

**“What it means to be Reformed”; Session # 16 – “Sola Gratia – God’s Electing Love”, Prepared for the Adult Sunday School class on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, by Pastor Paul Rendall.**

**Read Deuteronomy 7: 6-10**

We began our study of the Doctrines of Grace this past Sunday by looking at the doctrine of Election. I gave you a definition of the doctrine of election. Election is God’s having chosen in Christ, from before the foundation of the world, a certain and definite number of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation to receive the gift of eternal life; their being unable and unwilling to choose for themselves. He chose them, not based upon anything good in them, but according to His purpose in Christ, to have a people for His own possession. God knew that He would not have a people for Himself at all, if they were left to themselves to choose to believe in Him or to receive the gift of salvation. And so in the Divine counsels in eternity past the Father purposed in Christ His Son to do all the work of redemption in and through Him. In Himself He not only purposed who would be saved, but also purposed that the application all of the blessings of salvation would most certainly come to them in His time of choice. He sent His only-begotten Son into this world to redeem a people for Himself. If you have been converted to Jesus Christ according to the sovereign choice and the powerful working of the Triune God, you are one of His elect.

**1. Those who are chosen in Christ are chosen before the foundation of the world.**

Ephesians 1: 1-4 Acts 15: 13-18

**2. The doctrine of election, of God’s choosing some to eternal life, is based on God’s eternal decrees; and more specifically, the transaction which took place in eternity past between the Father and the Son in the Eternal Covenant of Redemption.**

Isaiah 46: 8-11

The Westminster shorter catechism says that God’s decrees are His eternal purpose, according the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.” He executes these purposes and plans in the works of creation and His providence. Our 1689 Confession Chapter 3, Paragraph 1 states: “God hath decreed in Himself, from all eternity by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established, in which appears His wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing His decree.”

Thomas Brooks in his treatise on the Covenant of Redemption in the 5th Volume of his works says this on P. 331 – “If you ask me, What this covenant of redemption is? I answer in general, that a covenant is a mutual agreement between parties, upon articles or propositions on both sides, so that each party is tied and bound to perform his own conditions. This description holds the general nature of a covenant, and is common to all covenants, public and private, divine, or human. But, secondly and more particularly, I answer, the covenant of redemption is that federal transaction or mutual stipulation that was betwixt God and Christ from everlasting, for

the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, to the eternal honor, and unspeakable praise, of the glorious grace of God. Or, if you please, take it in another form of words, thus: It is a compact, bargain, and agreement between God the Father and God the Son, designed mediator, concerning the conversion sanctification, and salvation of the elect, through the death, satisfaction, and obedience of Jesus Christ, which in due time was to be given to the Father.”

**3. It is because of His Special and Particular love toward them, that God’s elect are predestined to adoption as sons based on the work of Jesus Christ.**

There is a General love of God for all mankind because He created them and made them for His own good pleasure. This General love of God for all mankind is also shown toward all men everywhere in the preaching of Christ in the gospel to the whole world. This preaching is based upon His good-will toward all people in Christ. This is a will of desire in God, not His decretive will in relation to His Divine foreknowledge and purpose in saving specifically His Elect, His chosen, those whom He has determined to save from before the foundation of the world. The General love of God for sinners is based upon His goodness and kindness in presenting them with the means through common grace which will lead to their salvation if they will believe in Christ.

Revelation 4: 11    John 3: 16    1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2: 2: 1-4    Luke 6: 35 and 36    Romans 2: 3 and 4

Then there is a Special and Particular love which God shows toward His Elect people..

Ephesians 1: 4-6    Jeremiah 31: 3    Romans 8: 28-30

John Gill on Ephesians 1: 4 - “The love of God is the source and spring of election itself, and of holiness and happiness, the end of it; and which is shed abroad in the hearts of God’s people now, and will be more fully comprehended and enjoyed in the other world; and which causes love again in them to him.” –

Gill also says: “Some copies of Ephesians 1: 4 put the stop of verse 4 at “before him”; and read the phrase “in love” in connection with the words that follow, thus: “in love”, or “by love He hath predestined us”; so the Syriac version.”

W.G.T. Shedd says: “God’s decree of election respects man.” “Predestination is the Divine decree or purpose (proqesis) so far as it relates to moral agents, (viz. angels and men) “The world of matter and irrational existence is more properly the object of the Divine decree, than of the Divine predestination.” “God decreed rather than predestinated the existence of the material universe.” “Again a decree relates to a thing or fact; predestination to a person.” “Sin is decreed; the sinner is predestinated.”

**4. God’s choice of every person who would be saved (the elect) is according to the pleasure of God’s will, not your will as a man or woman.**

Our own 1689 London Baptist Confession says in Chapter 3, Paragraph 5 – “Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel of the good pleasure of His will, hath

chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto.”

Ephesians 1: 5 and 6    Matthew 11: 25-30    John 1: 12 and 13.

**5. All of God’s elect were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God in respect to their salvation and all the means which would be used to accomplish their salvation.**

1st Peter 1: 2    Romans 9: 6-16

Paragraph 6 of Chapter 3 of our Confession says: “As God hath appointed the elect unto eternal glory, so He hath, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto, wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed in Christ.

**6. God’s electing of some persons to eternal life, and His rejection of others, leaving them in their sins, has a different basis of consideration in His holy mind.**

God, who has created all men, permitted the Fall of all men in the first man Adam. In the decree of election God saw all men fallen in Adam, and He exercised His sovereign right to show undeserved mercy to some in electing them to eternal life. But in the decree of reprobation (His rejection of all the others whom He has not chosen) He has shown His just and holy determination to pass them by and not show them mercy. He does this, not because He is cruel or unfeeling in relation to the non-elect, but because He knows that they truly deserve to be punished eternally, having loved their sin more than God. In this act of preterition, God determined before the foundation of the world, even from eternity to leave them to themselves and their sins; and according to His justice, He then determines to punish them for all of their sins, which they justly deserve.

Turn with me over to 1st Thessalonians chapter 5, verses 8-11 – “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.” “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Notice here that it is not God’s will that any Christian fall away and end up in hell. God’s appointment for everyone who believes in Jesus is that they will obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. Dear Christian, this is truly reason to take heart. “Christ Jesus died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

Why does God appoint certain people to wrath? It is for their sins, not because He arbitrarily created them to destroy them.

Jeremiah 5: 27-30    Proverbs 16: 4    Romans 9: 17-24

William G.T. Shedd – Dogmatic Theology, Vol. 1, P. 433 is very good on this subject.

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James 1: 18

**8. It is God’s election of these particular persons, in connection with the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, which forms the basis of God’s conveying all the blessings of grace to them.**

Romans 8: 28-30    1st Thessalonians 1: 1-5

**9. Let’s remember that all those who are chosen are chosen in Christ, and that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is called God’s elect.** Therefore we ought to glory in being called the elect of God, and we ought to be willing to endure all things for their sakes in our service to Christ.

Isaiah 42: 1-9    1st Peter 2: 4 and 5    2 Timothy 2: 8-10