

The Truth Part 11 Glorifies God's Sovereignty In Salvation

The Truth

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"Worthy of worship worthy of praise
Worthy of honor and glory
Worthy of all the glad songs we can sing
Worthy of all of the offerings we bring.

You are worthy Father Creator
You are worthy Savior Sustainer
You are worthy worthy and wonderful
Worthy of worship and praise.

Worthy of rev'rence worthy of fear
Worthy of love and devotion
Worthy of bowing and bending of knees
Worthy of all this and added to these.

Almighty Father Master and Lord
King of all kings and Redeemer
Wonderful Counselor Comforter Friend
Savior and Source of our life without end."

Turn with me in your Bibles to Ephesians 1. This morning, I'm with the Lord's help going to try to continue on this series that I've been trying to preach that I've entitled "The Truth, The Truth in its Essential Elements." This is number 11 and I think probably there will be one more message.

The truth. Pilate asked Christ when he was interrogating him, he asked him this question, he said, "What is truth?" But like so many, his was not a genuine desire to know the truth because it says that he immediately turned and walked away from Christ. He turned and walked away from the truth. But as I said when I began this series, the truth can only be known by the Scriptures. The Scriptures alone. As a matter of fact, there were some of Berea when they heard Paul preaching, the Bible calls them the noble Bereans, and it

says that they searched the Scriptures to see if the things that Paul said were true. One of the first things that the Lord does in saving his people is he binds their heart to the truth, to the Scriptures, to the Bible, as the only authority for what we are to believe and practice.

I want to read you these first 11 verses, familiar to you here, in Ephesians 1. This is maybe one of the most noted epistles, most often read. And the verse quoted out of chapter 2 is, of course, that verse that says, "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus [that is, to all the believing in Christ Jesus]: 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

The truth in its essential elements tells about God. It always begins with God. It tells us how he is and it tells us what he's done and, therefore, we only know what he is and what he's done by his written word. The Scriptures say that the Spirit of God takes the things of God, the things of Christ, and shows it to us, and oftentimes when we tell people about how God is and what he's done, especially what he's done, they say, "God can't do that," and I tell them, "According to his word, he says he already has." And sometimes when we tell them how he is, they say, "My God's not like that," and I tell them, "I don't doubt that, but the God of the Bible is like that."

How is the God of the Bible? Who is the God of the Bible? Well, he is, first of all, an absolute or should I say, the absolute Sovereign. That means he rules over all things. That portion of the first verse of Psalm 99 said it all, "The LORD reigneth." And I don't know how many times that is said in the Bible, "The LORD God omnipotent reigneth." He tells us to say that to the world, to remind the world, all the people in the world, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, but he says this also especially to that one he calls Zion, which

is the true church. Zion is the body of Christ. Zion is the church of Jesus Christ and he says to the church, "Say unto Zion, The LORD thy God, he reigns." That means he being an absolute Sovereign is the first cause of all things. Blame all the second causes you want to but if the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, you can guarantee that he is the first cause of all things.

Look down at this 11th verse at what it says. It describes him in this way, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," and in this day in which we live, I'll take the current situation as an example, I don't know what coronavirus is, I don't know all that it involves, I don't know all that will happen as a result of it, but I know this: the first cause of all things is God himself. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his will." And these are the kind of things that do not fit into man's natural view of God, they don't fit into the views of God that are presented by false religion, but they certainly fit into the views of God as he is revealed in the Scripture and this simply means that neither faith, we use, people use that word a lot, or luck, or chance, or Satan, or man's so-called free will, or karma, or Mother Nature, or any of these such things, they neither created or guides or sustains or determines anything in this world. Not one single thing. As a matter of fact, the Scripture says in the prophecies of Isaiah, another, "Can there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?" He works all things after the counsel of his will. That means the things that you call good and the things that you call evil, they are all worked together by this Sovereign Lord of glory.

There was a king by the name of Nebuchadnezzar who ruled probably the greatest kingdom, had the most power that ever has been possessed by man in the world, and he stood out one day and he looked at all of the land from his balcony and he said, "O great Babylon which I have made by my hands for my own glory." And the Lord took that man and he made him as the beasts of the earth, to crawl like a raving madman, an animal, all through a period of time, and at the end of those days after God had revealed himself and his power to Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar found out who he was and who he himself was, this is what he said, "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High," the most High, "and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation." Now listen to this, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing," they're like dust in the balances, they "are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

He does all his will and here are these preachers standing up and saying things like, "God wants to and can't," or, "God wants to do this for you if you'll let him," and he works all things after the counsel of his will, you can't speed him up, you cannot stop him, you cannot slow him down in the doing of all his will. When you look back in Ephesians at verse 9 of chapter 1, it says, "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." That is, he has purposed a will and he has purposed it to be done solely by him, accomplished by him, and nobody can stop him.

The words of Isaiah in chapter 46 say this, this is God, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," I'll do all my pleasure, "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country," that is, the means by which he will execute judgment on nations by bringing such as Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar and others that defeat these Israelites to accomplish that purpose, "yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

He'll do it, and my friend, it must be this way in order for God to assure that he gets all the glory. You and I are not gonna get any of the glory. We don't have any power, we can't even will ourselves to lose five pounds and yet we think we can will ourselves to salvation, and everything we will to do, it just proves that we are incapable; we have a will but it's bound to this nature of sin and its weakness, its powerlessness. So if God doesn't be God, if he is not as the Bible describes him, nobody will ever be saved.

You see, his sovereignty guarantees not only that he gets the glory but it guarantees that he assures the salvation of all his people, and that's why Jonah in the book of Jonah is brought in the belly of that fish to confess something that this world, for the most part, knows nothing about: salvation is of the Lord. It begins with God. It doesn't begin with man's need or man's condition. It begins with God's purpose of grace in the Lord Jesus Christ and it has to do with all spiritual blessings.

Look here in verse 1. Here is a man that has been sent to these Ephesians to bear the good news of the Gospel to them. Did he decide he'd go into the ministry? Did he one day just decide he'd do this and thought it would be a good thing? Did he take to himself titles like men do in our day, calling themselves Reverend when the Bible says holy and reverend is God's name? "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." By the will of God. God determined that this man, Saul of Tarsus, he would save him and he would make him an apostle to spread and to be an instrument of the Gospel, "to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," to all who are brought to believe on Christ. Grace be to you." That's not the way it is in our day. Preachers stand up and they try to tell from A to Z everything that people are supposed to do: give, live right, do all these things, do the work for God. But Paul began in this way, "Grace be to you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's why the Gospel is called good news. If I have to tell you something to do to be saved like the Bible says regarding the condition that you're in spiritually, which is blind and deaf and halt and lame and bankrupt, every kind of description like that, if I have a message to you that tells you to do something or give something or be something in order to be saved, or add to salvation, that's not good news to you. But grace is good news to sinners.

Now listen to this, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us." Grace has got something to do with something God did before we were ever born; that he did for his people. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in

heavenly places in Christ." It involved the totality of salvation. All spiritual blessing. Among the true people of God, there are no big I's and little You's. No one will have big mansions in heaven and some that'll have little cabins in the corner of glory land. There's no such thing as that because it's all based on God's grace and God in his sovereignty has given all his people all spiritual blessings, and he's given to them all spiritual blessing by grace, and he's given all of them to them in Christ.

I remember where that text that says when Abraham sent his servant out to get a bride for Isaac and he meets this woman at the well, that he's supposed to find this wife in particular for Isaac, and all he had to tell her mainly was this, he said, "My master has got one son that was born to his wife in their latter years and he hath given everything into his hand, he's given everything to his son." In other words, if you have his son, if you marry his son, you have it all, everything Abraham's got. And God in grace has according to his own will given to a people in Christ everything he has to give in grace, all spiritual blessings.

And it's based on his choice. It's based on his choice, not man's choice. As a matter of fact, Christ said, "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you." If left up to man's choice, your choice, my choice, we'd only choose that which is evil. We'd choose everything and anything except God and his blessing because the natural mind is enmity against God. And I want you to notice when it says that God did all this.

Look at verse 4, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Were you born before the foundation of the world? Did you ever exercise an act of your will to determine whether or not you got this before the foundation of the world? You see, these are the things that assure that God gets the glory for his grace and mercy to his people, and these are the things that assure that his people actually get what he gave them because it's all determined before the foundation of the world. He chose them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, and this choice is not a choice in order to give a person a chance. He didn't choose just to give you a chance. He didn't give you this choice, make this choice to give you an opportunity. But this is a choice to salvation. This is who Christ died for, who he came into this world to die for.

Think about Noah. Noah lived in a time as wicked as the one we're living in right now. When he was a man, here is this man out here in the world and he's a sinner just like everybody else but what does the Bible say? It says Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. All the whole world was destroyed by the flood except for Noah and his family. Why them? They were just like them, descendants of Adam, born sinners. Grace. Sovereign grace.

Here's Abraham, he's raised up in idolatry, he lives in the land of Ur of the Chaldees, as a matter of fact, his own daddy makes idols, and God speaks to Abraham and says, "Get thee out of this country." He makes him a promise. Why Abraham?

Here is Naaman, the Syrian captain of the Syrian host, and he is just as wicked and did just as much deadly and damning things rising to his rank as anybody ever did, and yet

the Lord is pleased to show mercy to him, and Christ uses him as an illustration. He says, "There were many lepers in Syria at the time of Elijah," but God only sent his grace to one of them. There were many widows, he said, in the time that the prophet was sent in Samaria to a particular widow's house. Well, you think people would just rejoice that God who doesn't have to save anybody or show mercy to anybody, that he would show mercy to this poor man, or he would show mercy to this poor widow. But it says they rose up to stone him, Luke 4. They rose up to stone him. That's the God of the Bible. He is absolutely Sovereign and he has chosen a people to salvation in Christ Jesus.

Turn over to 2 Thessalonians 2. Paul has just been talking in this epistle about a great number of people that it says God sent them strong delusion that they would believe a lie rather than the truth. In chapter 2, verse 13, he turns with this "But, But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." He didn't say we give thanks to you because you love the Lord. Man's love of the Lord is non-existent until the Spirit of God fills his heart. He loves his own God, he loves his own, but he doesn't love the living God. He doesn't love the God of the Bible but the salvation is being loved of God. He loves with an everlasting love. He loved them in Christ Jesus before the world began. He says, "beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." This is election. Most people have not even heard a message or even heard hardly the word "election" which is in the Bible and the principle in the Bible time and time again, this is the choice of God because out of his love, he chose this people in Christ unto salvation and belief of the truth. You see, God's sovereign choice of salvation for some of Adam's race, it is absolutely the truth.

"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." You look at the nation of Israel, how could God, how could God choose one nation out of all the many nations that were bigger and stronger and more numerous, how could God choose one nation out of that group of nations and say to them, "I'll be your God," and bypass all the others? He said, "I didn't choose you because you were more than any other nation, I chose you even though you were the least of nations." But it had all bound up in the will of God, it's all bound up in the sovereign grace and purpose of God; it's all bound up in him displaying that sovereignty in choosing a people.

Let me read you a few verses. Matthew 24:31, "And he shall send his angels with the sound of a great trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." They're gonna gather who? His elect.

I saw a church sign this week and this is what it said, "God loves you and he approves this message." That is a lie. That's not the truth. Nowhere in this book do you read those words, "God loves you." You read God is love. Two times it says plainly God is love but that does not mean that he loves you. He's holy, as we read, he can't love anything that is unholy, and the Scriptures plainly say that the love of God is in Christ Jesus, and outside of Christ, he's a destroying fire. To indiscriminately say that God loves you is to place God on such a plane as your equal because if God loves you and yet you go to hell, what in the world did the love of God have to do with salvation? If God loves you and you die

in your sin, if God loves you and you end up in hell, which we know many are, if God loves you and yet it says that he hated Esau, that he hates all workers of iniquity, what does that make God? A helpless, feeble, lying God. And he's less than you because if you have a child or especially a grandchild, and you saw them playing out there in the middle of that road with the traffic going both ways, they're about three years old and you say to that, I'll use my own granddaughter, I'd say, "Lizzie, I love you but I can't go against your free will and take you out of that road." No, I'm gonna use everything in my power. If I love you, if I love her, I'm gonna do everything in my power to rescue her. If I love her. If I have the ability to. And God has the love for his people in Christ and he has the ability to. He's sovereign in all things and he has ability to choose whomsoever he will and have mercy on them.

Mark 13, "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days." "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce if it were possible even the elect. And then shall he send his angels and gather together his elect from the four winds from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven, and shall God not avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them?" How about this verse in Romans 8, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Then the next verse, "It is God that justifies." God justifies his elect people. Paul in Colossians 3, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."

When Paul was sitting in prison, he was not in prison for stealing or check forgery or any such crime as that, he was in prison for preaching the Gospel. "How can you bear that, Paul? You told them the truth. You preached the only good news there is for a sinner. You told them the truth about God, the truth about Christ, the truth about themselves and they put you in prison." Paul says, "I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Paul said, "I'm not on fool's errand, I'm not here to evangelize everybody, I'm looking for God's chosen." He sent them this message, to tell them that Christ has saved them, he has done it all, he did it on the cross, it was the purpose of grace from God all along before they were born. Then he says to Titus, "Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect." That's the Gospel, the truth of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.

One day this man Paul who was before Saul of Tarsus, he's riding along, he's a great persecutor of Christians at this time, he's a man of zealous, he's knowledgeable, he's a teacher and he's a Pharisee, he's a moral man, and he thinks he's doing God a favor by killing Christians, these people that trust Christ alone for their salvation. So he's riding down, he's on his way to a place called Damascus and all of a sudden he's un-horsed by Jesus Christ himself and he doesn't know at that time who it is at the first that's doing it, but he knows whoever it is, it's the Lord, and Christ says to him, "Why kickest thou against the pricks? You go down to Damascus to a street called Straight and there'll be a man there by the name of Ananias who will tell you the things I want you to know." Really? Can God do that? Select a man such as this, save him, bring him to faith in

Christ, use him to preach the Gospel that he once hated? That's exactly this. When Paul gets down there in the book of Acts according to his own testimony now, he said, "This is what Ananias told me." The first thing that Ananias told him, he said, "God has chosen you. This didn't happen because you chose him. You would never have chosen him, but he chose you and he chose you to hear his word and to see that just one, see him by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Then he said, "Well, that's too deep." Well, here's a man who the Lord's just dealing with, just bringing to the knowledge of himself and he's telling him about election, "The Lord has chosen me?" Well, yeah, because that's what we're to praise God for. Not a new car. Not a delivery from sickness or something like that. Those things if they be blessing, God can make them blessing, but that doesn't necessarily mean they will be if he doesn't. But to be chosen of God, chosen in grace, chosen by God acting out of his will, sovereign will in showing mercy. "He didn't have to but he did. He could have done it in anybody else but he did it to me and he did it in Christ."

Peter says, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, grace unto you and peace be multiplied."

One day Paul is writing an epistle and he's telling about all these people who've rejected Christ. He said but remember Elijah, when Elijah was said to be the messenger of God and he met up with all the false prophets on Mount Carmel, it was a showdown on Mount Carmel, and the man of God, the one representative of God, the one with the true message of God was one individual. Guess how many prophets of Baal there were, prophets of the grove? 850. Well, they must all be right, the majority is right. No.

Elijah delivered what he was to say and then he came down the mountain and he was in despair. He said, "Everybody's against me. The queen is trying to take my head off my shoulders. Lord, I'm ready to die." But the Lord said to him, "Elijah, you get up, you go somewhere and you preach this message because I've reserved unto myself 7,000 who have not bowed their knee to Baal." Paul uses that illustration and then he says this, "There is even at this time a remnant according to the election of grace." God had a people then, God has a people now, God has a people out of every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue, and the truth bears witness not only to God's sovereignty and God's election but God's predestination.

What does the word "predestinate" mean? It's proorizo and it means this, "to mark out beforehand; to determine beforehand." And the reason that men don't like predestination by nature is, number one, because it takes everything out of our hands. It's already out of our hands but it puts it where it really is, in the hands of an almighty God.

Look at our text in Ephesians 1. When preachers read verses like this in the Bible, I've always kind of likened it to this, like it says in verse 5. As a matter of fact, the last two words in the original are attached to what we read in verse 5, so it actually reads like this, "in love." In love. Not arbitrarily. Not to punish somebody. Not to do things without

reason but, "in love. Having predestinated us." In love having marked off beforehand, identified beforehand, determined something for this individual beforehand because it says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." They say God can't do that. It says having predestinated. He's already done it. It's too late.

Look down at verse 11, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." That means that God not only desired, you know, preachers are bad about saying God wants to do this but he can't because you won't let him, or you won't believe, or you won't... It says that whatsoever he desireth, that's what he does.

So he predestinated them to the adoption of children, he predestinated that and determined that they're gonna have this inheritance and this is a scary word to false religions because it will not accomplish his goal. Number one, it takes all the glory from man. Number 2, it will not bring the numbers that they desire. Number 3, it won't exalt the preachers. Number 4, it won't accomplish the purposes of denominations. All it does is give all the glory to God and save all his sheep. That's what Christ died for. He came into this world, took on himself human flesh, and he died as the substitute for the sins of his people. That's what God records in Isaiah. That's what he records in John 10, "I lay down my life for the sheep. The reason you Pharisees don't believe is because you're not of my sheep."

But every detail in this world, every detail is included in this predestination and it has to be for God to bring it about to a purposed end. Every detail. Every. Every. One preacher said the course of every particle of dust that's kicked up from a wagon's wheel, God's charted it. Every drop of rain that falls, where it falls, whether that drop is a determining drop that brings about a flood in an area. Every event, every detail of every event, it has to be for God to bring about this desired end. So this coronavirus, somehow it's being used by God to bring his people, somebody to hear the Gospel; to hear that salvation has been accomplished by Christ; to hear that the will of God determines salvation; to hear that Christ in his death put away all their sins.

Turn over to Romans 8. Romans 8. Now most all of you know at least part of this verse, verse 28, "And we know that all things work together for good." Everybody says, "Well, you know, I've known that all my life. I believe that, all things work together for good." No. No. "All things work together," and we know, we know, God's people, that's who this book's written to, and we know that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow," and that is fore-loved, "he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Now Christ has a people. He's described as the elder brother to that people, the joint heir with that people. How does God know that he's gonna have a people? Because he did predestinate them in love to be conformed to Christ, to be one with Christ, to be viewed by God as in Christ Jesus, complete in him, as he is so are we in this world so that God for all eternity has looked at them only in Christ Jesus. Do you think he favors his Son? I'm sure he does and therefore

he favors that people that he put in his Son and he predestinated all things concerning them.

One old preacher said the Father who has chosen, set apart, formed and reserved his people and children for himself, for his peculiar treasure and for his own glory, this act of divine predestination was according to the good pleasure of his will. The will of God is the rule of all his actions and of all his acts of grace and goodness, and the good pleasure of it appears in the predestination of men to grace and glory, and from hence it is manifest that foreseeing faith, holiness and good works are excluded from being the moving causes of predestinating grace and that it is wholly to be resolved to the good will and pleasure of God. So nobody ever that's saved will be able to say, "Well, God saved me because I did this." Not even, "God saved me because I believe." If you believe, it's the gift of God.

All this God did in love and he did it in Christ. He did it for the good of his people. He did it so that it would be sure to them, this salvation. He did it for his glory. And I'm gonna say this to you: you throw these things out and you don't have the truth. You never mention him and you don't preach the truth. These are the palaces, the bulwarks, the towers of Zion. The Psalmist said, "Walk about Zion. Go round about and tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." It's like when we preach the truth, when we preach the Gospel, it's like we're giving a guided tour of a city that's called Zion which is simply the people of God. We're saying, "Oh, look at this palace over here of riches. Look at this tower over here of strength. Look at this bulwark that makes sure and secure and wards off every enemy," he says, "that you may tell it to the following generations, for this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death."

This God is the God of the truth and those who believe the truth about who he says that he is and they believe what he says he's done, they believe the truth such as this, Paul to Titus, "Who has saved us and called us with an holy calling not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." So I have no reason to boast, then. Everything I have, I got from God. Everything I have in salvation, he gave me as a gift by his grace. Everything I have is based on Christ's work, not mine. Everything I have assures me that I am safe, forgiven, saved, whatever term you want.

Somebody always asks the question, "Do you believe in eternal security?" I always tell them, "Well, that depends." "You believe in once saved, always saved?" Well, that just all depends on who you think did the saving. If you had any part of it, or if I had any part of it, no. I'll mess it up for sure. I have messed it up. I continue to mess it up. But if God does the saving, if Christ did the work, if it's his blood that puts away my sin, if he satisfies justice, if he is my righteousness, yes. He saves and he saves forever.

God uses these truths to confront men with himself, how he is. He uses these truths because he knows that it hits home to the natural pride and rebellion and self-will and self-righteousness of men. He uses this to bring his people to bow and believe on the

truth. We're not trying to sneak up on anybody and say that God is just like us, he's like a one-eyed cyclops. "God loves everybody. God loves you." I bet I've heard that on different religious scenes half a dozen times over, "God loves you. God loves you." He doesn't if you're not in Christ. And if he loves you, which it doesn't say, but it does say this, that he loved. If he loves you, he loved you in all eternity and set his heart upon you, and he loved you in Christ Jesus, and he's gonna love you forever.

We don't want to make God more palatable to sinners. We don't have a contemporary gospel because God doesn't change. He said, "I am the Lord. I change not, therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The truth involves, includes, tells these three cardinal things: God's sovereignty, God's unconditional election, and God's perfect loving predestination. And when he opens our heart to believe the truth and we see what condition we were really in and we see what God in mercy purposed for us, it humbles us and it makes us thankful and we can say with the Psalmist, "This God is our God."

Our Father, we thank you this morning for your word. We pray that you would open our hearts to receive your word, believe your word, find that perfect rest in that salvation that's of the Lord. We thank you for Christ, for all spiritual blessing we have in him, and we pray in his name. Amen.