

**The 1689 Confession of Faith; Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 – “Of God’s Decree”, Message # 23 –  
“The Means of Our Prayers”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class  
by Pastor Paul Rendall, on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

**Paragraph 6** – As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so he hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto; wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

**1. God uses the Means of Our Prayers in relation to fulfilling His own Purposes.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2: 1-6** – “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

It is by means of prayer for those who are in authority over us in political government that a quiet and peaceable life, being lived in all godliness and reverence is established, according to God’s decretive will. This does not mean that Christians will always find that quiet and peaceable life all of the time. But God uses prayer to bring them every blessing which He knows will be good for them, this one included.

It is also prayer which is the means whereby God’s elect people can see God’s decree concerning who will be saved come to fruition. It is God’s will of desire that we pray for all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We do not know the secret things which belong to God’s decree of who is chosen unto eternal life and who is not, but God has given us the gospel of His Son and Paul teaches us to pray in order that none might be excluded from being saved, but those who exclude themselves by their unbelief. Therefore, we will pray for all men and God will work His purpose according to His eternal counsel, that His elect might be brought to Him by His using the means of our prayers in connection with the working of His Spirit, to fulfill His eternal purpose.

The atonement of Christ to satisfy for sins is sufficient to save all who will come to Him. If they do not come, it is not His fault. And yet, if they are saved, if they do choose to come to Him, believe on Him, and be saved, it is all of His grace, His working, and doing, which has enabled them to believe and be saved. All that the Father has given Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me, I will not cast out. (John 6: 37)

**2. In our Progressive Sanctification God uses the Means of Believers cleansing themselves from all dishonorable thoughts and actions.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2: 20-22** – “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.”

The way that this is worded here by the apostle Paul, we see that there are in the great house of Christ’s visible Church, different kinds of vessels; that is people who He has appointed for honor, and people whom He has appointed to dishonor, according to His decree. They will become evident according to the way that they conduct themselves in relation to the other members of the church. There will be people who are in Christ’s visible church who, although they have made profession of faith and have joined the church, are nevertheless, not true believers. Those who would truly know the Lord and walk with Him and be sanctified by Him, and be useful for Him, the Master, must cleanse themselves from those who

are dishonorable; that is, cleanse themselves from all of the sinfully worldly attitudes, actions, and practices of those persons who are actually walking in a disorderly, worldly, and compromising way, not really trying to keep the commandments of God in the way that they should do, in purity of heart and life. We should always remember, brethren that we have been called to be holy in all of our behavior.

**John Gill says – “There are not only vessels of gold and silver...”** There are people who are members of the church who are comparable to gold and silver, for their worth and value, and preciousness in the sight of Christ, those who He accounts His jewels, and peculiar treasure. This is because of their excellence and usefulness in the church, by reason of those differing gifts bestowed upon them; and for their lustre and purity, both of doctrine and of life; for their solidity and duration:

**“But also of wood, and of earth”:** there are others in a visible church state, who are like to dry wood, destitute of the grace of God, and are fit matter for Satan to work upon, and by them raise and increase the flames of contention and division, and will be fit fuel for everlasting burnings; and there are others who are sensual, and carnal, and worldly, who mind earth, and earthly things, and have no spirituality, nor spiritual mindedness in them:

**and some to honor;** who are designed for honourable service, and behave honorably, and are worthy of honour in the church; are honourable officers, or members in it; and are to the honour of Christ, and the Gospel; and shall at last enjoy honour, glory, immortality, and eternal life.

**And some to dishonor;** who are to the disreputation of the church, the dishonor of religion, and scandal of the Gospel; by them God is dishonored, his ways evil spoken of, his doctrines blasphemed, and his name reproached; and who are themselves dishonourable among men now, and will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt hereafter.”