

Will Calvinism Kill a Church?

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Romans 6:1

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My subject tonight is: Will Calvinism Kill a Church? Will Calvinism Kill a Church?

When I was in North Carolina last week I had the privilege of having fellowship with many preacher brethren. From Sunday night through Thursday night there were—not counting the pastor and I—16 different ministers who attended the services at Rosemont. On Thursday night a pastor and his assistant drove down from Yanceyville, North Carolina, pastor Bob Williams, who is pastor of Community Baptist Church there, has been there for seven or eight years and he has brother Rick Markum as pastor, the missionary to Ireland.

He called me and told me that he was coming down to attend the meeting and would like to have supper with me and so we met together that evening and we spent a time talking together and during the course of the conversation he said that he had run into, through the years, opposition to what we call Calvinism or sovereign grace or the message which he had been preaching for a good while. And he said people made the statement that Calvinism would kill a church, it would kill a missionary program, it would kill enthusiasm, it would kill zeal, it would just destroy all these things.

And while we talked I thought to myself, “I believe I will preach on that Sunday night. Will Calvinism really kill a Church? Will it kill missionary zeal? Will it kill missionary efforts? Will it kill fellowship? Will it really put the mark of death on a congregation?”

Now, if you will pardon me for saying so I hate to be different. But then again I don't hate it too badly because I don't make too much effort not to be. But I just don't particularly care for the term Calvinism. I know a lot of people use it. I know Mr. Spurgeon who is my favorite preacher and writer was quite fond of the term and he often said, “Calvinism, pure and simple, is just the gospel.” And I know that people understand when we use the word Calvinism they understand what we call the five points. And it is a shortcut.

But I feel like that any unscriptural term—and it is not a scriptural term at all. It is not in the Bible because it is a term that comes from the name of a man, John Calvin, who pastored in Switzerland many years ago. But we...they say, “Well, use the term for brevity.” And people have used it in religious circles for many years. So why not use it?

Well, here is the reason. Unfortunately, Calvinism means different things to different people. That is what is wrong with using it. You see, when the term was used many years ago it possibly meant one or two things, but now it could mean a half a dozen things.

I have people frequently who call me on the telephone and they want to talk about what I am preaching. And sometimes they will open the conversation to take on this way. They will say, "Do you believe in predestination?"

Well, it is not good to say yes because predestination may mean many things to many people. And so I have learned when someone asks me, "Do you believe in predestination?" not to readily say yes. Just say, "I don't know, what do you mean by that term? What does predestination mean to you?"

And I find quite often what it means to them is not what it means in God's Word. For example, one man said not too many months ago, "Do you believe in predestination. I said, "I don't know. What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, it means that people are born to go to heaven or born to go to hell."

I said, "No, sir, I don't believe that."

"Well, what do you believe?"

And then I had the opportunity to read the Scriptures.

Sometimes people say, "Do you believe in election."

I say, "I don't know. What do you mean by that?"

People say, "Do you believe in once saved always saved?"

No, I don't believe what most Southern Baptists mean by that. I know that. And when people ask that question, "Do you believe once saved, always saved?" In the day in which we live where there is so much religion and so little knowledge of God and so little knowledge of God's Word,...Now, 200 years ago you might when somebody asked you if you believed in predestination say yes or if you believe in election? Yes. Do you believe in once saved always saved? Yes. But not now because it means so many different things to so many different people.

But what I am talking about when I use the term Calvinism. Will Calvinism kill a Church? I will tell you what I am talking about. I am talking about old time Calvinism. And old time Calvinists believe this. This was a summary of their doctrine. The old time Calvinists believed this, that the whole of the work, the whole of the work whereby a lost sinner is lifted from darkness to light, from the state of sin and guilt to a state of sanctifi-

cation and holiness, from the kingdom of evil to the kingdom of God's dear Son, from a child of wrath to a child of God is of God and of him only. That is what Calvinism says, that he is the author and finisher of our faith in a scriptural term, that he is alpha and omega, that salvation is of the Lord in its planning, its execution, its application, its sustaining power, its ultimate protection.

In another definition the old time Calvinists used to say this. "The royal bath in which black souls are washed from the blackness of sin to the holiness of Christ was prepared by God himself and drawn from the veins of Jesus Christ and no blood or deeds of noble martyrs have entered that stream." And then another saying they used to use was this. "The banquet of mercy is served up by one host, the Lord himself."

So that is what I mean by Calvinism. And another definition I might give you, some of you remember this message. But over 25 years ago, May 1954, we had our first sovereign grace Bible conference at the Pollard Baptist Church. In 1954 I was reading one of Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. This was before brother Ross began reprinting them. This is one that I had on my bookshelf, 1861. And in reading that 1861 volume of Mr. Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit I saw and read about a conference that he had at the tabernacle when they first opened the tabernacle. They had a Calvinistic Bible conference, five nights, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Each of those nights was dedicated to one of the points of what we call Calvinism: total depravity, unconditional election, definite atonement, invincible grace and perseverance of the saints. And he had speakers come and bring a message on each of those subjects.

And I thought to myself, "That would be good to have. I would love to have a conference like that." And I didn't know too many folks that believed that. And so I wrote to brother I.C. Herringdean in Swingle, Pennsylvania. Brother Herringdean is 93 or 94 years old now. He was in his 70s, early 70s then or 68 or 69. He had...he printed Mr. Pink's *Sovereignty of God* and Pink's *Gospel of John* and most all of Pink's works. Pink was still living then, I believe.

And I asked him for a mailing list of people all over America who believed these doctrines, these truths that man, indeed was a sinner, that God, indeed was sovereign and that salvation, indeed, was by the power of God. And he sent me a list of people who had ordered the *Sovereignty of God* or *The Gospel of John* by Pink or some of these other books that people all over the nation who believed the grace of God.

And I wrote to them. I sent out many letters and I told them we were going to have a conference and I had four speakers. I had B.B. Colwell. I had A.D. Muse, Rolf Barnard, George Pletcher...there were five of them and old brother Clarence Walker. And these men did themselves well. We had a full auditorium downstairs nearly every night. We had preachers from 17 states. We had people from California, from Florida, from Pennsylvania, from Michigan, everywhere, who believed that God, indeed, did reign not only in creation, but in providence and not only in providence, but in salvation. And since that time every year but one or two we have had a conference emphasizing those doctrines.

But during that first conference in 1954 brother Barnard brought the keynote message. Brother Barnard brought the message that I thought summed up the whole effort, the whole week. And the title of that message was: Six Stubborn Statements.

And this message is just as alive today as it was when he preached it. I wish we had it on tape. I don't think we do. But he had six points to the message. He said, "Now, here are six stubborn statements that you have got to cope with, you have got to deal with." And it is just one thing, one of two things you can do when you meet a truth and that is accept it or turn and run from it. You can't remain neutral. You have got to accept it and bow to it or turn and run from it and deny it. And here are six stubborn statements. Now, you listen to them and let's look at them carefully.

First of all, and this is what we mean by Calvinism. This is what we mean by sovereign grace. And there is a man...well, Jerry Falwell is his name, who at one point preached these doctrines and who said that he was a five point Calvinist at one time. But he quit preaching them because he said he saw it was ruining his ministry. That's his exact words. That is quoting verbatim. "I don't preach them. I turned from them because they were ruining my ministry."

Now, here are the six statements. And the number one is God is sovereign. Are you listening to me? God is sovereign and I mean by that almighty. I am the Lord. Can I not do with my own what I will? I am the Lord, beside me there is none else. I create light and darkness, good and evil. I hold the reigns of life and death. I have the keys of hell and heaven. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done. I will do all my pleasure in heaven, earth and hell. I will work everything out according to my own will and none can stay my hand or say unto me, what doest thou. God is absolutely unchangeably, totally sovereign or he isn't, or he isn't. And he is absolutely sovereign in all things or he is sovereign in nothing. If there is anything in which God is not absolutely omnipotent, almighty and sovereign, then we are looking for a power greater than God which we must worship and to which we must bow.

But I now that he is sovereign and as Jack read in the study tonight, all things were made by him and for him and by him all things consist in heaven, earth and hell. Even the wrath of man shall praise the Lord. God is immutably, unchangeably sovereign or he is not sovereign at all. Now you can take either position and I will tell you the position that the Scripture takes is God is sovereign. God is king.

All right, the second statement that Rolf made is this. Man is either totally depraved and we mean by that that because of Adam's sin we were born dead in trespasses and sin, not that a man is dead physically. I am not dead physically. You are not dead physically, not that a man is dead mentally. A man thinks, but he doesn't think on God. A man loves, but he doesn't love God. A man has a will. He has a will. It is not a free. It is a will that is in bondage. It is a will that is in slavery to sin. It is a will that is twisted and perverted. It is a will that chooses evil and rejects good, that chooses darkness and rejects life. It chooses error and rejects truth. He has a will. But man is dead spiritually.

When Adam sinned God said, “In the day you eat, not 900 years later, but in the day you eat you die.” Something happened to Adam when he fell. He suddenly realized he was naked. He was naked before, but now he knew shame. He feared. He ran from God. He suddenly had fear. He never...he was in God’s presence before, but he never ran before. Now he knew fear. He lied. He had never lied before. He lied to God. He knew hate. He never knew hate before. Eve was with him. He loved her. He called her the mother of all women, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh I think or something like that. But when he fell he hated her. He said, “It is her fault I am in this condition.”

What happened to Adam? Suddenly something happened. That which was created holy was now unholy. Shame, guilt, fear, hate, all of these things were part of his nature now. Suddenly, just like that, he is a totally different creature. That is spiritual death.

Adam fell from an upright condition which knew no sin to an unholy condition which knew no thought of goodness. He knew no thought of goodness at all. Everything he thought was fearful, guilt, shame, hate, self righteousness, self defense. That is what happened. Man...when Adam fell in the garden man was twisted, warped, perverted. He still had his mind. He still had his tongue. He still had his heart. He still had his will. He still had all those things. But it was in darkness, plagued, bowed down in bondage.

You see, God has a free will. God is free to do what God chooses to do, what God wants to do. But man’s will is in bondage to sin. Man can’t do anything spiritually. He has no free will spiritually. He has a will and that will is in bondage. Now, man is either dead or he is not dead. Now, which is it? If he is not dead then he can save himself. If he is dead it takes God to save him. If he is not dead then he doesn’t need to be born again. If he is not dead he doesn’t need to be quickened. If he is not dead he doesn’t need to be awakened. If he is not dead he doesn’t need Christ who is the life. He already has life. But Scripture says he is dead.

All right. Thirdly, God has elected a people in Christ. And I’m...I don’t...I am not short-cutting this thing at all that if salvation had been left to the creature we would have never chosen God. God chose us. We didn’t choose. We not only didn’t choose him, but we wouldn’t choose him. There is no one here...the Scripture says there is none that seeketh after God. There is none that understandeth. There is none that doeth good. We would never...who loved...did you love God or did he love you? Well, he loved you first. The Scripture says we love him because he first loved us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, he loved us. And he made us an object of his affection. It pleased God. Did you ever trace that through the concordance? It pleased God.

David was talking about the heathen gods and they said, “Well, where is your God?”

He said, “My God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he pleased in heaven, in the earth, in the seas and all the deep places.”

Well, what did it please God to do? First it pleased God to make you his people. He chose you. He set his affections upon you. When did he choose you? It says before the foundation of the world, before man ever fell. Why did he choose you? According to the good pleasure of his own will.

“I thank thee,” Christ said, “Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and thou hast revealed them unto babes for even so, Father, it seemed good in thy sight.”

It pleased God to make you his people. It pleased God that in Christ should all fulness dwell. It pleased God to bruise him. It pleased God to reveal Christ in us and it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Salvation is of the Lord. He elected a people.

When he prayed that great priestly prayer in John 17 do you know six times, six times our Lord used the phrase, “Those that the Father gave me”? He said, “I pray not for the world. I pray for them which thou hast given me. Thine they were and thou gavest them me.”

I hear people always said, “Well, him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Yeah, but did you ever read the first part of that? “All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

Now, that is a statement...God either elected a people or he didn't. He either chose a people in Christ to be saved before the world began for his glory or else he didn't.

And then the fourth statement is this. The Lord Jesus Christ by his obedience and by his death, by his sacrifice, either effectually, sufficiently, completely redeemed a people or he didn't redeem anybody. Now you think about that a moment.

I hear what the world is saying. I know what the religious world is saying. They are saying that when Jesus Christ died on the cross and shed his blood and put his blood on the mercy seat of glory that that act of dying and suffering and agonizing and that hell that he bore and the sins for which he died and the offering which he made to God was for every son...every fallen son of Adam, every member of the human race. Well, now if that be true, I have got two things to say. Number one, if that be true, then every member of the human race is going to be saved. Now that is so. If Jesus Christ redeemed you, you re redeemed. If he paid the debt, it is paid. If he satisfied justice, it is satisfied.

Or, nobody is going to be saved. If one man can go to hell for whom Christ died. They rest of them can, too. If I thought standing right here tonight that there was somebody bearing the judgment and wrath of God for whom Christ has already borne the judgment and wrath of God. If I thought there was somebody suffering in the torments of the damned, in the regions of the damned for whom Christ prayed and for whom Christ

obeyed and for whom Christ died and for whom Christ suffered, I would close this book and go home and get ready to go to hell because that is exactly where I am going.

He said, "Yeah, but your faith saves you."

My faith, oh, how much faith have you got? I ain't got enough to save me. No, sir. My faith is not in my faith. It is in the person who died for me. My faith can't save me. Christ saves me. My faith didn't die on the cross. My faith didn't satisfy God's justice, Christ did.

I was over in Ireland preaching 1972, they had a convention over there, all the churches of the Northern Baptist Convention in Ireland. There are 54 churches in the six counties of Ulster. And brother Herbert Carson invited me to come and be the eight o'clock speaker Monday and Tuesday night. They had a pretty good crowd. And I chose to speak on, "For whom did Christ die?" on Monday night and I brought my message and in the message I made this statement. Old John Owen wrote 300 years ago or whenever he lived. It has been a long time, but he wrote this statement. He said, "If Christ died for all the sins of all men then all men will be saved. If Christ died for some of the sins of no men than nobody will be saved. If Christ died for all of the sins for some men, then some men are going to be saved."

And I went ahead and preached my message and I thought that was a pretty good point, you know. I thought it emphasized what I was teaching. I stepped down out of the pulpit and an old white haired gentleman came up. He was old. I tell you, old brother Johnson. He's dead probably now, but he was in charge of a missionary work over there. I believe that was his name, Johnson or Jackson. I can't remember.

But anyway, he came up and put his hands on my shoulder. I found out later, talking to him, that he was acquainted with a lot of Spurgeon's students over there in Ireland. He bridged the gap between the centuries, you know. And he took...put his hand on my shoulder and he said, "Young fellow," he said, "I'll tell you I never, never thought I would ever hear that statement by John Owen from a Baptist pulpit in Ireland."

I said, "Why? Don't they believe that here?"

He said, "No, they don't."

I said, "I thought they did."

Well, maybe a difference, you know. But I said, "I thought they did."

"Oh," he said, "Herbert does and I do and Macnabb does and two or three more, but the bulk of them don't and you will find it out."

Brethren, this is the plainest doctrine in God's Word. Christ is our salvation. And this is what I am preaching. I am not preaching a limited atonement. I am not preaching God

limited in anything. God is able to all things, whatsoever he pleases. That is what the Lord will do. But I am saying this. I am saying the high priest, our great high priest in glory is wearing the names of his people on his breastplate, in the palms of his hands. And he redeemed them. He died for them. He sacrificed himself for them.

He said, when he washed the disciples feet, he was washing their feet and Peter said, "You are not going to wash my feet."

And the Lord said, "If I don't wash you, you don't have any part with me." In other words, "If I don't cleanse you, if I don't redeem you, if I don't wash away your guilt..."

And Peter said, "Well, Lord, don't just wash my feet. Wash my head and my hands and..."

And the Lord said this to him. "He that is washed need not wash or cleanse except his feet." And he said, "You are clean, you are clean already."

Now watch it. He added a statement, "But not all of you," because he was talking about Judas. "All of you aren't cleansed."

And I am telling you, my friend, that...you just...all right, let's butt it head up, head up. Let's meet it head on, eyeball to eyeball. Christ either redeemed his people effectually, paid their sin debt, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself or he didn't save anybody. And salvation is left up to you and me. And if that be so, we are in trouble. We are in trouble.

No wonder folks get ulcers. No wonder they don't have any peace or rest. I wouldn't have any either if I was resting in anything that I thought that I had to do in order to be accepted of God because I go all the way through the word and I find in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In the flesh no man can please God. How in the world? Oh, wretched man that I am.

It is Christ. I am complete in him.

And the fifth statement is this. The Holy Spirit invincibly...and I don't like the word irresistible as...I really...it's ok if you know what you mean by it. But we do resist the Spirit, not effectually. You do always resist the Spirit as did your fathers. That's what Christ said. And there is a...even you who are believers at times in your life have kicked against the pricks. You have battled against what you know.

There may be someone here tonight battling against what I am preaching. But I tell you this. If you are one of God's own, you are going to come to believe it sooner or later.

I imagine the first time you ever heard...I never will forget the first time I ever heard this message. I was over at Pollard Baptist Church in 1950, about April the 17th and brother Barnard stepped in the pulpit, I mean in the pulpit of an Arminian Southern Baptist free

will Baptist Church. They were the leading association in baptisms and doing all they could to drag everybody they could down the aisle. It wasn't getting anybody saved, but it was getting them to the front.

And he got up and said, "A hundred years ago somebody started two lies."

And I thought, "Now what are they?"

And he said, "God loves everybody and Christ died for everybody." And he said, "Ain't neither one of them so." Now, that is a good way to get exposed to it, isn't it? That's a good way. And you...and there are some of us sitting right here that bucked against.

And I never will forget Paul. He didn't take to that too well, either, did you, Paul? Some of the rest of you. But...and so you do resist, but you don't keep on resisting if you are one of God's own. He will break your heart. He sure will He will bring you to his feet. That's where we belong. He is going to bring us down there one way or the other. And so I like the word invincible. That is, he...the Holy Spirit, if he sets out to convert you and to convict you and to enlighten you and to illuminate you and to bring you to Christ, he is going to bring you.

"My sheep," Christ said, "Will hear my voice." Not they ought to or they should or they might. "They shall hear my voice and they shall come to me."

And I don't care if a fellow gets mad at what we are preaching. I would rather him get mad than be indifferent. Yeah, it is a whole lot better. At least he is listening. The fellow that is indifferent hasn't heard anything. But the fellow you preach the...who is God? And what is man? And what did Christ do? And who is the Holy Spirit? And who gets the glory? And it rubs the wrong way, you know and that old natural mind is enmity. It doesn't say it is at enmity. It is enmity against all truth. And it is good when a fellow gets mad. It is good. That's wonderful. He is thinking. He is disturbed. He is convicted. He is troubled or he wouldn't be upset.

And the Holy Spirit will invincibly draw men to Christ or if he is just trying he is not going to draw anybody. If he can fail, if the Holy Spirit can fail to accomplish what he sets out to do, then...then nobody will be drawn.

There was a young preacher holding a meeting up in the mountains of eastern Kentucky and I couldn't vouch for this being the truth, but it was told for the true and I expect a lot of stories are told for the truth, not much truth in them. But this makes a good story. There was a young man up there preaching and he was preaching to folks that didn't know a whole lot. In fact, he was out walking on the hill side one day and he met a man and he said...he was going to witness to him, he said, "Are you a Christian?"

The man said, "No, sir." He said, "I am a Brown. The Christians all moved out of here a few months ago."

The young man said, “Well,” he said, “I am not getting through to you.” He said, “What I want to know is, are you lost?”

He said, “No, sir. I am not lost.” He said, “I was raised up here.” He said, “I know every pig trail in these hills.”

Well, the young fellow said, he said, “I’m still not...we’re not communicating.” He said, “What I want to know is, are you ready for the judgment day?”

The old man said, “I didn’t know there was going to be one. When is it?”

The boy said, “Well, I couldn’t rightly say when it is. It may be tomorrow, it may be the next day.”

He said, “Well, son, when you find out, would you let me know because my wife will probably want to go both days.”

But he was preaching to that crowd one night and he kept telling them, he said, “Now, the Lord has tried for 30 years to save you and you won’t let him. You won’t let him. Now he says he is going to send you to hell.”

And that same old man was there and he spoke up and said, “Preacher, he ain’t going to send me to hell.”

And that alarmed the young man. He said, “How can you talk so sacrilegiously, sir?”

“Well,” he said, “If he tries to save me I won’t let him. When he tries to send me to hell I won’t let him.”

It makes good sense. It may not be so, but it...if I can effectually resist God on one hand I can effectually resist God on the other hand. If I can defeat God on one hand, I can defeat God on the other hand. But God cannot be defeated. He will draw his own.

And the sixth statement brother Barnard made is this. All of the saints will persevere. They will be preserved. They will be kept by the power of God in faith or none of them shall persevere. They all will or none will.

Now, those...that is what we call Calvinism.

You say, “Well, will that...?”

People say, “That will kill a church. If you preach that it will kill all zeal and effort.”

Will it? Well, I will tell you this. I will tell you this. How men react to the truth doesn’t alter the truth. Now, that is my first point in this thing. If it kills your zeal then it ought

to have been killed because I am saying this. Men may turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, but his people are still saved by grace. They are still saved by grace.

It is for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any many should boast. That is still so no matter what men do with it. It is so.

And I am not going to alter that message. If a man turns the grace of God into lasciviousness, that's all right, we are still saved by grace. I don't care what they do with it, it is still so. It does not alter the truth. What men do with the truth does not change it.

For example, the Pharisees were offended when Christ...oh, boy, they had their ceremonies and their law and their standards and their programs and Christ came along, their rituals. And he said, "It is not that which goeth into the mouth that defiles you. It is that which comes out of your heart." And they were offended.

I don't care if they were offended. It is still so. It is still so. It is not that which goeth into the mouth that defiles the man. I don't care what...how men take that. A man may take that and go out and be a drunkard. That's between him and God, but it is still so. What he put in his mouth did not defile him. It is what came out of his heart. That is what defiled him.

And I will tell you this. If his heart got straightened out his life would. It is still so. I don't... you say, "Well, if you preach certain things people will do this."

That is not my responsibility. My responsibility is to preach the truth whatever men do. And that is what preachers are doing. They are trying to change the truth. For example, that story over there in John...I believe it is chapter eight, about the woman found in adultery. Some of those old puritans were so pharisaical and moral and self righteous, they took that out of the Bible and refused to preach it because it might lead someone to violate that commandment.

Well, I don't care about that. It's true. It is not my business to police men's actions. My business is to preach God's Word.

Do you see what I am saying, Charlie? It is so. And I will tell you this. The religious people may take up stones to stone Jesus Christ because he said, "I am my Father are one." But he and his Father are one, whatever reaction men have to it.

Their reaction does not alter the truth. And men may charge God with unrighteousness when he says, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated."

And they might say, "That's not right. That's unjust. That is unrighteous."

I don't care what it is, it is still so. Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated. That's what it says. And I don't have any authority to change it. Whoever it offends, whoever it upsets,

whatever it does, if it turns the whole town upside down and causes everybody to rot and rebel, it is still so. Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated. God said it and we don't have any privilege to change it.

And men may deny and discredit and seek to destroy the preservation of the saints, but my Lord still said, "My sheep hear my voice. I give them eternal life and they will never perish."

And men might say, "That will lead to sin. That will lead to indifference. That will lead to something else and folk will go out and live like they want to."

I don't know where it will lead, but I know it is so. It's not my business to apply it. it is my business to preach it. God will apply it. God will apply it. It is still so.

"Nothing," he said, "can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ my Lord."

And men may invent all kinds of plans and propositions and proposals and call it salvation, but Christ said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned."

And John said, "He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

And men may explain it away. They may turn away in anger. They may refuse to preach it. They may bring all kind of charges against it. But whom he did foreknow he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. And whom he predestinated he called. And whom he called he justified. And whom he justified he glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Who can lay anything to the charge of God's elect. It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth. It is Christ that died. Yea, rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us. That is still so.

I will tell you this and you think this over. Nearly every natural man—now think about this, darling—nearly every natural man can understand what we call Arminianism. That's right. Any natural man can understand what we call free willism. That is, any natural man with any mind at all can understand what you are saying when you say, "Now, God wants to do this and God wants to do that and God makes an effort, now it is up to you. Heaven is a place of happiness that will serve as a reward for those that do good and hell is a place of punishment that will serve as a prison for those who do not do good and now it is up to you to do your best and to please God."

All men can understand what we call fatalism. That is, that God elected a people before they were born and he is going to take them to heaven no matter what and he passed somebody and is going to send him to hell no matter what. And if God elected you, you are saved and if he didn't you are not saved and men can logically understand that sys-

tem. So there is nothing you can do, no use preaching, no use sending missionaries, no use getting all upset. No use studying, no use seeking the Lord because he chose you. You are going to be saved and that's it. Now, people can understand that.

But the grace of God, the mystery of the gospel which says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest." Which says, "Ho everyone that thirsteth. Come to the waters." Which says that Jesus Christ the Lord is willing to save all who believe and able to save to the uttermost them who come to God by him."

And that same messenger says, "But no man can come except my Father which sent me draw him. And all that my Father giveth me shall come to me..."

You say, "That confuses me."

That's right. Old Barnard said one time, "If you preach the Bible, the saved will get glad, rebels will get mad and religious people will get confused." And they will because they can't understand—and nobody can. It has to be revealed. I know it is so. I know this is so.

Both of these...the Bible teaches both of these. God chose a people. He is sovereign in salvation. That is so. He loved Jacob, he hated Esau. That is so. He passed by the angels that kept not their first estate. Christ took not on himself the nature of angels, but he took on himself the seed of Abraham. That is so. God has a people. Christ came down to redeem them. That's so. Yet this is so, too. Anyone who wants to be saved can be. Anybody. I didn't say anybody who didn't want to go to hell because I never met anybody that wanted to go to hell. But anybody who wants Christ, who hungers and thirsts and desires the Christ of the Bible, to know God, he will be saved. If anybody is thirsty the water is there. If anybody is hungry the table is spread. If anybody is naked, the robe of righteousness is for you. Anybody that is sinful and weary and heavy laden, Christ said, "Come."

How can you say both? Christ did. That's how come. And I just know it is so. I know it is so.

I will tell you what kills churches, I will tell you what kills churches is when people try to be consistent with themselves instead of consistent with God's Word. That is what destroys them. And Spurgeon said one time, "The man that spent his life trying to be consistent with himself will find at the end that he has been consistent with a fool."

If God says it, we preach it, just like he says it.

But, you know, Paul had trouble with this. Let me show you four Scriptures quickly. Paul had trouble with this. In Romans chapter three, Romans chapter three, verse one he said, "What advantage hath the Jew? What profit is there in circumcision?" Well, a whole lot. These Jews had the oracles of God. They had the prophets. They had the preaching.

They had the law. They had the ceremony. Well, what if some of them did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid. God forbid.

These Jews had an advantage. God gave them the prophets, the law, the promises and the Word and they didn't believe. But their unbelief didn't make God's purpose void, not at all, nor God's Word void. Let God be true, he said, and every man a liar. He had the same problem we do. Over there in Romans 6:1, look at Romans six, verse one. Cecil read this a while ago. What shall we say? What shall we say? If men are saved by faith alone, if men are saved by grace and if our sin and our unrighteousness exalts and exhibit's the grace of God, I tell you God gets praise out of lifting that old fallen sinner. He gets praise out of lifting that old wretched, fallen, depraved, vile, guilty, sinful creature. He gets all the glory.

Well, somebody said, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" If God gets glory out of forgiving our sins, then let's go on sinning. If our unrighteousness exhibits the grace and mercy of God, then let's really exhibit it.

Paul says, "God forbid. How are we that are dead in sin going to live any longer therein?"

You see, these are logical conclusions that the warped brain of sinful men come to.

"Well, if God elected a people why preach?"

That is the same thing.

"If God chose a people and he is going to save them, why send a missionary?"

That is the same thing. You see, these folks are saying here.

Look down here at Romans 6:14. Sin shall not have dominion over you. You are not under the law. You are under grace.

Oh, what we can do with that. I am not under the law. I am under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law?

See, that's the logical conclusion that a Adamic brain concludes from that.

"Well, all right, if I am not under the law, I have no rules or regulations hanging over my head, no threat, then, boy, let's kick the traces out and knock off the...knock the fences and take off," Barnard said.

No. God forbid. No ye not that whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are whom you obey?

But this is...see, this is natural man thinking. And that is what that old fellow when he

said that Calvinism kills churches. That is natural man thinking. That's the old Adamic nature. That is the old flesh talking just like in these Scriptures here. There is another one over there in Romans. He says if men are saved by faith alone does that make the law of now effect? Romans 3:31, Romans 3:31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. We establish the law. Does faith do away with the law? Does faith make the law void? Does faith overthrow the law? Does faith make it a dead letter? God forbid. Faith establishes, honors, upholds the law.

I will tell you what this preaching will do. It will kill all right. It will kill. I am going to sum it up and close with this right here. The first thing it will kill is your self righteousness. It will kill it deader than a doornail. It sure will. You will be saying with Paul, what I counted gain is loss. I tell you it will shut us up. It will strip us of all self righteousness. It will make us look to Christ for righteousness and cleansing and sanctification.

I tell you something else it will kill is pride. It will kill pride.

Who made you to differ? What do you have you didn't receive?

I will tell you. Grace is a leveler.

Someone said, "The grade-G-R-A-V-E—is a leveler." God's people get leveled off before they get to the grave. They get leveled off by grace. There are folks in this congregation who are very highly educated. Some of us are not. But those that are highly educated do not feel more important than those that aren't. There are folks in this congregation that are little more wealthier than others, but they don't feel...what do you have God didn't give you? Some are more gifted.

Cecil, I blessed his when he prayed. I like to hear him pray and read and joke and preach. Some of the rest of you have gifts, but are you proud of it? No. No. God has humbled you hasn't he? He has leveled us. We are one. There are no chiefs around here. We are all Indians. The Lord is the chief. And that is it. It will kill it. It will kill that old pride. It will kill it deader than a doornail. If that is what is keeping your church going it will kill it all right. It will kill all that division and pride and arrogance and haughtiness and smart aleck things, you know. It will kill it dead.

I'll tell you something else it will kill is human praise and human glory. We want to give him the glory. We don't run around bragging on each other. They said...one said, "I am of Paul." And one said, "I am of Apollos." "I am of Cephas."

He said, "Who are they?" Nothing, nothing, that's all.

I will tell you something else it will kill is the works of the flesh. I tell you we will quit trying to do the work of the Holy Spirit. We will quit trying to coerce and bribe and pay people to come to God's house. And we will quit trying to convict sinners and let the Holy Spirit do it and we will quit trying to do God's work and we will just preach and fel-

lowship and worship and send missionaries and sow the seed and let the Lord of the harvest germinate it and bring it up.

I have a time with what we call the altar call or the invitation. I don't know. Rolf suffered under that problem for 45, 50 years, 45 anyway. We close a service and what do you do?

I know the message is the invitation. I know I have invited men to Christ tonight. Come to Christ. It will make you whole.

I have preached the gospel. Christ is our salvation.

Now, then, what are you going to do about it? That is between you and God. Salvation is not down here. Salvation is not in the handshake or salvation is not in the water. Salvation is in Christ. If you could...if you could embrace him and close with him and commit...Paul said, "I commit it to him." If you could have something between you and the Lord, "Lord, I am yours. I believe thy Word. I trust thy Word. I cast myself on you."

And God gives peace to your heart and speaks peace to your heart, then tell folks about it. I believe you will. I believe you will want to follow him in baptism. I believe you will want to confess Christ. But I don't know about this...I don't know about this getting folks to walk up and down aisles making decisions.

I am always afraid...now, listen to me and understand what I am saying. I am not against it. I don't know enough about it to be against it, but I will always tremble lest someone should rest their eternal hope on what they did at the close of a service. And that bothers me. I have got to somehow come to rest my eternal hope on what Christ did on the cross and what he is doing at the right hand of God. And my being one with him and being by faith united to Christ.

I am always afraid somebody is going to rest their salvation on the fact that they come to Church and they pay their dues and they sing and they pray and they preach and they do these things and that God at the judgment is going to look with favor upon them when he is not at all. The Lord looks with favor upon those who are in the ark, Christ Jesus, who are in the rock, Christ Jesus, who are in the city of refuge, Christ Jesus. And he looks for favor upon them because of what Christ did not because of what they did. And we must not...and that is the reason I say that I don't know how to handle this particular part of the service. If God has done something for you, if the Lord has brought you to faith in Christ, if he has brought you to rest in him, confess him. That is all I know to say. Confess him.

They said, "Men, brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

But we sing...we will sing this to close, brother Ronnie, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and his righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame,” whatever it might be, an experience, a feeling, a doctrine, an ordinance, a ceremony, a decision. “I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand.”

And my question in closing: Are you in Christ? Are you in Christ? By eternal grace and by faith and by faith.