



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Scripture: Various

2000

TULIP Series: Part 3 "Limited Atonement"

TRANSCRIPT

It's seven o'clock, and so we'll begin with a word of prayer and then we'll look into our subject this evening. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You for Your goodness and Your grace. And as we study these various doctrines of sovereign grace, we are reminded of that, and reminded that as Jonah said, "Salvation is of the LORD", from beginning to end, it's Your work. From eternity past, and all the way throughout eternity in the future, it will be Your work, and we will praise You for it.

But as we seek to understand it in this world, and in the brief bit of time we have this evening, we pray that You'd bless us and guide our thinking; and make it an enjoyable and thought provoking time; and hopefully a helpful time for all of us.

May all that we do this evening be to Your glory. We pray that for the lesson, and for the time of prayer that follows—and we pray that for the other meetings that are going on this evening. Bless the young people as they meet, bless the instruction that they're given, and open their hearts to receive it. Bless all of us, we pray in Christ's name, Amen.

(Message) The story is often told of a ministers' meeting where a missionary minded William Carey was rebuked for his zeal by the elder, John Ryland. "Young man,

sit down. "Sit down", he said. "You're an enthusiast. When God is pleased to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."

That is often seen as the Calvinistic attitude toward the Gospel and toward evangelism—but is it? Does belief in the sovereignty of God undermine a sense of urgency about evangelism or undermine our part in it?

Well, we'll consider that this evening with our third lesson on TULIP, and the 'L' of the acrostic, which stands for "Limited Atonement." For many, this is the most controversial of the 'Five Points'; and it concerns the question, 'For whom did Christ die?'

Many answer the question the way the Arminians did, those early *Remonstrants*, in their statement of faith, called *The Remonstrance*—and the second article which is entitled, "Universal Atonement." They wrote, "Christ died for all men, and for every man. His sacrifice is sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and is intended for all by God, the Father." The only reason that that purpose, that goal, that intention, is not reached is because, as they say, "Man can resist successfully the grace of God."

Now Calvinists agree with Arminians on the fact that Christ's sacrifice was "Sufficient for the whole world." That's really not the debate; for it is sufficient for the whole world. It's sufficient for an infinite number of worlds.

But some interpret the name, "Limited Atonement", to suggest that the atonement is, (in our minds; my mind and those who hold the view that I do), as '*insufficient*'—that it's '*limited* in its power' or '*limited* in its value'. It's not; it's not limited. Christ's sacrifice was of infinite value—of infinite power. The issue is not the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice—but the intention of it.

The Cross was designed to save a limited number of people. It was designed to save God's elect. And so, to avoid the confusion that some people have, (a lot of people have), a number of Calvinists prefer the expressions, '*definite atonement*' or '*particular redemption*'; which indicates that the issue is the atonement's *design*, not its *value*.

But, the issue of the *value* or the *power* of the sacrifice does raise another important question. And that is, 'What did Christ actually do on the cross?' What did His death accomplish? Did God send His Son into the world merely to make salvation possible for everyone? Or did He send His Son into the world to actually save people?

Well Calvinists say that God sent His Son *to save those whom He gave to Him*—and that Christ's death actually did that; it was *efficacious*. It was *effective*. It saved His people on the cross. That's what He did. That was His purpose; and that's what He accomplished.

The Arminian says, 'No, the cross actually saved no one. It only made salvation possible. Faith is what determines the outcome of the work of Christ at Calvary.'

So, really both groups, (if you think about it and consider their positions), both groups limit the atonement. The Calvinist limits the *extent* of the atonement—the extent of what Christ's death did to those for whom He died; or, 'Christ died only for the elect'. The Arminian limits the *power* of the atonement—'it does not save anyone.'

Loraine Boettner, in his book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination...*(and if you are interested in studying these doctrines more fully, that's a good book to begin with. It's a classic on the subject.)...but in that book, he illustrates the difference between the two views with the illustration of a bridge. For the Calvinist, the cross is like a narrow bridge that goes all the way across a stream. For the Arminian, it's like a great wide bridge that goes only half way across. It doesn't actually save anyone—it doesn't actually get you there. So the Arminian, really, puts a greater limitation on the Lord's sacrifice than the Calvinist does.

So these are the two questions that we must deal with and that we'll seek to deal with tonight: First of all, 'For whom did Christ die?' And secondly, 'What did He do when He died?' —Or, 'What is the extent of the atonement, and what is the nature of it?' And in the time left we will seek to deal with these questions logically, biblically, and practically. And by practically I mean, at least in part or large part, the 'How does this affect evangelism?'

From the standpoint of logic, or from the standpoint of theology, it is very hard to deny that the atonement was limited to the elect if you are convinced of the first two points that we've covered, Total Depravity, and Unconditional Election. If, as we have sought to show in our first lesson, 'Man cannot choose God', that Total Depravity not only means that 'man has no good with God', (this doesn't mean he doesn't have any good but that he has no good with God); 'nothing in him that is acceptable to God'.

But also means that 'he's totally unable to believe', that, 'No man can come to the Father', as the Lord says in John 6; then if we accept that, then it must be so that—'For man to be saved, God must first come to him—that He must choose man before man chooses Him.' And that choice, by virtue of the fact of *total depravity*, must be an *unconditional election*. Now if you accept those two points: If you accept the first, you must accept the second—and if you accept both, then *limited atonement* follows naturally.

Now I came to see that for myself many years ago. In fact I remember it quite well: It was in the summer of 1967; I picked up my Bible and I read the Book of Romans, thoughtfully, for the first time. And after reading through chapters 8 and 9, I was thoroughly convinced of the absolute sovereignty of God. Not because I was such a brilliant student, (I was not), but one does not need to be brilliant to see that; it's quite plain if you read Romans 8 and Romans 9, that that's exactly what Paul is teaching—God is "absolutely sovereign." And so, from my reading of the Book of Romans, those issues were very clear to me. I believed in 'divine sovereignty', and I believed in 'divine election', *unconditional election*.

But it wasn't until few years later, when I was in college, that I first learned of this doctrine of 'Limited Atonement'. I was engaged in a theological discussion with a friend. and in the course of the discussion he informed me that John Calvin, 'Believed that Christ died only for the elect', that he believed in the doctrine of 'Limited Atonement'.

I'd never heard that before and I got to thinking about it. I didn't think about it very long before I decided, 'That made good sense!' I don't think I got out of the car;

I think we hadn't driven a mile before I thought, "That makes good sense. After all, why would Christ die for people His Father had not elected?" What would have been the point of doing such a thing: Of dying to save those who were not chosen to be saved?

It wouldn't make sense, to my mind, and to many others, that He would do such a thing. For that would mean that He died to save people who were already in hell. He died on the cross to save Esau, to save Pharaoh, to save Judas, ("the son of perdition"), which would be unreasonable on the one hand—but it would mean that He wasted some of His blood because they would not be saved.

Also, the idea that Christ died for the non-elect introduces a terrible contradiction into the Godhead: 'The Father chooses some for salvation. The Holy Spirit draws those chosen ones to salvation. (We'll come to that next week in the 'I' of TULIP, Irresistible Grace.) But then the Son dies for those not chosen for salvation?! Now that's an inconsistency in the Godhead—that's an inconsistency in the plan of salvation.

And it's inconsistent with Christ's priestly ministry. In His high priestly prayer, in John 17, verse 9, Jesus explicitly excludes the non-elect. He says, "...I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours."

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Now, did Christ die for those for whom He would not pray? Well, it would seem not. His priestly prayer was surely consistent with His priestly sacrifice. And really, isn't that what our Lord says, back in John chapter 6, in verse 39? There He says, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me...", [Now, 'Who did He give to Him? Did He give every single individual in the world to Him? No, the ones He gave to Him are His chosen ones—are the *elect!*], "...that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." The Father's will is that the Son save 'the given ones', that He save 'the chosen ones', that He save 'the ones that He, (*the Father*), had given to His Son', the elect.

Now that's very simply the logic of it. As I said before in our prayer, we could spend a lot of time on this subject, that we don't have tonight. A whole book could be written on this subject—but briefly, that's the logic of it.

But the logic is not always convincing to people. People will frequently say, as I have heard said, "It may be logical, but it's not biblical." Now they don't realize what a big concession they make when they say that, because the logic of it is built upon biblical teaching on other areas. But nevertheless, that's what often is said, 'It's not biblical.'

'Four Point Calvinists', for example, argue that. They affirm a belief in depravity and in election, but they deny limited atonement—and they accept the inconsistency of it; and they accept the inconsistency of it because they don't believe that the Bible teaches it. Which is fair enough. In fact, I would say to you who may be in that camp tonight, if you do not believe that the Bible teaches this, then you shouldn't believe it; you must believe what the Bible teaches.

But that raises the question, 'Is it true that the Bible does not teach this doctrine of Limited Atonement?' 'Is it *not biblical*?' Well, John 6:39, (we just read), is biblical and it certainly would suggest the position that I'm arguing for this evening. But there are many other texts as well. The doctrine of Limited Atonement is supported by explicit statements of Scripture as well as the force of logic.

Now admittedly, nowhere in my reading of the Bible have I read the statement, 'Christ died for the elect only.' But nowhere have I read that, 'He died for the non-elect.' What the statements of the Bible do make clear is that, 'The scope of Christ's death was *definite—it was particular*.

We see that in the Old Testament with the priests and the sacrifices, which are types of Christ and His work, His priestly work. He is our high priest. And what the priests of Aaron did, priests of Levi, Aaron and the others with their sacrifices, picture what our Lord would do.

And we see that very clearly in Leviticus 16 with the great day of atonement. Aaron did not represent the Gentiles; his priestly work was done representing Israelites only. And you see that in the clothing that he wore, the high priestly clothing, with the breastplate, which had the 12 tribes of Israel upon it, and the names of the 12 tribes that he bore on his shoulders. He did not make the sacrifice and then sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat for the Egyptians or for the Canaanites, or for the Babylonians—but for Israel alone. In fact, if you'll look at Leviticus 16, there you will see statements like this, that his sacrifice was “for the people”, and for “all the assembly of Israel”. It was particular; it was a definite sacrifice.

Isaiah 53 gives the same scope to the atonement; the same design—it's particular. In fact, if you'll look over at Isaiah 53, you see that in verses 5 and 6. And there Isaiah writes, speaking of ‘the servant who would suffer for us’, “But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening of our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging, we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us turned to his own way; But the LORD caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.” (Is 53: 5-6).

Now someone might say, ‘Well yes, on us *all*’, meaning ‘*everyone, everywhere.*’ But then we read in verse 8, that if that's, perhaps, the question that one might have, it seems to be cleared up in verse 8 where Isaiah writes, “For the transgression of My people, to whom the stroke was due.” No, it's for a *particular* people that the sacrifice was made.

We see that in the Old Testament in the types and in the statements such as Isaiah 53, but that's made clear in the New Testament where the work of Christ, (the people for whom He died), are seen to be quite *particular*. In Matthew 1:21, the angel said, ‘And she will bear a Son, and you will call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.’ John 10:15, “I lay down My life for the *sheep*.” John 15:13, “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his *friends*.”

In Acts chapter 20, in verse 28, Paul is speaking to the Ephesian elders, and he tells them to, “Shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

And in Ephesians, chapter 5, in verse 25 Paul tells husbands, "Love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for her." A point, (I might add), that is lost if Christ loves those outside the church the same as He loves His bride—the illustration of faithfulness holds only if the atonement is definite.

Well, all of this is quite explicit. Christ died for 'His people', He died for 'His sheep', He died for 'His friends', He died for 'the church', He died for 'His bride', which makes clear, biblically, those for whom Christ died. —It's for a *particular* people.

But the issue of the *design* of the atonement is settled, it would seem to me, by the *nature* of the atonement. Because if Christ's death actually saves... [And Paul says, for example in Galatians 3:13, that "Christ", actually, "redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us." By becoming a curse, he says, 'He redeemed us', bought us out from the curse of the Law.] ...He did that for us. It's not something we did, but He did it for us.

Now if that's the case, if Christ's death actually saved, then all for whom He died must be saved. But if He died for everyone, and everyone must be saved, well that leads to *universalism*—which we know cannot be, (for we know that there are many, there were multitudes who perish in the lake of fire.) But, that's the conclusion that one must reach if one holds that Christ's death is effective, and is for everyone.

Well, the Arminian and the Four Point Calvinists recognize the problem—which is the reason that they teach the atonement only *provides* for salvation, that it does not actually *remove* sin—that it's a 'provision' but it's *not effective*. It is, (as many of the Four Point Calvinists say), "a hypothetical atonement"; and it only applies to those who believe and when they believe.

But the Bible is clear: The sacrifice that's made is *effective*. Sacrifice removes sin. The death of the substitute satisfies God's justice and it accomplishes salvation. The penalty of sin was actually "paid in full" at the cross. That's why Christ said, "It is

finished!" —The work is done. Not halfway; we're not halfway across the stream; we're all the way across the stream. The work is finished!

Now we see that again in the Old Testament on 'The Day of Atonement', back in Leviticus 16. Because if you study through that passage, there are *two* goats, there are *two* offerings, *two* sacrifices. One is slain; and its blood is sprinkled on the mercy seat. And the other goat is not slain. The priest places his hands upon it; he confesses the sin of the nation on that goat, and then that goat, (which is the *scapegoat*), is driven out into the wilderness. And the picture that is symbolized in all of that is, 'through the shedding of blood', (through the sacrifice), sin is removed. —It's taken away.

But sacrifice not only removes sin, it *satisfied* God's justice. It *satisfies* all the demands of the Law. —It makes *atonement*. In Isaiah 53, what we read earlier, we read that 'The suffering servant would bear our transgressions, that He would be pierced through for our transgressions, and He would carry our iniquities.' And then, in verse 11 we read, "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He", (meaning the Father), "will see *it* and be satisfied." God's justice was *satisfied* by Christ suffering as our substitute. 'His work satisfied His justice.' —that's what Isaiah is saying.

Now, if God is satisfied with Christ's sacrifice in our place, and He paid for our sins, (all of our transgressions were laid upon Him, all of our iniquities were laid upon Him; and they were all punished there at the cross—and God is *satisfied* with that), what is left for the sinner, for whom Christ died, to pay? What's left that He wouldn't be satisfied about? What do we have to make up that has not been dealt with fully and completely at the cross?

Well, Nothing! It was all paid for! And He doesn't require double payment from us. He doesn't require us to pay what Christ has already paid. In fact, He cannot require double payment. —That's not just; that would be wrong. As Spurgeon put it, "If God punished Christ for your sins, He will not punish you. Payment, God's justice, cannot twice demand; First at the bleeding Savior's hand—and then again at mine."

But, if Christ died for everybody, every single individual whoever lived, even those who are already suffering in hell, then those multitudes (for whom Christ died), they perish even though He paid for their sins. They must pay again, the price that Christ had already paid: And that is the problem for the Four Point Calvinist .

Their answer that is given to that problem is that, 'Christ did not die for the sin of unbelief', —that that was left unpaid for and we deal with that when we believe. If we believe, then it's removed—if we don't, then it's not.

But really all sin is ultimately 'a sin of unbelief.' Paul says that in Romans 14:23. "Whatever is not of faith is sin," he says. And if that is the case, then that really is a 'limited atonement' in the worst sense of the term—because He didn't finish the work. He didn't take care of that which is at the root of all of our sins, *unbelief*.

Well, the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible does not exclude any type of sin—or any sin from the cross. He clearly died for all our sins, even our sin of unbelief. In fact, I would say, essentially, that He did die for our unbelief, so that God's justice was completely satisfied for all for whom Christ died.

The *nature* of the Lord's death was that of a sacrifice that *satisfied* God and was *effective* in saving His people. We see that in the terms in the New Testament that are used to describe our Lord's death. The atonement is sometimes described as 'a *ransom*', which is a word that was associated in the ancient world with the price that was paid for freeing a slave.

In Matthew 20, in verse 28, Jesus said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."; (and a number of people make quite a point out of the fact that He says "*many*" and not *all*). But I think the main point to be made in the verse is that the death of Christ, the life that He gave up as a sacrifice, was a *ransom* price. It was a payment price. And the nature of a ransom is such that when it is paid and accepted, it automatically frees the person for whom it was intended. It's unconscionable that the captors would be paid the ransom price to free the captives—and then having been paid, they don't release the captives. There would

be no point in paying a ransom price. And so those for whom the ransom was paid must be freed.

And they are. And we experience that in time. *All* those for whom Christ paid the price, paid the penalty, for whom He settled the issue on the cross, are freed *in time* by the Spirit of God as He applies the merits of the cross to His people down through the ages. Now that takes us again to next week's lesson, but they're freed because of the payment that was made.

Well the same can be said of the word, *redeemed*; another word that was used in the ancient world for buying slaves. It's used of an *effective purchase*. It's used of buying people, or buying things. And you can think in your own experience how this would work. When you go into a store and you make a purchase, once the price is paid, what happens? When you've paid the money for the item that you're purchasing, whose is it? Does it sit there on the counter, and you wonder, 'Now who gets it?' Once the price has been paid and once the payment has been accepted, the item is yours. You own what you bought.

And so, in 1 Corinthians 6:20, when Paul says, "You have been bought with a price...",—when were you bought with a price?...at Calvary. You were bought when Christ shed His blood. "You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." Paul means by that, you were actually purchased for God at the cross, when Jesus Christ paid for you with His own precious blood—that is of infinite value. His death made us His; so 'we are no longer our own', as Paul also says.

His death, therefore, was *effective*. It accomplished what it intended to accomplish. It actually bought us. We were purchased with His blood. His atonement was not 'hypothetical'. It was not a *possibility*. It was an actual payment, with the intended results.

But, what about all those 'universal statements' in the New Testament which describe His death as being 'for the *world*', and 'for *all*'? John 1:29, John the Baptist sees

our Lord and he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" In John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He 'loved the world.'

Or John 4, verse 42, where the Samaritans say that Jesus is "the Savior of the world." And then, 1 John 2:2, where Christ's death is said to be "...the propitiation for our sins; and not ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*" Or Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:14, that Christ died for all; "...one died for all, therefore all died."

What do we do with these? Well, first of all, when we interpret the Bible, we always need to interpret the passage we're reading, the passage we're studying, in its context. Verses in the Bible cannot, should not be isolated from the rest of the passage—and from the rest of the Bible, for that matter.

Now there are many 'universal expressions' in the Word of God that don't have a universal meaning—at least not what they might seem to have at face value: 'All doesn't always mean *all*. Sometimes it does—oftentimes it doesn't. It can mean 'all without distinction', meaning 'all kinds of people'; or *all* can mean, 'all without exception', meaning, 'everybody, every single individual.'

And the '*world*' is the same way. That word must be interpreted in light of the context in which it's found. For example, if we take '*the world*' as meaning, 'every single individual that has ever lived or ever will live', what are we going to do with John 12:19, when Jesus entered Jerusalem toward the last week of His life, and He has this large crowd of people, many of those from Galilee who are ushering Him in with palm branches, singing Hosanna!...and the authorities are very worried about what they see and they say, "The *whole* world is gone after Him."?

Well, did they mean by that, 'Look the barbarians from Germany and Briton are there, and the Chinese have even gone after him. Everybody in the world is here.' Obviously they don't mean that. They mean, 'A lot of people are following Him', or something like that. But they certainly don't mean every single individual who's ever lived or ever will live.

And we see the meaning of, '*the world*', in that context, I think, (or that light), not having that meaning of every single individual in chapter 1, where John the Baptist speaks, or in chapter 3 of John, where we have that great Gospel text of John 3:16, (and 17, which helps interpret John 3:16), there, what is meant is, 'the world in all of its parts, with all kinds of people; not all men without exception but all men without distinction.'

Go back to John the Baptist's statement about what Christ would do, and he said, He will 'take away the sin of the world!' Did He take away the sin of the world in the sense of every single individual—that all sin has been removed and that there are no guilty men? Of course he didn't mean that. He meant He took away the sin of His people, who are from all aspects of the world—His elect. Christ died to save the Jew as well as the Gentile, the free as well as the slave, the rich as well as the poor, male as well as female, all kinds of people. That's the point.

And if that strikes some as being a bit forced or contrived, they don't understand the nature of the world in which that was written, in which that was said—because this was an age in which the Jew felt that he had an exclusive right to God's love. The LORD was his God, and everyone else fell outside of that.

And Paul gives a pretty close description of that in the Book of Ephesians, where he talks about the Gentile, and how they were, 'outside the covenant and the commonwealth of Israel.' (Eph 2:12). They were in the darkness. And then we have this statement that He is, as the Samaritan said, "the Savior of the world." (Jn 4:42)...And what they are saying when they make that statement is, 'He's not just the Savior of the Jew, He the Savior of the Samaritan as well. —All kinds of people.'

I think that the best definition that we can have for '*the world*', and that helps us interpret John's statement is another statement that John makes that doesn't use the word *world*, but it clearly defines the extent of the atonement—and that's in Revelation, chapter 5, in verse 9. There we have the heavenly scene with the 24 elders saying of Christ, 'The Lamb', "...You were slain, and purchased for God with your blood *men*", (*or literally*), "*some* out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." 'some out of', —

that's the sense of it. It's not that 'You purchased with your blood every tribe and tongue and people and nation', but, 'You purchased with your blood, some people out of every tribe and nation—every part of the world, every aspect of the world—You saved the world and all of its parts, all of its aspects.'

Now that is how I think we're to understand these statements of a universal nature. Well they are universal in the sense that Christ is the Savior of the globe, the whole world, of all kinds of people. Not every single individual; He didn't come for every single individual, but every aspect of the world is the object of God's love.

Well, in Romans 8:32, we find another text that people often cite to prove *unlimited atonement*. And there Paul writes, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" At first glance, it might seem to prove a universal atonement: "...delivered Him up for us all..." But everything must be read in its context, as I said; and the context in this passage is about God's elect. It's about those in verse 29 who are "*predestined*" to life—to conformity to the Christ; and those in verse 28, for whom, "all things work together for good." Now we can't say that that's true of every single individual, can we? Of every single individual in the world, it cannot be said of them that 'everything works together for their good.' It's not intended to mean that. It's for those whom God has 'predestined to be conformed to Christ's image.'

Everything before verse 32 is about God's special people. In verse 31 Paul says, "If God is for us, who is against us?" That is a great statement, a statement of great encouragement. But how do we know that He is for us? How do we know that God is actually on our side? And that's given, the proof of it, is in verse 32. This is the measure of God's love. He says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

How do we know He's for us? He gave His own Son for us. And the argument that Paul makes here is from '*the greater to the lesser*'. The point that he makes is there's nothing that God won't do for us having done the greatest thing for us—giving His son.

If God gave the greatest gift in the universe, He won't withhold lesser gifts. If He gave His own Son, then He will give every blessing that is for our good. He will give us faith; He'll give us salvation. He'll give us glorification. Now that's the implication.

God's love and purpose for those for whom He delivered up His own Son cannot be frustrated. That's the encouragement of the statement. And so if '*us all*' has the sense of every person to ever live, then everyone must be saved. If God gave His Son for the purpose of saving *all*, elect and non-elect alike, then He will give them everything necessary for obtaining that goal, that intention, that purpose for them, which is salvation. That means He'll give them an evangelist, and He'll give them the faith to believe what the evangelist says...That, at least, is the implication of it.

But obviously He does not do that, so the '*us all*' of Romans 8:32 is, 'not everybody without exception', but 'all who have been predestined to be conformed to His Son's image.' And they will be *conformed*, he says, and He will bless us with everything that we need in this life to come to that point.

Well that is, as I said, a verse of great encouragement. We don't need to worry about the uncertainties of this life. We don't need to be fearful—we just need to trust the LORD. He's proven His love for us. He's loved us enough to give His own Son for us and purchase us for Himself. Having done that, is He going to let anything less than that go unaddressed, and not take care of it for us? Of course not. He won't withhold any blessing from us that's for our good.

Well, we can read the '*all*' of 2 Corinthians 5:14 and 15 in the same way. "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;" Well, what does he mean, "all died"?

How did they die? Not physically of course—they died spiritually. Have all without exception died to sin, and are now living for God? No. Will that ever be true? No, it will not.

So who are the *all* for whom 'the one died'? I like the answer that Charles Hodge gave in his commentary on 2 Corinthians. And he answered it this way. "Christ died for

the *all* who died when He died." He died for all of His people. When He died for them, they died, so that they can live to God. And He does not fail in regard to any one of them.

Well, these are some of the verses—and there are many more I know that we could deal with. But let's consider for the last few minutes, the last five minutes or so, the practical implications of this.

What does the idea of Limited Atonement do to evangelism? And I would answer that by saying, 'Nothing but encourage it!' We are to go to all men and preach the Gospel—and we can do that honestly. We can preach what's called a '*bona fide*' Gospel. A. A. Hodge, Charles Hodge's son, put it this way. "It is a bona fide offer, first because the death of Christ is sufficient for all men. And secondly because it is exactly adapted to the redemption of all—it's for sinners. And thirdly because God designed it so that whoever exercises faith in Christ shall be saved by Him." That's the essence of it.

And so you can go out into the world and you don't need to know who the elect are. You don't need to know who Christ died for. You can go to all people and you can give that Gospel. You can tell them the Good News that Christ died for sinners. And every sinner who believes in Him, every sinner who trusts in Jesus Christ will receive that salvation. —That's the Gospel.

And many have done just that. Many have gone out with that Gospel and proclaimed it with great success. Paul was the champion of free sovereign grace—and he went over the world, preaching to the lost. John Calvin preached the Gospel, preached frequently, preached almost every day of the week—and many times on Sunday—he preached the Gospel. You can read his writings; and he had a great burden for his native country, France. He lived in exile, but they sent ministers into France to preach the Gospel, (and some were actually arrested and burned at the stake for preaching the Gospel in Roman Catholic France).

George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards were evangelists. We think of Edwards as a great theologian. Some call him the greatest mind that America ever produced. He

was a great theologian—but he was an evangelist. We talked about that, (was it one Wednesday night, or maybe it was a Sunday morning), I mentioned ‘The Great Awakening’, and how it occurred in the colonies in America when Edwards was preaching the Gospel. Both of those men, Whitfield and Edwards were Five Point Calvinists.

Whitfield may have been the greatest evangelist in the history of the church. He wrote, "My soul is athirst for the salvation of poor sinners." His view of unconditional election and particular redemption, (or limited atonement), did not thwart him at all in the work of the Gospel. He crossed the Atlantic many times to preach here; He preached in England; He preached to thousands and thousands of people a Gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. And multitudes responded and came to faith.

And then there’s William Carrey: One who was missionary minded and told to, ‘sit down’ because of his zeal, was himself a Five Point Calvinist—and went on to open up the sub-continent of India for the Gospel. His motto was, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." And he could do that because he believed in a God who is absolutely sovereign and a God who saves. "Salvation is of the LORD" —and he believed it.

There are many others that could be listed. Charles Spurgeon, a Five Point Calvinist; and yet, if you read his sermons, (and I’ve read plenty of Spurgeon's sermons), I don't know that I've read one sermon, (and I don't think you will find one either), in which the Gospel is not presented. The Gospel's all through his writings—as well as these doctrines, that he preached there in London.

Granted there is mystery in all of this, but what is not mysterious is what God has made known. He has given us a command, and He has revealed His plan. He has commanded us to, ‘Go and preach the Gospel!’

That is what we are to do. And He has made known His plan of salvation: that He has *chosen*, He has *elected* some. And His Son has purchased them for Himself. He

settled the issue at the cross. And we are to go and follow what He has said. We are to order our lives according to His command, and not guess about His plan.

And so we're to go out and we're to proclaim the Gospel. And if you want to know who the elect are, if you want to know those for whom Christ died, then go preach the Gospel and you'll find out because they respond. And they will come, and they will believe. And we'll see next week, that it's because the Father will draw them. He draws them through the preaching of the Gospel.

Well, 'Amen to that!' And may God help us to go out and do it and preach the Gospel; and grow in our understanding of these things: The Sovereign Grace of God—it's nothing to fear. It doesn't frustrate godly activity. It doesn't thwart the Gospel; not rightly understood it doesn't. —It encourages it.

Many men have gone forth with the Gospel, confident that God's people will come, because God has *chosen*, and Christ has redeemed them, and they will respond. So may God help us to do that. Well, our time is up. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, we do thank You for Your grace and Your goodness. We thank You that "Salvation is of the LORD", because if it was left to us, we would not be saved. We look to You with thanksgiving and praise. We thank You for Your Unconditional Election. We thank You for Your Particular Redemption that You accomplished in Your Son, Your Irresistible Grace, and the fact that we will Persevere in the faith because of Your grace. And we thank You for all of this in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)