

# **“Man – His Salvation – Chosen or Free”**

**Romans 11:33-34**

## **Introduction**

- Tonight we continue our series we have entitled “ground work – laying a foundation for faith.”
  - The reason we are doing this is it is so important that every one of us are able to give a reason for the things we believe.

**“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.” – I Peter 3:15**

- We are supposed to understand what we believe and as the verse above states, we are to consider, ‘why’ we believe it.
  - Why do we hold the convictions that we do.

## **We looked first at God – His Existence...**

- So often we are told that smart people believe in things like evolution and weak-minded people believe in God.
  - But as we saw there are some great reasons to believe that something out there exists greater than yourself.

## **Next we look at God – His Word**

- If we are going to study theology, the study of God, then we need to have some logical reasons we believe He exists and we need have a reliable source to learn about Him
  - And although there are 27 books consider ‘religious’ in our world, all teaching different things about god – only one is back up with consistency of scripture, archeological evidence, fulfilled prophecy, external sources and scientific facts.

## **Then we considered that God is the Trinity**

- He is one God, but One God that exists in three persons.
  - God the Father.
  - God the Son.
  - God the Holy Spirit.

## **Then we considered God the Father**

- And we looked at His attributes or as we called them His perfections because He does not just love, but He is everything Love is and nothing that love is not.
  - We saw that in His perfections and also in His names that He chose to be called be, they reveal to us so much of who God is.

## **Then we considered God the Son**

- That He did not begin with Matthew 1 and Luke 2 but He has always existed in eternity past with God the Father.
  - But then took on flesh to be a sympathetic high priest, reveal God to us and die in our place.
  - He died on Calvary’s cross and three days later rose again.

## **Then we dealt with God the Holy Spirit**

- That He is not an “it” or a “force”, He is God.
  - Sent to convict the world of sin, lead us into all truth and transform us into different men and women.
  - Jesus never intended us to do life and ministry apart from the Holy Spirit – so we must not grieve or quench Him, but be filled with Him.

## **Last week we moved on to Mankind**

- We were created by God with both spirit and body, with the spirit foremost but when man fell, the body took control and we started to die physically and spiritually – so Jesus had to come to die for you and me – to impart righteousness to us.

**But as we left off last week, the question was is salvation available for all – this topic has caused much argument**

- 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 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.

**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.

**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 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**

**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.

**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.

**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 say...**

**“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, and 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**

**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
  - That no one seeks after God. – Romans 3:11

**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.

### **We are totally depraved**

- We cannot save ourselves.
- We cannot 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 conditions 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 no earned a thing.
  - Are there are 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 that 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 cannot 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's will is going to be done in the world, but your part in that, well, the scripture indicated 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**

- 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” – 1 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 than I even pretend to be have debated this issue for 500 years without resolve.

**But Peter says we are the 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 the 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 chose Him or did I choose God because He chose 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 contradiction**

- 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 it’s 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 sides of this debate, oh we have discovered the deep things of God, and 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 or 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 – huh?
- 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 he 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 Armenist – 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.