

## Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God

### Introduction – A riddle to solve

- A. If it is \_\_\_\_\_ that keeps *my neighbor* from choosing to believe, and yet we are both \_\_\_\_\_ sinners...
- B. And if it is \_\_\_\_\_ that enables *me* to believe, and yet my neighbor has received an \_\_\_\_\_ amount of grace...
- C. Then what can possibly explain \_\_\_\_\_ I have believed the most obviously true thing in the whole wide world, but my neighbor has not?!?
- I. If we are ever to have true joy and freedom in evangelism, we must first feel in our hearts that all evangelism is a completely \_\_\_\_\_ of time.
- A. 1 Corinthians 2:14 – A natural man **does not** accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness* to him; and he **cannot** understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
1. Paul is saying that no one can be saved unless he first becomes “\_\_\_\_\_.”
  2. Your neighbor has not believed because a natural man \_\_\_\_\_ believe.
  3. If 1 Corinthians 2:14 is true, then what is the point of \_\_\_\_\_?
- B. Romans 8:7-8 – The mind set on the flesh **does not** subject itself to the law of God, for it is **not even able** to do so, and those who are in the flesh **cannot** please God.
1. Paul is saying that as long as your neighbor is “in the flesh”, it will be \_\_\_\_\_ for him to believe the Gospel.
  2. If Romans 8:7-8 is really true, then \_\_\_\_\_ should we engage in Evangelism?
- C. Romans 8:7-8 – The mind set on the flesh is **hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
1. The reason your neighbor cannot believe is because he \_\_\_\_\_ God.
  2. As long as he is in the flesh he \_\_\_\_\_ will.
  3. What \_\_\_\_\_ do we have for evangelism?
- D. Ephesians 2:1-3 – And you were **dead** in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature** children of wrath, even as the rest.
- E. Romans 3:10-12 – There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none (in his natural sinful state) who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.
1. If these verses are true...
  2. No one has ever \_\_\_\_\_ after God whose mind is actively \_\_\_\_\_ toward God!
  3. Instead, man willfully and sinfully seeks \_\_\_\_\_ for God.

F. Summary and conclusion

1. Your neighbor has been endowed by his Creator with the \_\_\_\_\_ capacity to believe in the Gospel...  
But because of his \_\_\_\_\_, he has completely lost the \_\_\_\_\_ capacity to believe the truth of the Gospel.
2. This means that even though he *cannot* believe, his unbelief is still \_\_\_\_\_.

II. When we grasp the utter “futility” of evangelism and the “impossibility” of salvation, then we can truly understand and rejoice in God’s \_\_\_\_\_.

A. Why have I believed while my neighbor has not?

\*\*\* \_\_\_\_\_!\*\*\*

B. God dispenses His life-giving grace to \_\_\_\_\_ and not to \_\_\_\_\_.

1. John 3:5-8 – Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ **The wind blows where it wishes** and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; **so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**”
  - a. *Before* a person can *believe* the Gospel he must be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. But not \_\_\_\_\_ people are granted this grace.
2. John 1:12-13 – But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
3. Luke 10:21 – At that very time He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit, and said, “I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.
4. John 6:44-45 – No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, “AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.” Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.
5. Luke 10:22 – All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

C. God dispenses His saving grace to some and not to others wholly according to the \_\_\_\_\_ pleasure of His \_\_\_\_\_).

1. Ephesians 1:4-6 – He *chose us* in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would 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.
2. Ephesians 1:11-12 – Having been *predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will*, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.
3. Romans 8:29-30 – For those whom He *foreknew [chose]*, He also *predestined* to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also *called*; and these whom He called, He also *justified*; and these whom He justified, He also *glorified*.
4. It is only *sovereign* grace that kills all \_\_\_\_\_!

5. It is only *sovereign* grace that gives us a reason for \_\_\_\_\_!

III. An understanding of God's sovereign grace will give us abundant \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in evangelism.

- A. Acts 18:9-11 – And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.”
- B. 2 Timothy 2:10 – For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.
- C. Titus 1:1 – Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness.
- D. God has ordained that His elect people will only come to saving faith when they hear the Gospel \_\_\_\_\_ by a preacher – by one of \_\_\_\_\_!  
✓ Romans 10:14-15, 17 – How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!” ... So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
- E. The task of evangelism is the equivalent of telling the gospel to spiritually \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
1. This means that by our proclamation of the Gospel, many people will only be \_\_\_\_\_ in their unbelief.
    - a. Isaiah 6:8-10 (cf. John 12:35-41; Isaiah 44:18-20) – Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.’ Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.”
    - b. 2 Corinthians 2:15-16 (cf. 4:2-4) – We are a fragrance of Christ to God (through the proclamation of the Gospel; v. 12) among those who are perishing... an aroma from death to death.
    - c. Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-24
  2. But because of God's sovereign, omnipotent grace, there will be times when the truly \_\_\_\_\_ happens.
    - a. Ezekiel 37:1-2, 4-5, 7-10 (cf. Ephesians 2:4-5) – The hand of the LORD was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones... and lo, they were very dry... He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones, “Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life...”” So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.”’ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life.
    - b. 2 Corinthians 2:15-16 (cf. 4:2-4) – For we are a fragrance of Christ to God (through the proclamation of the Gospel; v. 12) among those who are being saved... an aroma from life to life.
    - c. Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-24

## Conclusion

- A. We must come to smell the stench of the rotting corpse so that we will give up \_\_\_\_\_ that anyone could possibly respond in faith.
1. In our evangelism, most of us are not working from this perspective, and so we are easily prone to \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. All because our understanding of the Gospel is ultimately \_\_\_\_\_-centered.
  3. This results in illegitimate definitions and methods of evangelism.
    - a. Apologetics / polished speech
      - ✓ **Evangelism is simply: sincerely and passionately proclaiming the truth of the Gospel – and leaving the result to God’s sovereign grace (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5).**
    - b. Seeking to create a psychological moment of “crisis.”
      - ✓ A spiritually rotting corpse can respond quite easily to \_\_\_\_\_ manipulation. It simply cannot respond to the \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. When we have given up all hope that man is able to believe, then we can turn to God and discover His \_\_\_\_\_-giving, \_\_\_\_\_-working, all-\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ grace.
1. Fear will be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. Doubt will be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Frustration will be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. All because our understanding of the Gospel is truly \_\_\_\_\_-centered and \_\_\_\_\_-centered.

## Teaching our Children

- Q.** Can we believe in Jesus without God first making us *able* to believe? Why or why not?  
**A.** ~ No. It is impossible for us to believe in Jesus unless God makes us *able* to believe.  
~ This is because all the true desires of our sinful hearts are against God and His ways.  
~ Review the Scriptures under I.
- Q.** If our friends don’t believe in Jesus, but we do, doesn’t this mean that we are better than our friends?  
**A.** No!!!
- Q.** Why are we not any better than our friends, even when they refuse to believe in Jesus?  
**A.** Because the only reason we can believe in Jesus is if God first gives us a new heart so that we *can* believe. (Review Scriptures under II. B.)
- Q.** Do we deserve this new heart that God gives us?  
**A.** No! Our new heart that makes us want to believe in Jesus is a gracious gift from God.
- Q.** Do you believe in Jesus? Are you trusting in Him to save you from your sins and God’s wrath? If so, then who deserves *all* the credit and all the glory?  
**A.** Only **GOD!!!** Isn’t God **GOOD!!!**
- Q.** Since we know that God is still going to give new hearts to many other people in the world, what should we be joyfully doing?  
**A.** We should be telling others about Jesus! We can do this with a joyful heart because we know that there are some who will have new hearts so that they will be able to believe the good news when we tell them. (Review Scriptures under III. A. – D.)
- Q.** Why will some people refuse to believe the good news about Jesus when we tell them?  
**A.** Because their sinful heart makes them always hate God. They don’t *want* to believe. They don’t have a new heart.
- Q.** Do these people deserve a new heart that will make them want to believe in Jesus?  
**A.** No!!!
- Q.** Can you pray that God would give them this new heart?  
**A.** YES! YES!! **YES!!!** Because this is the only way they will ever be able to believe.