

Calvary Discipleship Night

Doctrine of Predestination and Election

March 16, 2022

3 things for us to keep in mind when studying this doctrine...

1. **We must be** _____.
2. **We must be** _____.
3. **We must be** _____.

Everyone Believes This Doctrine

Let's begin by defining what exactly election is:

Wayne Grudem def. – *“Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.”*

Tim Keller def. - *“The doctrine of election is this: it's that all human beings (as a result of their sinful, depraved nature), given a hundred chances, a thousand chances, an infinite number of chances, will always – because their desires are such – will always choose to be their own lord and savior and they'll never choose Jesus. And what God does, is in His love and grace, He opens the eyes of some so they'll see the truth.”*

What does the Bible say about predestination and election?

Deuteronomy 7:6-8...6 *"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

John 6:37

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

John 6:44

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 10:27-29

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

John 15:16

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Acts 13:48

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Eph. 1:3-6

3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us*

*in him before the foundation of the world, In love **5** he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

Romans 8:28-30...

***28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. **29** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

The golden chain of salvation...this chain cannot be broken.

1 Thes. 1:4-5

***4** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, **5** because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.*

1 Tim. 5:21

***21** In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.*

1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2:9

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,... To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, **2** according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

1 Pet. 2:9

***9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

Rev. 13

***7** Also (the beast) was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, **8** and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.*

So the Bible clearly teaches predestination and election. How are we to understand it? How has it been understood by Christians in the past?

Predestination & Election in Church History

3 Basic Types of theology in Christian History:

1. P _____

2. S _____ **-Pelagianism**

3. A _____

Semi-Pelagianism and Augustinianism are the 2 main categories of debate within the church.

SP – *We cannot be saved apart from God’s grace but it is ultimately on us, even in our fallen state, to be saved...it is ultimately and finally our choice to either cooperate with God’s grace or reject God’s grace.*

Aug – *We are so sinful that we are totally dependant on God’s grace, even for the very cooperating with and responding to the Gospel...it is only the grace of God that causes us to be saved.*

Augustinian Theologians:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

******These are 5 titans of the Christian faith...none of these men of infallible, but when you see these 5 guys agreeing on a doctrine it should get our attention.***

Semi-Pelagian Theologians

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3 Main Issues:

Issue #1: How sinful are we?: Man's radical fallenness

...the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, - GENESIS 6:5

*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?
- JEREMIAH 17:9*

There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one....

- ROMANS 3:10-12

Let's look at this with a chart:

<i>Our Relationship to sin:</i>	<i>Pre-Fall Man</i>	<i>Post-Fall Man</i>	<i>Reborn Man</i>	<i>Glorified Man</i>
Able to Sin	Able to Sin	Able to Sin	Able to Sin	
Able to NOT sin	Able to NOT Sin		Able to NOT Sin	Able to NOT Sin
Unable to NOT sin		Unable to NOT Sin		
Unable to sin				Unable to Sin

Issue #2: In light of our radical sinfulness, do we have free will?

What is Free Will? *"For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing" (Rom. 7:19).*

Sproul: Any time we broach this subject of divine election, the question inevitably arises: "What about my free will?" If God chooses those who will be saved, am I free to make my own decisions?

Certain assumptions about the nature of our freedom usually lurk behind this question. Most people in the West, including Christians, unconsciously accept what is usually called the "libertarian view" of free will. This understanding of human freedom says that we have the ability to make spontaneous choices contrary to our dispositions and inclinations. Nothing determines our choices. We are always able to choose good or evil. Our wills are wholly neutral.

Yet there are two problems with this definition of free will. First, if we make decisions spontaneously, there can be no reason or motivation for our choice. But since we know God takes our motivations into account (Num. 15:22–31), how can He judge us guilty or innocent if no motivation, good or evil, prompts

our choice? Second, if our wills are neutral, why do we make decisions at all? For example, consider what would happen if I were presented with an apple and an orange and must decide which one to eat. If I am neutral I will have no preference for either fruit and no reason to choose one or the other. Nothing will move me to pick one, and I will starve to death.

In *The Freedom of the Will*, Jonathan Edwards defines biblical freedom. Man is free, he says, to choose according to his disposition. Human beings always choose according to their strongest desire, and so we make free choices. We do what we want to do. Some may object that people often choose the undesirable, such as handing a wallet over to a mugger. But even if I do this, my strongest inclination has prompted my choice. All things being equal, I do not desire to give my wallet away. But if my choice is my wallet or my life, and I hand over my wallet, I prove that I want to live more than I want money.

Apart from Christ, we are dead in sin (Eph. 2:1) and wholly disposed to hate God. We only want darkness, and so we freely choose to reject Him. We freely choose to love and to serve Jesus only if the Spirit changes our hearts (John 3:1-8). Otherwise we remain lost.

Biblical "Free Will" in Summary:

1. Free will is defined as "the ability to make choices according to our desires."
2. The concept of a "neutral free will," a will without prior disposition or inclination, is a false view of free will. It is unbiblical.
3. In light of the Fall, apart from Christ, we have free choice but not free will.
4. Fallen man has the natural ability to make choices but lacks the moral ability to make godly choices.
5. Fallen man is "unable to not sin."
6. Jesus taught that man is powerless to come to him without divine aid.
7. Before a person will ever choose Jesus, he must first be born again. (*Read John 3:1-8*).

Issue #3: The Divine Initiative and Our Response: How much Grace do we need to be Saved?

Underlying Biblical Conviction: None deserve to be saved...it is all grace if any of us are saved.

Ephesians 2:1-10... *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— **6** and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **7** so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. **8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

When we were running away from Him as fast as could run...He grabbed us and saved us by His grace alone!

The doctrine of election is what truly makes the grace of God in our salvation indescribably amazing! It is 100% by grace that we are saved...and He gets all the glory for it!!!

Addressing 4 Common Objections to Sovereign Election:

Objection #1: Election means that we do not have a choice in whether we accept Christ or not...it makes us nothing more than puppets or robots.

Answer: We have a voluntary and real choice along with God's predestination.

J.I. Packer says this about **antinomies**:

*"An **antinomy** is an apparent incompatibility between two apparent truths. An **antinomy** exists when a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable...each rests on clear and solid evidence; but it is a mystery to you how they can be squared with each other. You see that each must be true on its own, but you do not see how they can both be true together."*

One of the most difficult **antinomies** for us to reconcile is the Biblical relationship between **God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility which mysteriously lies at the very heart of the doctrine of election and predestination.**

1. God's Sovereignty: God has absolute authority and complete control of everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen in this world.

The Bible is clear that God is Sovereign.

2. Human Responsibility: The Bible is also clear and completely affirms that human beings are responsible for their actions and choices in this life. **We call this truth human responsibility.**

God is sovereign – but Human beings are responsible for their choices.

At the Cross, we see these two things come together...

Look at Acts 4:27-28: *27*Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. *28*They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Herod and Pilate made real choices, they were responsible for those choices, but God is sovereign and He planned the cross long before Herod and Pilate were even born.

God is sovereign – but we make choices and are responsible for those choices.

- Many times we want to take all the mystery out of our faith and we overemphasize one of these over the other.
- If we take one side and not the other, we will always be trying to explain away certain verses in the Bible.

But, we must hold each truth with equal seriousness because that is what the Bible does. --- we have no right to dilute one by a heavy dose of the other.

Charles Spurgeon:

"I never have to reconcile friends. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility have never had a falling out with each other. I do not need to reconcile what God has joined together." – Spurgeon

God purposely put these 2 truths in the Scripture...and only God knows how these 2 truths are reconciled.

- **In the doctrine of election** we see that the Bible clearly teaches that God is sovereign over our salvation...that from before the foundations of the world He chose us...He chose to save us from the beginning of time. Yet, that election involves and somehow includes the responsibility of every human being to willingly accept or reject Christ as Lord and Savior.

Objection #2: The doctrine of election means that unbelievers never had a chance to believe

Answer: Scripture blames people for rejecting God's message.

Isaiah 53:3: *He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and*

acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

1 Corinthians 2:14: *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

1 Thes. 4:8: *Therefore anyone who rejects this (teaching/instruction) does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.*

God's attitude toward those who are not saved...

Ezekiel 33:11 - *Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?*

Matthew 11:28 - *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

John 3:18 - *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

Objection #3: Election is unfair

Answer: It would be perfectly fair if God did not save anyone. He can save whoever He wants to save. He is God, we are not.

Romans 9:18-24: ¹⁸ *So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.* ¹⁹ *You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?"* ²⁰ *But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"* ²¹ *Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?* ²² *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,* ²³ *in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—* ²⁴ *even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?*

Objection #4: The Bible says that God "wills" (desires) to save everyone.

1 Tim 2:4 -... (God) who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

***Romans 10:14-17 - 14** How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15** And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" **16** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" **17** So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

We want all to be saved...so does God. So why doesn't He save everyone? There is something that is more important to Him than saving everyone.

Answer: Yes! But God desires something more than saving everyone.

Two wills of God

Piper - The most compelling example of God's willing for sin to come to pass while at the same time disapproving the sin is his willing the death of his perfect, divine Son. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas was a morally evil act inspired immediately by Satan (Luke 22:3). Yet in Acts 2:23 Luke says, "This Jesus [was] *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.*" The betrayal was sin, and it involved the instrumentality of Satan; but it was part of God's ordained plan. That is, there is a sense in which God willed the delivering up of his Son, even though the act was sin.

Semi-Pelagian/Arminian answer: God desires to preserve man's totally free will more.

Augustinian/Calvinist/Reformed answer: God desires to demonstrate his glory in both salvation and in righteous judgment more.

Application of this Doctrine

5 Biblical Applications of the Doctrine of Election to our lives as disciples of Jesus:

1. The doctrine of election should lead to overflowing thankfulness and humility before God and others...eliminating boasting in anything or anyone other than God Himself.

1 Corinthians 1:26-31...26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27** But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; **28** God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, **29** so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. **30** And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, **31** so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

2. The doctrine of election should lead to a joyful pursuit of holiness along with a life of determined and growing obedience in the life of the Christian.

3. The doctrine of election promotes evangelism, missions, and prayer for the lost, giving believers confidence that God truly is "mighty to save."

4. The doctrine of election gives Christians continued assurance of His unyielding love and care for them.

John 10:27-29: 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

5. The doctrine of election should cause us to live lives of persistent, passionate, praise to God.

Handout – The Application of Salvation in Time

Sources:

1. Chosen by God, RC Sproul
2. Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem
3. The Pleasures of God, John Piper
4. Ephesians, John Stott
5. Chosen for Life, Sam Storms

56. The Application of Salvation in Time

Aspect	Description	Scripture
The effectual call of God	God's special calling of the elect into fellowship with Jesus Christ	Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:9
Regeneration by the Holy Spirit	The cleansing and renewing work of the Holy Spirit imparting new life to man and enabling him to believe	John 3:5-8; 2 Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:5
Conversion through faith in Christ and repentance of sins	The unbelievers' turning away from sin and turning toward Christ	Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; Acts 2:38
Justification by faith	The action of pronouncing sinners righteous	Rom. 3:21; 4:5; 8:33-34
Adoption as children of the heavenly Father	The transfer of the believer from alienation from God to sonship	John 1:12; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:5
Sanctification for the purpose of doing good works	The continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him holy	Titus 2:14; Heb. 13:21; 1 Peter 5:10
Perseverance in the Word of Christ	The impossibility of the true believer's totally and finally falling away from grace, and his continuance in faith until death	John 6:39; 10:27-30; Heb. 4:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5
Glorification with Christ at his return	The complete and final redemption of the whole person conformed to the image of Christ	John 14:16-17; Rom. 8:29-30; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 1:3