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist OR Anti-Disney Boycott Pro-Choice Unashamed Fundamentalist Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist?"

"Pro-Disney Boycott Pro-Life Unashamed Fundamentalist Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist," he said.

"Me, too!" I said. "KJV Only Pro-Disney Boycott Pro-Life Unashamed Fundamentalist Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist OR Modern Versions Pro-Disney Boycott Pro-Life Unashamed Fundamentalist Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist?"

"MODERN VERSIONS Pro-Disney Boycott Pro-Life Unashamed Fundamentalist Against Women in Ministry Dispensational Premillennial Calvinistic Conservative Independent Baptist" he said.

"Auuggghh!!! You heretic!" I said. And I pushed him over!

➤ Now obviously this is fictional story – this did not really happen

- But it is a great picture of the church today
- We are agree on 95 of things but if we can find one we are so quick to divide churches, not speak to one another and declare each other hypocrites

I was speaking at a Baptist Revival – some friends of mine were going to Baptist church in Texas and there pastor asked if they knew anyone who would be good for a special revival weekend and they said, oh Jason Duff – he yells and get all sweaty, kind of strange in Calvary Chapel but perfect for a Revival

- So I was contacted and agree to it and the first night we talked about salvation and commitment to Jesus and it was such a great night – but then I felt lead to talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Now I am not new to the South or to Baptist theology so I could try to claim ignorance but I knew what I was lead to do would not go over so good

- and it didn't – let just end the story right there
 - but these kind of things in the church really break my heart and I think I have the Lord's heart on this – I think it breaks His heart too
- I mean we can argue over terms like “filled with the Spirit” or “baptized in the Spirit” and we spend all our time arguing we miss experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives
- We can argue over the gifts of the spirit and we yell back and forth, not for today, no you need them today you uninspired heretic – we argue and miss what the scriptures says is the greatest gift – love

“And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.” – I Corinthians 13:13

And probably the greatest example of this in Christendom over the past 500 years is the debate over God's sovereignty and man's free will

- The debate over whether God chooses us to be saved and that is what's saves us or is it our response to the gospel that saves us
 - For 500 years the church has been arguing and literally in bygone year setting one another on fire (in love of course – set you on fire in love) – over this debate

And this Wednesday Night we really get to ground zero of the debate as we have come to Romans 9, 10 and 11

- Wednesday Night we will tear apart the text, see what God was saying about the matter through the apostle Paul and what He was not saying
 - Hope you can be with us

But this weekend I thought we would get in depth on the main issue

- now it is a rule that when you are a guest speaker, when you are covering for someone on vacation you don't want to address controversial subjects
 - just tell the people Jesus loves them and go along your merry way
- but for three reasons we are going to throw caution to the wind this morning

#1 – I do not consider myself a guess speaker – I am one of the teaching pastors at this church and I fully believe one day I will be one of the men held accountable by the Lord for what you were taught

#2 – it comes from Romans 9-11

#3 – I know in the past this congregation has been hurt deeply by this debate and it is my heart and Pastor's Rob's heart that that would never happen again

So we begin by understanding a little history...

Although trained in the reformed tradition, Jacobus Arminius had serious doubts about the doctrine of "reformed theology" as taught by the followers of John Calvin. Basically John Calvin

or more properly his followers developed a series of teaching, summed up in the acronym T-U-L-I-P

T-U-L-I-P

Total Depravity – Man is totally depraved to the extent that he cannot respond to God

Unconditional Election – there are no conditions by which God elects man to be saved, including repentance

Limited Atonement – Jesus atonement on the cross was not for the whole world but for the only the elect

Irresistible Grace - God woos the elect with grace that can not be resisted

Perseverance of the Saints – all that are truly elected will persevere to the end. (once saved, always saved)

Now before we go any further I totally understand that is simplistic definition of the TULIP and that many Godly wonderful men and women of faith in church history and today are what we term Calvinist – I read them, I love them, there are brothers and sisters in Christ in every way

- I disagree with extreme Calvinism as you will clearly be able to see as we continue on, but count those that hold to this belief as brothers and many of the old authors as essential to the Christian faith
 - But we need to start with a simple definition
 - So back to our history

Jacobus Arminius was a pastor of the Reformed congregation in Amsterdam in 1588, but during his fifteen years of ministry there, he began to question many of the conclusions of Calvinism.

- He left the pastorate and became professor of theology at the University of Leyden.
 - It was his series of lectures on election and predestination that led to a violent and tragic controversy.

After his death in 1609, his followers developed the Remonstrance of 1610 which outlined the "Five Points of Arminianism."

- This document was a protest against the doctrines of the Calvinists, and was submitted to the State of Holland.

In 1618, a National Synod of the Church was convened in Dort to examine the teachings of Arminius in the light of Scripture.

- After 154 sessions, lasting seven months, the Five Points of Arminianism were declared to be heretical.

The response to the five points of Arminianism which was basically the reverse of the five points of Calvinism, was TULIP that we already defined, and as I said earlier the church has now been at war for those who can't just love, for 500 years

- After the synod of Dort, many of the disciples of Arminius, such as Hugo Grotius, were imprisoned or banished and beaten
 - Arminianism was brought to prominence by John Wesley who took up some of the teachings of Arminianism, the movement began to grow, and it affected the Methodist tradition as well as the beliefs of most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

So who is right?

- well it is my belief as well as Pastor Rob's and most Calvary Chapel Pastors that the scripture teaches both sides
 - not both sides of some man made five points exactly
 - but both sides of the fact God is sovereign, totally in control and in His sovereignty, He allows man to be have a free will and holds him responsible for the decisions he makes with that free will

Now I don't want to just state an opinion but I want us to see it in the scriptures

God is sovereign

- Man is not dictating to God what will happen, God is not sitting in heaven biting his nails hoping it all works out
 - From the Old Testament we see this and many other scriptures just like it

“The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, “Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand:” – Isaiah 14:24

- God does not bow to us, God says, if I say it, it is going to happen
 - And from the New Testament we see this and again there are many scriptures like it

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,” – Ephesians 1:11

- Paul is saying we have been chosen not because of our purpose, but because of His, not because of counsel of our will, but His
 - Well pastor Jason, now I am leaning Calvinist, because if God does what He wants and chooses us simply because of the counsel of His will, then how am I free
 - Again we must go to the scriptures

Man is free

- In the Old Testament we see that we have choice whether to follow the Lord or not

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” – Joshua 24:15

- God also spoke through the prophet Elijah

“And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” – 1 Kings 18:21

- In the Old Testament man had to make a choice, either follow God or don't follow God
 - The fact they had a choice shows you that they were free
- And in New Testament times it is the same
 - The most famous verse in all of scripture...

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life...“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” – John 3:16,18

- We are responsible to believe in the Lord, and whoever does can be saved, not just those God has chosen
 - You have a decision to make to serve the Lord
 - As Paul says to Timothy

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses

himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.” – 2 Timothy 2:20-21

- He goes on to say, flee youth lusts - You see this has implications for this Wednesday Night, where we will see Paul say in Romans 9 “what if God wants to make you a vessel prepared for destruction”
 - The Calvinist will say – yeah what if God wanted to do that, you could do nothing

Listen the fact that God could do whatever He wants, I am not arguing that

- The question is what does choose to do with His sovereignty
- Does He want to arbitrarily choose to send some people to heaven and some to hell – does He choose to make people vessels for destruction
- well according to the same guy who wrote Romans 9, Paul says in II Timothy 2, it is up to us and the choices we make of whether or not we are going to be a vessel of honor or dishonor

Jesus cried out to the people of Jerusalem

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!” – Matthew 23:37

- God wanted to save them, God wanted them to be His
 - But they used their free will to reject Him and God honored their decision

You see friends we see this balance – that God is sovereign, yet man is free all through the scriptures

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” – John 1:12-13

- do you see the balance?
 - Verse 13, the second half of that verse is used all the time to show, we have no free will, it’s not the will of man
 - But verse 12 right before it says, as many as received Him, to those who believed
 - We see it again in John 6

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” – John 6:37

- Again first part of the verse used all the time to show we don’t have a free will, it is just predetermined, but the second half says – the one that comes, I will be no means
 - That means I won’t cast out the one who comes freely

We see God’s Will and Man’s Will side by side in the scripture – in the Old Testament

God’s Will & Man’s Will

The Predicament of Joseph

“Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.” – Genesis 50:19-20

- God was working a divine plan, but Joseph brother freely choose to sell him into slavery and were held accountable for that choice
 - And in the New Testament

God’s Will & Man’s Will

The Crucifixion of Christ

“Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;” – Acts 2:23

- The crucifixion of Jesus was clearly determined by God to happen
 - Yet man took him by lawless hands, of their own free will

God's Will & Man's Will

The Betrayal of Christ

“And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” – Luke 22:22

- It was determined Judas would betray Christ, but God holds Judas responsible for his free decision

God's Will & Man's Will

The Stumbling of Israel

“Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.” – 1 Peter 2:7-8

- They were appointed to do so
 - But they are responsible because it came about by being disobedient to the Word

Well isn't God just inspiring people to do what He wants – so it seems like we have free will, but really it is just God working behind the scenes – that is what

Jonathan Edwards believed

- but hold on just a second
 - So God is inspiring people to sin against His Will
- God is inspiring Judas to betray Christ, inspiring the mob to crucify Christ, inspiring Joseph's brother to try and kill him – Inspiring Jews to not believe???

No way Jose... but not my opinion, the scriptures..

“Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” – James 1:13-14

We are tempted by our own desires, our own free will, our own nasty old man

- Truly – Solomon the wisest man ever summed it up pretty good when he said **“Truly, this I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes.” – Ecclesiastes 7:29**

God totally knows the future and speaks of it as if it already has happened because to Him it has, but holds us responsible to obey and listen to him

- this is seen beautifully illustrated in Acts 27
- Paul is on his way to Rome, but the ship is in trouble, a great storm is all around them
- But Paul reassures his fellows travelers in advance

“Not one of you will be lost, only the ship” – Acts 27:22

- But a few verses later he warns them...

“Unless these men stay with the ship, you can not be saved” – Acts 27:31

- You see both are true, God knew in advance and revealed to Paul that none would drown, but He also knew it would be through their free choice to stay on the ship that this would be accomplished

Again it may sound like I am one sided in my opinion, but that is not true, back to T-U-L-I-P

T-U-L-I-P

Total Depravity – Man is totally depraved to the extent that he cannot respond to God

- I believe the scripture teaches that there we are dead in our trespasses and sins – Ephesians 2:1

And that no one seeks after God – Romans 3:11

- of course, just a side note, the next verse 12, it is because we have turned aside
 - we are dead and unrighteous because we have chosen freely to be
 - but that aside

Apart from Christ we are dead, we don't seek after God

- but what does that mean?
 - The Calvinist will say – a dead man can do nothing – and I agree
 - I can do nothing do nothing to save myself, I can't earn it our deserve it
- But did Paul mean that we were dead in the sense that all of our capacity to respond to God is gone

I don't think so

- for again, same author, Roman chapter one says,

“For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.*” – Romans 1:20-21

- God has revealed to the world, those who are dead in their trespass and sins things in nature, things inside them – so that they we have no excuse not to respond to God

Adam and Eve were dead in their sin

- Yet they could hear and respond to God
 - And not just words, but they seem to understand what He was saying in Genesis 3

Death in scripture often means separated from God

- it certainly does and every Calvinist would agree in Rev 20, the second death, we are not someday if we are not saved be annihilated, no we are going to be separated, functional, yet separated from God
 - that is state of man without Christ now

We are totally depraved

- We can not save ourselves
- We can not figure things out on our own
- But can we respond to God initiation, to God's wooing – yes and we must!

Unconditional Election – there are no conditions by which God elects man to be saved, including repentance

- Are there conditions for salvation?
 - There are no conditions for God giving salvation – again we do not earn it in any way – it is His gift and His work
 - But there are condition for receiving the salvation He purchased Himself

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, - Acts 16:31

- We are to believe – that term doesn't just mean to intellectually agree there is a God but to cast all of who you are upon Him
 - We are to believe, we are to confess

“if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” – Romans 10:9

- Notice “if” – if you confess

- Again are their conditions for the Lord to give salvation – no you have not earned a thing
- Are there conditions to receive Salvation – yes
- You have to respond to what God initiates by believing and confessing, I surrender Lord

Limited Atonement – Jesus atonement on the cross was not for the whole world but for the only the elect

- Is Jesus atonement limited?
 - Well it is limited in its application – only those who believe and confess are saved
 - Without the understanding you would have universalism, the whole world would be saved
- But Jesus atonement is not limited in its scope

“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” – I John 2:2

- Jesus died for the sins of the whole world

Irresistible Grace - God woos the elect with grace that can not be resisted

- I agree God’s will is going to be accomplished, but can you as an individual resist what God wants to do?
 - Yes – remember Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!” – Matthew 23:37

- Or Acts 7:51...

God is not willing that any should perish

“The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” – 2 Peter 3:9

- God desire, God’s will is that all men be saved

“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” – 1 Timothy 2:4

- But man resists the will of God

“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so do you.” – Acts 7:51

- Clearly God will is going to be done in the world, but your part in that, well, the scripture to indicate you can resist God, you can go the opposite direction He intends for you
 - And that can’t be a good thing

Again I think in the scripture there is a balance

- I have leaned in one direction to this morning because quite honestly the hostility is one direction, no body seems to question whether or not God is sovereign, just whether or not we are truly free and responsible
 - are there scriptures that seem to indicate God forced His will upon us
 - yes – Wednesday Night we are looking at Romans 9 and try to bring a balance – because its there

Sometimes Calvary Pastors are guilty of explaining all of God’s sovereignty away on the alter of Man’s free will

- I myself have said things like – “God would never forced Himself upon you, for forced love is rape”

- But the more I think on that – I know if my child was running toward the street, you bet I would force myself upon them and it would be the most loving thing I can do
- God does sovereignty do things friends
- But to use the same illustration, some would say, but what God does do is force His will on some of his kids and save them from destruction, but He choose to not save others

Now can you image – if my child is running toward the street and I force my love upon them, you would say amen

- But if I sat back and let other just go, well then I would be cold and unloving
 - And that goes against everything we understand about God and who He is
- We see the balance, we see the strain and to me it is best understood in what the Apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 1:2

“elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” – I Peter 1:2

- Now listen to me, because I think this is key
 - I do agree it is rather silly to say, I think I got this for men that are far smarter that I even pretend to be have debated this issue for 500 years without resolve

But Peter says we are elect, chosen by God, according to the foreknowledge of God

- Now listen to that carefully not “because” of the foreknowledge of God – that one side of the coin “Arminianism” – He chooses me because I choose him
 - No – we are not chosen because of the foreknowledge of God
- Nor does Peter say we are elect “apart” from the foreknowledge of God – that’s the other side of the coin “Calvinism” – God knowing what I would do had nothing to do with the process

Not because of or apart from, but according to, or in conjunction with

- you see something that boggles are little puny human brains is God is outside of time
 - that is why He can speak of the future as if it already has happened

We live sequentially – we see this week and then it followed by the next week

- God is outside of time, so He sees it all happening at once
 - We live sequentially, and listen, we think sequentially – I ask my wife to marry me, because I asked and I fooled her, she said yes!

But then we transferee that to God

- what happened? – Did God choose me because I choose Him or did I choose God because He choose me

But God does not think sequentially – He is not sitting in heaven waiting to see what you will do so He can respond?

- He has both known what you would do freely and has chosen, elected you freely from before the foundations of the earth
 - Not because of what you would do
 - Not apart from what you would do
 - But according, in conjunction to what He knew for sure you would do

You see some people see it a great condition

- the Calvinist Charles Spurgeon said, “God’s sovereignty and man’s free will are two parallel lines that only cross in the mind of God”
 - but to me its not a contradiction, but a mystery

A contradiction would be me saying – God is sovereign, God is not sovereign

- that’s a contradiction

A contradiction is to say – man is free, man is not free - That’s a contradiction

- But to say God is sovereign (completely in control) and yet man is free (totally free)
 - That is not a contradiction but a mystery, a mystery we see all over the scriptures

And I think we need to mystery – to take it back to where we started today

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?” – Romans 11:33-34

When did we figure out everything about God?

- It amazes me on both side of this debate, oh we have discovered the deep things of God, you have to be able to understand it, to make sense of it
 - Really – when did that apply to God

I Timothy 3:16 – great is the mystery of Godliness

- I mean - The trinity???
 - You have the figured out
 - God is three, God is one
 - Make up your mind
 - No - we see both in the scripture
- Our how about the incarnation???
 - Jesus was fully God – got it
 - Jesus was fully man – huhh?
 - How can you be 100 percent of two things
 - Both are true – both are seen in scripture

Don't run from the mystery!!!

- some pastors, teachers and Christians want to get rid of God's sovereignty
 - and many more try to get ride of man's free will and responsible
 - to me - both sides are important and I loose something when I pick one or the other

You see as I am going though the scriptures there are times when I am hit with a verse that lets me know God is completely in control

- and there is days I need to trust like a Calvinist – that God is control – that some idiot, (can I say that in church) that sum, sum, sum, sum idiot is not going to rip off God's plan for me – I need that

And then there are other times I go through the Word and I read how God expects me to respond and obey

- and I need that – I need to at times preach and live and believe like an Arminius – like God is going to hold me responsible, because He will
 - Great is the mystery of Godliness
 - Don't run from that – embrace that and let it lead you to worship someone that far higher than you
 - One that you can trust with every fiber of your being that is He is got you
 - And one you know is calling you to respond and obey

What do you need to trust God like a Calvinist today for?

What do you need to respond to God like an Arminius with?

You need to remember God is sovereign, because He is!

You need to respond like God will hold you accountable because He will!