



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Scripture: Various

2000

TULIP Series: Part 2 "Unconditional Election"

TRANSCRIPT

It is seven o'clock, and time for us to begin our second in this series on TULIP. And so before we do that, we want to open with a word of prayer. Let's pray.

Father, we count it a privilege to be able to gather together as believers in Jesus Christ. We thank You for the grace that brought us to Him, that brought us to a saving knowledge of our Savior that has blessed us so. And we pray that as we consider Your grace tonight, that You might bless us with an understanding of it, and a great appreciation of it.

Bless the lesson here, bless it in the other classes that are meeting, and bless our time of prayer at the end. May it all be done in a way that pleases You, a sweet savor to You. We commit our time to You now, and pray You'd bless it. In Christ's name, Amen.

(Message) Couple of months ago I was listening to National Public Radio, (I tune in occasionally. They have some very interesting programs on occasion), and on this occasion I happened to turn it on in the middle of a conversion in which a person was telling of an odd experience that he had while waiting for the subway.

As he was standing there, he noticed a man coming toward him through the crowd. He was a young man and he described him as well dressed and rather plain looking. But as he watched him he noticed that he was speaking to people in the crowd.

He would stop; he would say something to a person; he would then move on to another and say something to that person; then move on. So the speaker was curious about what was being said when eventually, the man came up to him, looked at him for a moment—and then said, "You can stay." And then he moved on.

And what he said...all this impressed the observer very much in the sense that he suddenly felt this sense of relief—like he'd made the cut, like he was worthy. He told the story with a sense of humor, and he and the other person on the radio were both amused by the absurdity of it all, and they tried to analyze the experience.

I don't remember the point that was made from it, but I thought, as I heard that, 'This is probably the way people imagine 'the doctrine of divine election' to be. It's random and impersonal. It's like fate. Or, it's certainly unjustified; God has no more right to choose one over another than that man at the subway had to go around choosing who could stay. And it produces pride; those who believe themselves chosen by God are puffed up with a sense of self-worth—like they made the cut and they are now part of the chosen few.'

Well nothing could be further from the biblical teaching on *election* than that. But even Christians are troubled by it and have many of the same misconceptions. They can't dismiss it as easily as a non-Christian might, for it's clearly taught in the Bible. In Matthew 24, Jesus speaks of "the elect". He says that, 'The angels will come from the four winds and gather the elect.' (vs31). But still, they treat this doctrine like it's some dark secret of the faith, something that we don't talk about—and shouldn't study. 'It's too deep for our minds, or it's not practical—and worst of all, it's controversial.'

But then what in the Bible isn't controversial? The doctrine of the Trinity is controversial. The deity of Christ is controversial. The way of salvation is controversial: Justification through faith alone, justification by grace alone. Or the fact that there is only 'one way', and all other ways are excluded. So, what in the Bible is not controversial?

And what has God revealed to us in the Word of God that's impractical? 'Every doctrine is profitable for reproof and instruction and correction.' (2Tim 3:16). And how are we to go about avoiding this issue, this subject of *election* anyway? Are we to ignore the Gospel of John, or are we to be very selective in the passages in it that we consider? Are we going to ignore John chapter 1, and chapter 5, and chapter 6, and skip chapter 10, and skip chapter 12, and chapter 13? What about the Book of Romans? Are we going to teach it, or just not teach chapter 8 and chapter 9? What about the Book of Ephesians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Peter?

Reality is, the doctrine of election is throughout the Bible. And because it is throughout the Bible, it should be talked about—and talked about a lot. It is a glorious doctrine, and it is a fundamental doctrine for all believers—and that includes young believers. I think young believers should be taught the doctrine of election; they should be taught, as we all should be taught, the origin, the nature, and the goal of salvation. Rightly understood, it gives the greatest comfort and joy to us; and it gives all the glory to God.

Well that's our subject this evening, the second point in the acrostic TULIP, "Unconditional Election". And what I want to do is consider the doctrine logically, biblically, and practically. And in the process I hope to clear up some of the misconceptions that people have of it. And this is quite a tall order for the amount of time that we have, but we're going to seek to do that.

'Unconditional Election' is part of 'Divine Sovereignty'. We can understand sovereignty broadly in terms of *foreordination*—which is God's plan that governs everything that happens in the universe. Nothing happens by chance. Everything that happens is by the will and design of God. Ephesians 1:11, God, "works all things after the counsel of His will." Nothing is excluded in that statement: 'He works all things after the counsel of His will.' He wouldn't be God if He didn't.

*Predestination* is a part of *foreordination*. Foreordination is about everything in the universe—animate and inanimate. Predestination refers to man's eternal destiny. *Election* is an aspect of *predestination*. It concerns those who have been predestined to eternal life. *Reprobation* regards those who have been rejected or passed over.

And again, to understand election, we can go back to Ephesians 1:11(a), "Also we have obtained an inheritance", Paul says. It's an eternal inheritance, it's eternal life.

Why? Because, we have been *predestined*. And how are we predestined? "According to His purpose, who works all things after the counsel of His will." (Eph 1:11b)

Now we're all familiar with the idea of 'election'. Living in a democracy we have national elections every two, every four years. Growing up in school we had student council elections. We all know elections. Candidates give their speeches and they make promises. And based on what we know about them, and what we like or what we dislike, we give them our vote, or we withhold it. We *choose* or we *reject* them. That is 'election' of a kind; it is *choosing*.

But that kind of election is what's called '*conditional election*'. It's what the early Arminians, (and what Arminians of today), advocate. And we considered the early Arminians a little bit last week. I gave some historical background: They were called the 'Remonstrants'. They were disciples of James Arminius, and they *remonstrated*; they protested against Reformed Theology and formulated a document called *The Remonstrance*.

And in that document, the first article is entitled "Conditional Predestination". And it states, "Election and condemnation are conditioned by foreknowledge, and made dependent on the foreseen faith or unbelief of men." Now that fits most people's conception of election: 'Just as we elect candidates who are worthy of our vote, who promise to do us some good, it's to our advantage to elect them, God too, elects those who are worthy of His choice.' Now that seems legitimate, at least according to the way we naturally think. Who could complain about God choosing a good person to be in His family? No one would object to that.

But is that what the Bible teaches? The question that must be answered when we deal with this subject is, 'Who decides salvation? Who makes the primary choice, God or man?' The Arminian makes man's choice primary. He takes the choice out of the hands of God, and he puts it into the hands of men.

The problem is, that's not biblical—and not practical. It's unworkable. If it were true that God's choice is conditioned on foreseen faith, we would all be doomed; and there would be no salvation, there would be no election. Election would be impossible because 'none are worthy'.

We saw that last week in the first point that we studied, Total Depravity, (which is Total Inability). And in Romans chapter 3, Paul makes that very clear where he gives this sweeping summary of the human condition. We won't read it all, but there he says, "There is none righteous, not even one." (vs10). Now someone might say, 'Well, of course, none are righteous; we're all sinners. But we can change that by simply repenting and believing; and coming to Jesus Christ.'

But then Paul goes on, "There is none who understands", (vs11a), (i.e. who can't comprehend, the Gospel). Now I think people can understand what we say when we preach the Gospel, and they know the words we're using, and they know the concept, but they can't understand it as being true. —It's foolishness to them.

So they can't understand it, and because of that, "There is none who seeks for God", (vs11b). "There is none who does good..." Paul says, "...There's not even one." (vs12b). So I'm wondering just what is it that God would have seen from eternity that would have made Him want to choose anyone? Not faith, because there's no faith in anyone, not naturally: 'None seeks God', and certainly nothing 'good', 'no one does any good works.' 'There's none righteous, no not one.' As He looked down through time, all He would have found is total depravity, total inability—a race in rebellion, across the board, universally the case.

'Unconditional Election' follows naturally, it follows logically, from 'Total Depravity'. If no man seeks, then God must seek, if any are to be saved. And that is exactly what the Bible teaches. Jesus Christ came "to seek and to save that which was

lost", (Luk 19:10), —and not to find those who were seeking Him. And John makes that very clear in 1 John chapter 4, in verse 10, "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us." And then he goes on in verse 19 to say, "We love because He first loved us."

But logic is not all that we have in favor of *unconditional election*. The Bible clearly teaches it. We see it in both the Old and in the New Testament. In the Old Testament we see it in Deuteronomy chapter 7, in verse 7 and 8. Moses gives Israel some perspective on the great privilege that they had as being God's chosen people. And there he says, in verse 7, "The LORD did not set His love on you nor chose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you."

Why did He choose Israel? Well not because of anything in Israel. They were insignificant when that choice was made. He chose that people over all other peoples because He loved them. Well, why did He love them? Moses doesn't say. He loved them because He loved them. And that's where Moses leaves it, with an unexplained and unconditional love of God. That's the reason for their election. Election is clearly taught in the Bible, and the election that is taught is unconditional. It could only be that.

And that is reason for great comfort. It's not a reason to shy away from this doctrine. It's not a reason to avoid it, it is a reason to revel in it and rejoice in it! Who could be saved if it were dependent on ourselves, on our works, on our faith? Well, we've seen already that that's impossible. Who could rest in Christ? Who could enjoy peace in Jesus Christ, if salvation were dependent on our faithfulness?

And to understand the other position is to understand it's not simply that God saw that you *would* believe, but you would *continue* to believe, that you would maintain your salvation—that you would uphold your salvation to the very end. And the possibility is that some wouldn't; they'd lose their salvation. Well, there's no peace in that kind of understanding of things. Left to ourselves, we're going to fall away, we're going to prove unfaithful. So there's great comfort in the doctrine of unconditional election, which rules all of that out.

But we don't hold to it because it is encouraging; we hold to it because it's biblical. It's found in the Old Testament, it's found in the New Testament: So I'd like to read some of the texts. We're not going to go through all of them, but I want to read some of the texts, and I'll make a few comments.

Some I don't think need comment: John chapter 15, in verse 16, Jesus told the disciples, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." Now, it's possible to take that statement as a reference to choosing them to be His apostles. But even if that's the case, the principle holds true for salvation as well. "You did not choose Me, I chose you."

Acts 13:48, Luke there writes about the conversion of the Gentiles in Pisidian in Antioch during Paul's first missionary journey. Paul gave the Gospel, and Luke writes, "...as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." Who believed?  
—Those "appointed."

Turn over to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, in verse 13. Paul writes, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." The choice was made when? "From the beginning", —from all eternity.

Romans chapter 8, verses 28 and 29, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the first born among many brethren."

Verse 28 is great promise, but it's a promise that is limited to a certain group. It's a promise that is given only for God's people, "...those who are called according to *His* purpose." And Paul then defines them, defines who the "called" are in verse 29, as "those whom He, (*God*), foreknew." And based on that foreknowledge, 'predestined them to become conformed to Christ, and to have life everlasting.'

The word *foreknew* does not mean '*foresaw*' or '*knew beforehand*'. It means '*foreloved*'. Now, if you got the latest edition of the *Chapel News*, I began a series entitled, "The Golden Chain," about these verses—and I deal with them in some depth

and support that statement. So because time is limited here, I'm not going to develop that fully, but that is what '*foreknew*' means—"foreloved".

The word '*know*' is an idiom, (and I think there's a typo in that article, by the way, *idiom* is misspelled), but it's an idiom in both Greek and Hebrew for '*love*'. And so the sense is not that, 'He knew something about them beforehand', but, 'He foreloved them'.

And you get an understanding of that by just reading the text: You see that here because Paul doesn't say that 'God *foreknew* something about us', or that 'He *foresaw* faith' and therefore *predestined* us. No, 'He *foreknew* us.' We're the object of His *foreknowledge*; not something about us. But we, personally, are the object of His foreknowledge, of His forelove. He foreloved us—and because He foreloved us, He chose us—that's the idea. Loved before; loved from all eternity; chosen from eternity and therefore predestined us to life.

Now that's also the same meaning in 1 Peter chapter 1. And there Peter begins his epistle in verses one and two by saying, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood." It means, "chosen according to the *forelove* of God."

Now, it's clear that Peter doesn't mean *foreknowledge* in terms of *foresight*; or *prescience* in terms of seeing ahead in time. And we get a sense of that, or we see that from the relationship of the word *chosen* and the word *obey*. He doesn't say, 'who were chosen because of obedience', but, "who are chosen...to obey." The obedience of faith, the obedience of the Christian life are the result of election—not the basis of it. They were *chosen* to *obey*, and *chosen* to be *sprinkled* with atoning blood.

Well how else could it be? From what we've seen, there is "none who understands", and "none who seeks for God". If we all begin dead in our trespasses and sins, how else could it be but for God to love us and take the first step: quicken us and bring us to faith in Him?



Now, I want to consider two more passages before we deal with the application of this. And the first is Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3 through 6. And then we'll look at one other passage that I think is definitive in all of this.

But in Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3 through 6, Paul writes, "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

Now three things to notice. And *first* is, 'every spiritual blessing' is from God. Every spiritual blessing comes from Him. So salvation is altogether of the LORD.

*Secondly*, His choice was made, "before the foundation of the world". Before we existed; before we had any thought of Him; before we could make any choice; before we could make any decision—"He chose us."

And *thirdly*, His choice, "to predestine us to adoption of sons", was made sovereignly by Him. Here's the nature of it: It wasn't made because of anything in us but, "according to the kind intention of His will". The King James version has, "according to the good *pleasure* of His will", and I think that's a good translation, (but to some it has led to a misconception and suggested some arbitrariness on the part of God).

*Pleasure* is a word that seems frivolous. It sometimes has to do with *feeling good* and suggests the idea of the *emotions*, so that His choice might appear in that interpretation, that translation, to be whimsical or capricious. And so being *chosen* or *elected* is kind of like, 'winning the lottery'. 'We just got lucky'. 'God happened to like us when He chose us', or 'had the good pleasure toward us', or whatever. Well, election is not that at all. Even if we take it this way, it is "God's *good* pleasure", anything in God that is *good*, cannot be construed as bad.

But here we have in the other translation, the New American Standard Bible, "the kind intention of His will." Nothing that God does is arbitrary, not in the sense of

being fatalistic. Now it does appear to us to be arbitrary in the sense that we don't know why He chose one over the other. But we can know this: That nothing with God is arbitrary; it's not fatalistic. He is all-wise, and He does all things well—and He does everything for a perfect purpose.

And that's true of the choices that He has made for salvation. The reason for the choices is not in us, it is in Him; it is according to His will. We can't know why He chose one and not another—but He does do that. And knowing that God has done that, and that God is perfect, that God is all-wise, and all good, it is enough to know that. It is enough to know that He has done it, and there can be no arbitrariness in God.

Now, that is *unconditional election*. But if there is any question about that being the nature of divine election, it's settled in the second text, Romans 9, (or at least it should be in my opinion because this is the defining passage on the subject). Romans chapter 9, verses 6 through 26. We can't deal with this in any detail, but we can hit some high points.

Romans chapters 9 through 11: Paul is answering the question, 'What happened to Israel?' This is like a parenthesis in the Book of Romans. If you were at the end at Romans chapter 8, you could turn over to the beginning of chapter 12 and you wouldn't notice anything missing. It would read very smoothly, because this is a parenthesis in the book, in which Paul is answering the question, 'What happened to Israel?'

The great theme of the whole book is 'Justification through faith alone.' But Israel was given over to the Law. Israel was seeking to achieve its righteousness through the works of the Law. And so the question arises, 'Well, what has happened to Israel? Did the promises that God made to the nation fail?'

And the answer that Paul gives in verse 6 of chapter 9 is, 'No, they've not failed.' And then he goes on in chapter 9 to explain that salvation is not according to physical descent, but according to God's sovereign grace: "They are not all Israel who are descended from Israel." (vs6). Within the nation Israel, there is a remnant,

an elect people: those chosen for spiritual, eternal blessings within the larger company of those who have been chosen for national and temporal blessing.

And to prove that, Paul traces Israel's history, beginning with Abraham's two sons, Ishmael, (the oldest), and Isaac, (the youngest). God said to Abraham, in verse 7, "Through Isaac your descendants will be named." So the older was passed over for the younger—which was unheard of in the ancient world. The *law of primogeniture* was in force at that time; the older naturally inherited the blessings. But here we have this great overturning of that, where the younger is chosen over the older.

Now some might say, 'Well, of course Isaac was chosen over Ishmael because Ishmael was born of Hagar, an Egyptian bondwoman. And Isaac was born of Sarah.' So, in verse 10 through 13, Paul gives the example of the next generation: Isaac's sons, Jacob and Esau, twins who were born of the same mother; the righteous woman, Rebecca.

We read in verses 11-13, "for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls. It was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' Just as it is written, 'Jacob, I have loved, but Esau I hated.' " God's choice was not based on foreseen works or faith: "not because of works", verse 11.

Jacob was a scoundrel; we know that from his history. But God loved Him; and that's why He chose him. It wasn't anything in Jacob that moved Him to love him. He loved him because He loved him. And 'He hated Esau'. Now that doesn't mean that God had a loathing for Esau or an attitude of malice toward him. It is a way of saying that, 'He withheld His mercy from him.'

But to many, that seems very unjust. And Paul had heard that objection many times; and so he answers it in verses 14 through 16. "What shall we say then?...", verse 14, "...There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!"

Now the very question of injustice at this point presupposes that Paul was teaching *unconditional election*. But no one raises the question of injustice against the Arminian on his theory of *conditional election*: 'God chooses the way we choose, according to merit, according to the person who deserves it. Election is based on human decisions. It's really not a choice, (in the final analysis), at all with God.'

So according to that view, God simply ratifies our choice of Him—and the objection of injustice doesn't even arise in the Arminian view of conditional election. Therefore, the fact that Paul's teaching on Jacob and Esau seems unjust, indicates that the objection was against *unconditional election* and it is against the idea that God's choice was sovereign, without any consideration of Jacob's or Esau's choice.

And Paul makes that obvious by affirming that very point. He says, in verses 15-18, "For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' So then it *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.' So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires."

Now if Paul had intended to teach, 'An election according to foreseen faith', this was the opportunity to do that—or this was the opportunity to have made the correction in the thinking of those who have objected. If someone is objecting to the idea of unconditional election, Paul could have very easily at this point said, 'No, you've misunderstood me. That choice was based on what was done or what was seen beforehand.' So he's already eliminated that before the objection was raised.

He doesn't do that, though. He doesn't correct, he doesn't interject some new kind of teaching. He reaffirms that election is unconditional: "It *does not depend* on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy." (vs16).

Now that is what the Bible teaches: This is not something I wrote. Dr. Johnson didn't write this out and hand it to me before I got up here. This doesn't come from the pen of John Calvin. This is the apostle Paul—and he's quoting Moses.

But it's raised objections, and Paul goes on to silence all objections of injustice on God's part by saying, in Romans 9, verse 20, "Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?" God is sovereign in the matter of salvation. It is His salvation to give as He will—and none of us who receives it is deserving of it in the first place. God is sovereign.

He goes on to illustrate that very point with the potter and the clay, (vs21), for God has the same kind of authority. A potter has absolute authority over the lump of clay—to make from that one lump two different vessels, one vessel purposed for honorable use, and one for dishonorable use; two different functions. And in the same way, God has the absolute right to determine the destinies of all men—He's God.

He does not choose everybody for salvation; He only chooses some to be saved. That is, as I say, the clear teaching of the Bible. And if it's disturbing, then we need to remember that, 'His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than our thoughts.' (Isa 55:9). There's much in this that we don't understand—but as I say, again, the Bible does teach it. And ultimately we must simply bow to that.

Now, having said that, this does raise some questions of a practical nature. What about evangelism? If election is true, is that an impediment to giving the Gospel? If God has ordained these things, if God has chosen some and not chosen others, is there any purpose or need to give the Gospel? Does it thwart the purpose of the Gospel?

No, it does not. In fact, just the opposite. If election were not true, there would be no evangelism because none would seek God. Election is the reason that men do seek Him. It's the insurance of success in the whole enterprise of evangelism. Election is not simply, 'to salvation'. *Election*, itself, is not salvation. Some have that idea: 'Well, if a person is elect, then they're saved, and that's the end of it.' That's not the case.

Election is to salvation through faith. Faith is still necessary. Election simply guarantees that when men hear the Gospel, some will respond to it and believe in Jesus

Christ. And so we make our appeal to men on that basis, in that way, for them to believe in Jesus Christ, to receive salvation through faith, and faith alone. 'Believe and you will be saved!' That's the Gospel.

The assurance is that the elect will do that. We don't know who they are, and so we cast our net widely and know that God, in His providence, will bring people there and the Spirit of God will quicken them and bring them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Spurgeon was a Five Point Calvinist, and had very illuminating words on the whole subject. And he wrote on this idea of election and salvation and evangelism: "If you loved to be saved by Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ elected you to be saved." Now he does not mean by that, 'If you loved to be saved, if you desire salvation, then because of that, Christ has elected you.' Rather he means, 'Then you're elect because that's the obvious evidence that God has chosen you. Only the elect desire that.'

So Spurgeon says, "If you loved to be saved by Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ elected you to be saved. If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it—if you desire it sincerely and earnestly. But if you don't desire it, why on earth should you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that, (which you do not like), to other people."

That makes a very good point: Election is no impediment to evangelism. Whoever wants salvation can have it through faith. Those who refuse the offer do so because they don't want it. God is not unjust in denying men what they don't want. He is not unjust in anything that He does. Whether we understand it or not, if He does it, it's right.

But individuals certainly can't object to God being unjust for denying men what they don't want. What He is, is merciful for granting salvation to men who don't seek it, who don't desire it, and who don't deserve it. And that's the real issue. Not justice, but mercy. And His mercy and His grace are abundant.

It is a mistake to think that the elect are few in number. There is a vast multitude of the elect. Genesis chapter 15, in verse 5, God promised to Abraham, seed that will

number like 'the stars of the heaven'. He goes on to describe it like 'the sand of the seashore', like 'the dust of the earth.'

In Revelation chapter 7, in verse 9, John sees this 'innumerable multitude in heaven.' That's the elect—more than we can count. It's not some small group; it is a vast number of souls that God has chosen for Himself. It is though, (and this is how Dr. Johnson illustrated it so many years ago), God looked down on this fallen humanity; and He reached down and scooped some up—and scooped up a lot of them. That's grace; and it's abundant. And so, because of that, because there is an abundant number of the elect in the world, we can go out into the world and proclaim the Gospel confidently knowing that the elect will respond to it. —They will believe.

That's the effect, the practical effect that this doctrine should have. It's not something that we should avoid, it's something we should preach, proclaim, understand and enjoy because it is a doctrine that should fill us with great confidence. We're not out there on our own. God has planned it; God is going to carry it out. He's merely enlisted us to go out and carry out the certain work that He has determined will occur.

So we can go out and we can do the work of evangelism with confidence. God's people are throughout the world, and we should go out and proclaim the Gospel to them, and call them to Him—call them to saving faith.

The doctrine of election should have a humbling effect upon us and not producing pride, as though we made the cut and we're worthy. Just the opposite. We are unworthy—yet chosen by God. Think of that. You're absolutely unworthy. What you deserve is what I deserve, and that's hell forever. But if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, you're a believer in Jesus Christ because in eternity past, God set His love on you and chose you for Himself—and you're not going to go to hell, you're going to go to heaven forever, because He loved you.

That's His love. That's the nature of unconditional election. We are unworthy, yet chosen by Him—and that should not only eliminate pride and instill humility, it should

also produce peace. God loves us from all eternity—and that's a love that's unconditional.

And because that's the nature of His love, it will never fail, even though we will fail. You'll fail. You'll stumble. You'll be unfaithful. You've been unfaithful today. You'll be unfaithful tonight, probably. In some way, you're going to be unfaithful. We're constantly like that, and yet God's never unfaithful to us. We may fail Him, but He never fails us.

So that's *Unconditional Election*. I think that's the very practical aspect of it. Unconditional election follows naturally from Total Depravity. It is logical; it's biblical; it's practical. As John Calvin wrote in *The Institutes*, "We will never be convinced that our salvation flows from the fountain of God's free mercy till we are acquainted with His eternal election." That's true. So may God help us all become even more acquainted with that great doctrine. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You for Your grace; grace that is eternal, grace that goes back before the foundation of the world—and it was that grace that chose us. You set Your love upon a people who are unworthy, undeserving; and yet, You chose us for Yourself, chose us for faith, chose us for holiness, for righteousness. May we increase in our faith, and increase in our righteousness, and serve You faithfully. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

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