

An Introduction to the Doctrine of Election: Chosen by God

A Study in 1st Thessalonians

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1 Thessalonians chapter number one.

We have got some visitors back from Sunday morning. Is it Anthony over there? Is that correct? Anthony and your wife's name is Elizabeth and you all's last name is Booher. Ok, ok, right, B O O H E R? All right, very good. And they were in the {?} class this morning. Is that right? Good. I won't ask you how you liked it in case it was terrible and you gave me a thumb's up. All right. That is good. And they are working through on John Piper's book *Momentary Marriage* and Piper is a strong advocate of marriage and so I know that is going to be a good study. And then over here first time visitors with us on a Sunday night. Is that right? What are you all doing in church on Sunday night? Nobody goes to church on Sunday night much less visit a church. All right. Welcome. And then in that back row right there we have another set, right? And you all are... Sam, help me out. Taylor and Lynn. Ok, your last names? Law. All right, well welcome. That is not Debbie Smith right there. Has she been friendly? Right behind there? If she hasn't let me know. All right. Very good. Ok, good. All right. You can tell me afterwards the truth. All right.

Is there anyone else visiting? Anyone else back from Sunday morning? Anyone else? Well, of course, the {?} are back for Sunday night church as well and is always a joy. When are you all flying back? Tuesday. It is unfortunate that you have to go back to that side of the United States.

How long will it be, Kathy, till you abandon your loyalty to such a godless part of the world? California needs Jesus, too, a lot.

All right. 1 Thessalonians chapter number one verse number four, please. All right. I must confess to you that it is with trepidation that I tackle this subject tonight. Quite frankly, I am not looking forward to it. It is difficult. It is exceptionally difficult.

I was talking to Dr. Anderson who is the president of Appalachia Bible College Friday morning. We were having a private conversation about this. I was sharing with him what I am preaching about on Sunday night. He is so gracious. The grace just oozes out of that

man. He is just such a model of servant leadership and they are doing a great work up there in Appalachian Bible College for the cause of Christ and he said, "Never forget that revelation always trumps reason." Revelation, so that would be the Words of God, revelation always trumps reason. So I don't have to understand something to believe it. Reason is what we do in our minds. We reason. We are humans. We reason things out. Do we like to reason things out? We like to solve things. We like to fit it together. We like to understand it. That is how we are. I knee to understand this. Explain it to me. Who made us that way? God did, very intentional. But at the same time we are not God. We are not infinite beings. We are finite beings. This book contains things that we will not understand until the other side of glory and even then we are not sure. The Bible doesn't say that we are going to be infinite when we get on the other side of glory. It doesn't say we are going to be like God. That was Satan's lie in the garden. We are not promised to be gods. We are not promised that we will know everything like God knows everything. So we don't know. We just don't.

So let's look at 1 Thessalonians chapter one.

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.¹

There it is right there, your election of God.

I can still remember the time when I got introduced to the doctrine of grace or, in more particular, this election of God. It was {}, Oklahoma in 1995. I was there for Enoch, advanced non commission officer course. I was {} there for about three or four months. And I remember for the very first time being introduced to this concept of election and I went home and I could not go to sleep. I could not believe what I was hearing. I was so ill prepared for what I was hearing. I had been in church my entire life as a child and I had been part of Berean since 1988 faithfully attending Sunday after Sunday. I had been here for seven plus years with PCS out to Fort's Hill, Oklahoma en route to {} or {}, {} in Michigan. I was going to school by myself. And I remember, Bill, going home that night back to the billets wherever we stayed and going: Is this true? This can't be true. No way. I don't understand it.

And, quite frankly, I was exasperated that I hadn't been introduced to anything like this in my church.

Folks, there are hard things in the Bible. There are exceptionally hard things in the Bible and tonight we are confronted with one of them. We are just going to wrestle through it.

¹ 1 Thessalonians 1:1-4.

We are going to look at Bible text after Bible text. We are going to use this shopping cart as our illustration to help us understand this concept and in the end we are going to be confronted with the fact that God is good, that God is just and that he has the sovereign right to do as he pleases in the universe that he created. And that will hurt your head. There is no other way around it. You are not going to go home and figure this out. I don't have answers for you. My job is not to unpack all the answers, it is simply to make you aware of what the Word of God says and that is what I am going to do after I pray.

Would you help us, God? Would you help me? I want to be faithful like the apostle Paul who said that he declared the whole counsel. I recognize, first and foremost, God, that I must account to you for the manner in which I teach your Word to your people for whom you redeemed and so, dear God, it is a great privilege and an awesome responsibility to stand before people and to exegete your text, your Word, to unpack what the Bible obviously says in very clear terms. Help us to see it tonight in Jesus' name. Amen.

So here is our verse and I want to just show it to you in three different translations, the ESV, a very reliable word for word translation, the New American Standard Bible, another very reliable translation. Baptist preachers all across the United States use the King James, the New King James, the ESV and the NASB and they use them well and they are both all three on here good translations.

I wanted you to notice that this word election is translated chosen in the ESV and translated choice in the NASB.

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”²

“For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you.”³

“...knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you.”⁴

That is very specific when you see that in front of you, when you see his choice of you, when you see knowing that he has chosen you. When you read verse five that says:

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.”⁵

When he talks about the fact that he has great confidence that these brothers and sisters in Thessalonica are part of God's elect because when the gospel came unto them it came in much power or in power. This is precisely why we call people to put their faith in Christ at the invitation, David, and then we stop. This is exactly why. We can easily say, “Come forward and fill out a card.” We could easily say, “Pray this prayer.” We could

² 1 Thessalonians 1:4.

³ Ibid (ESV)

⁴ Ibid (NASB)

⁵ 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

use that model, but we don't know anything about the legitimacy or the authenticity or the realness of their conversion until, perhaps, months later. And that is particularly what he is referring to here. He has already preached the gospel to them. He has departed into another city. He cannot go back for he is not wanted in the city. He sends Timothy in there and Timothy comes back with a great report about that family and those brothers and that sister and how they have turned from idols and how that they are serving the one and true living God. And this is why Paul is able to say that he has great confidence of God's election of them, because he can see that the gospel is real to them. Real.

So we do not know who was converted this morning at the 10:45 service when I preached my heart out because I know of at least two men who are lost and keep coming to church week after week and I am praying, I am earnestly praying that God would open their hearts. I want to see these men come to Christ. I know who they are. I have met with them. I have shared the gospel with them. There was a young lady coming not the 8:30 service who needs to receive Christ. She needs to receive Christ. I am praying for salvation. And I am not leading any of them in a prayer. I am not. I am praying that the gospel will overwhelm them and they will say, "I need to be baptized and I need to join this church and I need to go forward and do this."

And that is when I will have some assurance that they are converted. And that is precisely what Paul is referring to here. {?} writes, "Election is both simple and complex. Therefore there is a need for both faith and humility, faith to believe the clear teaching of Scripture and intellectual humility not to go beyond what is written." That is so important. We do not take things to their logical conclusion. We stop where the Word of God stops. We do not say, "If this is true, then this must be true." And I will unpack that some more as we preach.

There are mysteries to the doctrine that cannot be explained logically or rationally due to the lack of revelation. Nevertheless, these mysteries can be believed. So here is our first Greek word. It is the word right there found in this text right here. The word right there that is translated either election or choose or chosen or choice. It is this one right here. Ok? The act of picking out, choosing, the act of God's free will by which before the foundation of the world he decreed his blessings to certain persons. That makes me uncomfortable even thinking that. I don't know why, but I do know why. I know why I am comfortable with it. I know why I am uncomfortable with it.

The word election is found, this particular word is found seven times. There are five different words. This particular word is found seven times. Election six, chosen once. Let me show you the ESV just as a way of comparison. Little small font, a little bit difficult to see, but I am going to unpack it in a larger slide.

Acts 9:15, Romans 9:11, Romans 11:5, 7 and 28, 1 Thessalonians four, the verse we are looking at and 1 Peter 1:10. And we will see that in a minute. Now I just want to show you how it is translated. Chosen, election, chosen, elect, election, chosen and election so that it gives you an idea that we have got one Greek word that sometimes we render choose, chosen, election, like that.

So did God choose to have a shopping cart with no idea what is in there or did God choose to have a box of stuffing mix, this one? Did God choose to have planters or did God just choose to have a shopping cart full of groceries and God is just waiting to find out what is in the shopping cart? Individual corporate. Because I have heard it explained corporate a lot. God chose to have a church. Just chose to have a church. Or did God choose not only to have a cart full of groceries, but God chose what was going to be in the cart? Individual or corporate.

Now did God choose based on his sovereignty or did God choose based on his prescience, pre science. Science is the act of knowing. Pre is before. Prescience is know something before. So do we have a God who chose what is going not be in the shopping cart or do we have a God who knew that the stuffing mix wanted to be in the shopping cart and the stuffing mix put itself in the shopping cart? There is a difference there. One is God says, "I want you in my shopping cart." The other is God looked forward into the corridor of time and said, "I can see that two syrups are going to jump in the shopping cart so therefore I will decree that the syrup is in the cart."

Sovereignty, he is in charge. That is going in the cart. Prescience he is all knowing so based on his ability to look into the corridor of time he waits until this syrup decides to get into the cart and then if the syrup gets in the cart he decrees that the syrup is on the list. That its he difference.

Now you say to me, "That is ridiculous pastor Sean, because I am not syrup. I am a being that make choices."

Sure. No, not quite. Actually you are dead just like this syrup. No way. I know I am not dead. Yeah, Ephesians. You know it. We don't have to unpack this. The Word of God makes it abundantly clear that when Adam sinned he died. And all have died in Adam. They are all dead. So while it is true that you go, "No way in the world are you going to compare me to complete buttermilk pancake mix, because I make decisions and I make choices," there is a spiritual component in which you are utterly dead.

But wait a minute. I know I breathe. I know I think. Yes, I know. But if you did not have to be regenerated, why does the Word of God tell you that you have to be regenerated? Why is there a necessity to be born again if you are all fine? The reality is the Word of God makes it abundantly clear and, oh, by the way, our article of faith number six is so clear on this matter that we actually use the language of no divine spark in you. There is nothing inside you that you can flame and get yourself going to get saved. Outside of God working in your life, you would never, ever come to Christ. You are not any different than this spam sitting on the shelf. You have no ability to move yourself into that cart. Outside of somebody grabbing you and moving you to the cart, you would never get into a shopping cart.

Now I know we don't think that way. We think I chose Christ. And it is true, you did choose Christ. I am not going to deny that. It is true you believed. It is true that you

turned. Paul even says that, 1 Thessalonians 1:9. They turned. But behind that, behind that turning, behind that choosing is a can of Spam that is sitting on the shelf that has no ability to move itself into the shopping cart. You can't. The Bible teaches it is abundantly clear in this matter. You can't move yourself to that cart. You have no idea how to get to that cart. You don't know when the cart is going by. You don't even know if that is the right cart to get in. You are as dead as this Spam outside of God's grace.

Yes, I know that makes us uncomfortable.

All right. Let's continue. Sure. Yes. We don't need to pretend like it doesn't. God doesn't tell us that we have to be comfortable with everything. I am not comfortable with hell. I am not comfortable with hell. It drives me crazy. I can tell you most recently I have been at the malls and I see masses of people and I think to myself, are all these people going to hell? I am so uncomfortable with it. I don't understand it.

So let's look at verse 15 of chapter nine of Acts.

“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.”⁶

Who is this chosen vessel, by the way, in Acts chapter number nine, church? Paul. Is that corporate or individual? Did God choose Paul? By name? Sure he did. Yeah, to be what? A chosen vessel and more particular the apostle to the Gentiles. Did God make that selection of Paul an apostle to the Gentiles hoping and praying that he would receive Jesus and based on receiving Jesus it would work out that he would become the... is that the way it worked? Boy, I sure hope he receives Jesus, because if he doesn't, this whole thing of being apostle to Gentiles is not going to work out very good.

Do you use where I am going with this?

Sure. Yeah. Yeah, the opposite. That is right. And left to his own devices he would have never ever chosen Christ. So the idea to say that what God did is he looked out in the corridor of time and saw the time that Paul prayed to receive Jesus and based on that he elected him is absolutely absurd, because we know Paul's life so that he would never have done that. Some teach that election of God is based on his foreknowledge or prescience of my choice of him. And we just said that, look, that just makes God subordinate to every human decision. He is no different at that point than you who have watched a football game before your buddy and you are calling shots ahead of time and he is so amazed and you are like... all I did was watch the football game before you.

Is that all God is? Is he just someone who watched the football game before us and so therefore he is calling the shots because he saw everything?

Now if you subscribe to that theory of how this election works, I want to ask you this question. Why then do you pray to him? Because his ability to influence is not based on

⁶ Acts 9:15.

his sovereignty. It is based on his awareness of what happened already. That is pretty weak, isn't it?

Romans 9:11. You can turn there because we are going to look at this passage in great detail because it is an essential package to this. Romans nine, please. And verse 11 is the word that we are looking at in particular.

“(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;)”⁷

So now let's look in who we are referring to in this passage. Paul is actually going back to the Old Testament and he is using Jacob and Esau as his sermon illustration. That is what he is doing. He is using Jacob and Esau as his sermon illustration here. So let's begin reading, let's see, let's try around verse three.

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (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. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.⁸

Now if there is any doubt in your mind as to is election predicated upon my good choice of God, that is to say that God looked out in the corridor of time and saw that I would make a good choice, I am more intelligent than the rest. I can understand the gospel better than everybody else. I could choose God when others didn't. That was a good thing. Read that Bible verse one more time and that puts that to utter rubbish.

“(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil...”⁹

⁷ Romans 9:11.

⁸ Romans 9:3-13.

⁹ Romans 9:11.

I don't know how else Paul could say it. They hadn't done anything.

“...that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)”¹⁰

So, once again, we do not have Jacob and Esau and God saw that Jacob wanted to be in the cart and Esau did not want to be in the cart. And so therefore God, knowing that Jacob wanted to be in the cart and Esau did not want to be in the cart and Jacob made.... that is not what it says. It says just the opposite. The purpose of God according to election.

Turn over to Romans chapter 11. Let's look at verse number five.

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”¹¹

Paul said the only reason there is a remnant right now is because of election of grace. That is the only reason. Left to their own devices there would be no remnant. Verse six.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded¹²

Ok, again, another verse that says that God did not elect Sean Harris to salvation because God looked in the corridor of time and saw that dad would move the family to Peterstown, West Virginia, a soul winner would witness to dad, dad would see the gospel, understand it intellectually and make a wise decision and thereby bring the family through his association... That is not what happened. Because if that was the case it would be of works. And we could talk about the fact that I chose Christ.

So what we have here is in verse seven, please notice, the election hath obtained it. So we have a corporate election of Israel, God's people. But they are not the elect. Within God's people called Israel there are some that are not converted. They are children of Abraham, but they are not converted. Every descendant of Abraham is not converted. Being a descendant of Abraham does not automatically mean you are converted. But the election hath obtained it. All right? Let's look at another one. Verse 28.

“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.”¹³

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Romans 11:5.

¹² Romans 11:6-7.

¹³ Romans 11:28.

And now we look at 1 Thessalonians 1:4, the text that we are preaching from. Look at this word brethren, knowing brethren. When Paul says that does he have particular people in mind? Is he thinking in terms of just a body, a massive body with no idea who they are? No. Could Paul have named names? Yes.

And then let's look at 2 Peter 1:10 which says:

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.”¹⁴

If this is only a corporate election whereby God has chosen to have a cart full of groceries with no idea outside of who knowing all things, but not because of anything that he chose, whether there is his hamburger helper or mac and cheese in it or Spam in it, then how in the world can I make my election sure? Because who makes the election sure here? Who does? I do. For whom? Myself. Dick, I can't make your election sure and you can't impact my election. And, oh, by the way, mom and dad, you can't impact your child's election either. They have to make sure their election is sure. They have to. It is an individual responsibility. It is a personal responsibility. The admonition here is to each individual to give diligence, to make sure your calling and election is sure. I can't do it for Jim McKenna and Jim McKenna can't do it for me. Grandparents cannot do it for their grandbabies. As much as you love your grandbabies, it is their responsibility to make their election and calling sure. I can't do it for you. You can't do it for me. I am to examine myself and do I see fruit of repentance in my own life? Do I see evidence of grace in my own life? Do I see a hunger and thirst for the things of God? Am I seeking the kingdom of God? Do I see repentance in my life? Do I see a desire for God's name and God's name to be glorified? Do I see an active prayer life? Do I see conquering of sin? These are all ways that someone makes their calling and election sure.

We are coming. It is there, brother. I am going to show it to you and we are going to love it. We are getting there. Absolutely. That is our conclusion. Yeah. There is a second one, just another variant of the same word.

“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”¹⁵

“And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.”¹⁶

Another example of how it is used. Does being chosen of God produce a Spirit of arrogance among the elect? Does being chosen of God, do we walk around arrogant about this? Absolutely not. Did Paul ever get to the point where he was arrogant about it? It was just the opposite. He couldn't get over it. He could not get over the fact that the chief of sinners was called. He would talk about it everywhere again. I can't believe that the guy who was persecuting the church more than anybody else was called.

¹⁴ 2 Peter 1:10.

¹⁵ Matthew 20:16.

¹⁶ Luke 23:35.

Paul was like, “God, of all the people you could have chosen, why did you choose me?”

How many can relate to that? The opposite is self righteousness. The opposite is that of course God chose me. I grew up in church. I have been a faithful Christian all my life and of course he chose me. Why wouldn't he? That is arrogant. That is failing to recognize that outside of God's sovereign grace I would still be on the shelf. So I say absolutely not. The elect understand that left to themselves they were spiritually dead and would never have chosen God.

How about Romans 16:13?

“Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord.”¹⁷

Is that individual or corporate? By name? How about this one? Revelation 17:14.

“... they... are called, and chosen, and faithful.”¹⁸

So we don't have any scenario whereby there is elect out there and they are not faithful. A characteristic of being elect is faithful. We don't have any scenario out there where they just live in any way they want, but, hey, they are elect and they can live like the devil, but they are elect. No. That is not what he says. One of the characteristics of the elect is that they are faithful.

Here is our last variant. Choose, choose out and make a choice. Pick out, choose, pick out, choose, pick out. So here is one.

“And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.”¹⁹

Folks, it doesn't get any clearer than that.

John 15:16.

“... but I have chosen you, and ordained you.”²⁰

Acts 15:7. Now look at this.

“And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”²¹

¹⁷ Romans 16:13.

¹⁸ Revelation 17:14.

¹⁹ Mark 13:20.

²⁰ John 15:16.

²¹ Acts 15:7.

So, let's say this and let's say it in no uncertain terms. Let's say unequivocally. Let's be ultra clear. Let's be uber clear. Nothing about the election of God negates the responsibility to believe the gospel. There is not one single person in all eternity that is saved outside of believing the gospel. There isn't anyone who is elect but doesn't have to believe the gospel. There isn't anyone who doesn't have to hear the Word of the gospel. There is no other means whereby the elect come to Christ but by the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no plan B.

How then do the elect come to God? Through the gospel. How? They hear and believe. Thus, this morning we preached our heart out. We did not say in any way, shape or form we did not say the elect are going to come to Christ whether I preach or not so there is no need to preach. We didn't say that this morning. Did you get any sense from the manner in which I was preaching this morning that I thought we don't have to be passionate and call people to repentance? No. Because not only has God ordained the elect, he has ordained the means whereby the elect come to Christ. And the means is faith in the gospel.

So nothing about election removes the human responsibility to believe the truth. Nothing, nothing. Ephesians 1:4.

“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.”²²

A couple of other passages. Ho about this one? 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.”²³

Now this verse right here on the screen in front of us tonight, this verse from the Lord Jesus Christ is what gives us great confidence in soul winning. It is what inspires us to preach the gospel. It is what encourages us, because Jesus said:

“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.”²⁴

So this is a great encouragement. I am not a used car salesman, John, and I go home at the end of the night when no one believed and go, “Oh, my goodness. What could I have said differently? How could I have packaged it more cleverly? What kind of different program could I have used? Maybe I should have done this. Maybe I should have done that,” and think to myself, it is all my fault. No. I trust that there are other sheep out there and they will hear his voice. They will. They will hear his voice. I am but one vessel trying to get them to hear his voice. That is all. And so you are you. And you are at

²² Ephesians 1:4.

²³ John 10:16.

²⁴ Ibid.

work and you are planting seeds. And you know that on Fort Bragg there are those that God has elected and he is calling them to yourself and that gives you great confidence that somebody is going to get saved. Somebody is going to come to Christ. Somebody is going to believe the truth.

Look at 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.”²⁵

They are excited about it.

Turn to Acts 18, please. Let’s look at this story of the Church at Corinth. This is a great passage. Acts 18 and this is a very instructive passage. Verse seven says:

And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.²⁶

Look at that. Paul, park it right here. Stay right there in Corinth. Why, Lord? I have much people in this city.

All right. So what did Paul do? Did he go back to tent making? Did he go back to playing video games because God has already elected them? No. That is not what he did.

“And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”²⁷

Paul did not say election removes my human responsibility. That is not what happened here. It was just the opposite. Paul, be encouraged. Why, Lord? I have got many folks in this city. What then should I do? Preach the Word of God. Why must he preach the Words of God? Because Romans 10:17 teaches me that faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. So not only had God ordained much people in that city, but God has ordained that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. So Paul can stay in Corinth, preach the Word of God, being very confident that in the city of Corinth there are many people that are going to hear the Word of God and believe.

So nothing removes the human responsibility to preach the gospel. This is not an anti evangelism thing. This is a pro evangelism thing. Go to Morocco. Why? Because I have

²⁵ Acts 13:48.

²⁶ Acts 18:7-10.

²⁷ Acts 18:11.

got people in Morocco that I am going to save. That is the idea. Based on what promise? Is it Revelation five or eight that has every kindred and tongue? Which one is it? Five.

So God says, “I am not going to have a shopping cart of only macaroni and cheese. I am going to have a shopping cart of a huge variety. I am going to have some shopping cart from Africa and some from Asia. I am going to have some food from down central America. I am going not have some over here. It is from Korea.” And so based on the idea that God is calling people from all kindreds, all people, all languages, all nations, I am going to go shopping everywhere and fill God’s cart out. That is the idea.

{?} says election is Paul’s guarantee that there will be some success for his evangelism for he knows that some of the people he speaks to will be the elect and they will believe the gospel and be saved. Why did he stay? We said that.

2 Thessalonians 2:13:

“But we are bound to give thanks always 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.”²⁸

What a verse. Don’t just skip over that verse. That is a verse that we are going to unpack one more time whenever we get to 2 Thessalonians. But just look at it.

“But we are bound to give thanks always 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.”²⁹

So this morning what was our method? What drove our train? We began the service, even before the preaching of his Word. Last night the week before, all the time, Holy Spirit come in here. Do your work. Come and be here. Holy Spirit, we need you. Holy Spirit, we can’t do it on our own. And then we called everyone to believe the... that is it right there. It is not a salesman program. It is pray, God, your Holy Spirit to do what I can’t do.

That is what we are doing. When you have met with somebody like I have over and over again and you have unpacked the gospel in as many different ways and you have showed them as ... and you have challenged them to trust Christ and you are just like, my goodness, what do you not understand about what I am saying? Do you not think that hell is scary? Don’t you realize at your age you could die and have a heart attack right now? What more do I need to say to you?

You know, are you following me or not? Has anybody ever been there? And you are like this is crazy. Trust Christ.

²⁸ 2 Thessalonians 2:13.

²⁹ Ibid.

But what a minute. It is not just through sanctification of the Spirit. Did we not this morning read in John chapter three that the Spirit blows when the Spirit wants to blow? Did we not read this morning that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit that does the work? Did we not see that this morning? This is not just a matter of I can get anyone to pray a prayer. This is a matter of the Holy Spirit must come and do what only the Holy Spirit can do and when the Spirit does what that Spirit does they believe. It happens. Don't you know in your own life? Can't you remember your own salvation testimony when you didn't care a thing about the things of God and then suddenly you cared about the things of God? What happened? Did you take a vitamin? Was it two Tylenols? What put you over the top? Amen. Amen. Why? Because I am not much different than a box of Cheerios sitting on a shelf. I have no ability to move myself in the shopping cart.

But what if my son isn't part of God's elect? What if my daughter isn't part of God's elect? And so I speak to Dave's point. Nothing that we said so far negates this promise. Nothing. Nothing we have said... this is a promise right there. What is the promise?

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”³⁰

This promise does not say if you are part of the elect, then you may call upon the name of the Lord. It does not say that. I can walk up to John and say:

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”³¹

I can walk up to you and say:

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”³²

I can say to you by the authority of God's Word if you call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ you will be saved. I do not predicate it with if, by the way, parenthetically if you are part of the elect. I don't say that. I don't have to say that. Paul doesn't say it. It is a complete sentence right there. I can walk around and say, “Christ died for you. He tasted death for every man, sins of the whole world.” I can walk up to every single human being, every child in Sunday school, every single student in that VBA and say, “If you call upon the name of the Lord, you will be saved.” Nothing about election negates whosoever. Nothing. Nothing about election negates whosoever. What we have, Rob, is two truths that we hold up and we affirm them both simultaneously. And when you say, “I don't understand that.” I say, “Me, too.” And we both go, “Yup.” That is what we do. We say, “Yup.”

But that is true and that is true, both. We don't say because I can't figure it out I am going to subordinate this truth to this truth, because I can't figure it out. We don't say that. We say he is all knowing. He is all powerful. He is the sovereign. He is the creator and this is the means whereby he has ordained that he will have a shopping cart full of

³⁰ Romans 10:13.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

groceries. He did not leave it to chance. Amen. Because left to myself, folks, I would still be on the shelf and that is what we don't seem to grasp. Left to myself, I would still be on the shelf. And yet God works, God calls, God saves. It is an amazing thing.

Doesn't that mean that God is responsible for men going to hell? No. Not at all. Go back to Romans chapter nine. That is exactly what Paul addresses here. Go back to Romans nine

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?³³

The stuffing mix does not say, "You should have made me pudding." And the pudding doesn't say, "You should have made me stuffing mix." Ok? God is not unrighteous. There is nothing unrighteous in him whatsoever, nothing. There is on unrighteousness in him. And yet, Darin, we can walk up to every single person on the planet and say:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."³⁴

Every person. Every one. That is a universal promise. Jesus said, "Come unto me." So you can tell every coworker, "Come unto me." You can tell every single person on the planet, "Come to Jesus and be saved. Come to Jesus and rest. Come to Jesus and trust him. Come to Jesus and trust him. Come to Jesus and receive eternal life. Come to Jesus and be forgiven." We can walk up to every single person on the planet because of the Word God and say, "If you come to Jesus, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, every one."

Turn over to John chapter six and you have got to underline this verse because this is an absolute key verse. You have to see it. This is essential to your understanding of the doctrine of election. This is a critically important... this is the John 3:16. This is the whosoever. This is all. John six verse 37. You should underline this in your Bible. You should know this verse. Please read it with me from your own Bible.

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me."³⁵

³³ Romans 9:14-21.

³⁴ Matthew 11:28.

But wait a minute. It is not done.

“...and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”³⁶

Now that is so important for you to see that. You should underline that in your Bible. You should put a star next to that verse. That is critical for you to understand. There is absolutely, positively not one single soul ever created who wants to come to Jesus and he goes, “Sorry, you are not elect.” That is never ever the case. Every single preacher must positively affirm this truth when they are teaching this. They must take those two truths and hold them up just like this, not like this, both of them just like this. And incredible tension, just like this, not letting any one of them go. They are held together in an incredible bond that says that if you come to Christ he will not turn you away. That is so important for you to see. Do not leave this auditorium without hearing that. We are not saying in any way, shape or form in any terms that there is a single person out there, Dick, that wants to come to Christ, desires to be saved and God says, “No, sorry, you are to on the list.” That is not the case. That is not the case. There is not one person on the planet past, present or future that desires to come to Christ, wants to embrace the gospel, turn from his idolatry, love Jesus, trust in Jesus and God says, “Hold on. Let me check the list. Sorry.” Never.

Which gives us amazing confidence. That this why we can preach to the masses on Sunday morning and say, “Come to Christ. You who are heavy laden, come to Christ.” Like Pilgrim, drop your rucksack and run to Jesus. And I promise you by the authority of God’s Word that he will not go, “No.” He has his arms as open as they come and there is not one person on the planet that is being turned away.

The ESV study Bible has a great note and I want to actually read it to you so that the audio people on the audio that will listen to this in the weeks to come may hear it. John 6:37.

“Whoever comes to me I will never cast out implies that people should never think maybe I am not chosen by God and therefore maybe Jesus will reject me when I come to him. Jesus promises to receive everyone who comes to him and trust him for salvation, yet a few verses later, verse 44, Jesus states the paradoxical truth or the paradoxical and the corresponding truth that once people come to Jesus they will realize that behind their willing decision to come and believe lies the mysterious, invisible work of the Father who all along was drawing them to Christ.”

And they do not have to understand this to come to Christ. It could be years until they understand this. They may never come to understand this. You do not have to be a theologian to get saved. Come to Jesus. Run to Jesus. Trust in Jesus.

³⁵ John 6:37.

³⁶ Ibid.

And then, David, as they mature as a disciple of Christ and they are taught well in a Bible believing church they will begin to understand that the reason they were running to Jesus was because the Holy Spirit was... Get up there.

Because left to myself right there. What I need is the Holy Spirit going, "Well, now how did you go in there?"

That didn't work well. It was too full. But that is the idea. That is the idea. Nothing we are saying tonight, nothing we are saying removes the fact that the person believes they believe, because they do believe. Nothing we are saying removes the fact that they repent, because they do repent. There is nothing we are saying that removes the fact that they decide, because they do decide. There is nothing that we are saying in any way, shape or form that takes away from all that the person does. They do trust. They do believe. They do love. They do bow. They do confess. They do trust. They do all those things. And as they grow in their knowledge of the Word God they realize that it was the Holy Spirit working in behind their enabling, giving them, strengthening them... that is what it is. It is amazing. And that is why we don't say, "Wow, God, we did it. You did some and I did some and together we put this thing together. Wow, what a joint effort, Lord. I was kind of inching forward on the edge of the shelf and I was kind of moving myself there and then you kind of put me over the top and together we got ourselves saved.

No. No. All to Jesus, all. Everything. It is not a shared glory. It is not a joint effort whereby we share the effort.

Is there a biblical evidence that God does not deal with everyone in the same way? Because that is what we are implying here. The answer is yes. There certainly is. You don't have to turn there. We are running out of time. But do you remember this amazing parable in Matthew 20 in which Jesus hires somebody in the beginning of the morning and says, "Come work for me for eight hours and I give you this amount. Come work for me for six hours and I give you the same amount. Come work for me for five hours and I give you the same amount. Come work for me three hours and I give you the same amount. Come work with me for one hour and I will give you the same amount?"

Now was that fair? From our human perspective we would say, "Absolutely not." I worked for eight hours. You worked for one hour. We are getting the same wage? That is not fair. But the parable says the kingdom of God is like unto ... whoa, wait a minute. Write it down. Read it this week. Read it. The response is wait a minute. It is my vineyard. It is my money. Who are you to tell me what I do in my vineyard with my money? Did you not agree to work for eight ours for this amount? The guy says yes. Did you not agree to work for six hours for this amount? Yes. Did you not agree? Yes. Did I short change you in any way, shape or form? No. Did I short change you? No. Then where is the injustice then? There is no injustice.

In this parable about the kingdom of God no one received less than they deserved, emphasizing the divine justice, but some got more than they deserved, a feature grace.

Don't miss that. Don't let that truth just roll in one ear and out the other. No one got less than what they deserved. But some got more. We call that grace.

Is it fair that one person can call out to God on their death bed after a life time of sinning and be saved and another person serves all their life and gets the same eternal life? God can do what he wants. Is it fair that one person works all day and gets the same amount of dollars as the one who worked one hour? Is it fair that God's elects some, but doesn't elect all? Amen. It is his vineyard. God is not obligated to elect anyone to salvation. Therefore, the fact that he does elect some and not all does not impugn his character. God was not obligated to elect any. God's justice requires him to judge all in the same way, but God is not obligated to love everyone in the same way. There is a difference between being just and showering your love on someone. You don't love everyone in this church the same way.

“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”³⁷

What would you think of a Father who sent his Son to die on a cross, to redeem people and then left the results to chance, such that the cart could have ended up empty, because everyone said no? So right and wrong questions. The wrong question is: Why didn't God elect everyone to salvation? The right question is: Why did God elect anyone to salvation?

And don't forget this. We are almost done, but don't forget this truth. God still has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. God's desire is still that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore, what? Turn. Don't forget that God now commands all men everywhere to what? To repent. God doesn't command just the elect to repent. God commands all men everywhere to repent. And all are commanded to repent because anyone who turns to God and puts their faith in Christ will be saved, anyone.

I thought I had one more slide. I guess not. Can you go back, Art? I thought I had one more. Oh, I moved it. That was the whosoever one.

So, one more time as we pray. Don't leave here without remembering that whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Whosoever.

How does your son or daughter come to Christ? Through the gospel. What is your responsibility? Preach the gospel to them. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Is there anyone out there that desires to be with Jesus in which they cannot be? No, not a single person on the planet. If your son or daughter desires to be saved they will be saved.

³⁷ Romans 9:21.

Father, thank you for these truths. Help us, dear God, to recognize that one truth does not negate another one, that both are to be believed and both are to be preached and both are to be emphasized and are to be lived by, that one is not exalted above the other, that only at the throne of grace where these two truths meet can we understand them. And that in and of ourselves with our weak, finite, human mind we must accept the reality that the secret things belong to you. Give us the power and the strength to do that in Jesus' name. Amen.