



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Lesson 4

Summer 2020

"The Chosen One"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Seth. And good morning. It's good to be back with you all. It's been ... what? ... two weeks since we were in 2 Thessalonians. And you'll remember that we were in an eschatological section of Scripture. It ended with Paul speaking of those in "the last days" and the judgment that will come upon them as unbelievers—where he says in verse 12, "...in order that they may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." Really, that's a characteristic of the world at large, and while he's looking at the generation that would come at that future time, it would certainly have characterized so many in Thessaloniki when he wrote this letter.

So I think we see a contrast between that and what Paul says next, where he gives thanks for the Thessalonians who had, in contrast to that, believed. He writes in verse 13,

¹³But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴It was for this He called you through our gospel that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So then brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.

¹⁶ Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, ¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of studying it this morning. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

Lord, it's a great privilege to be together with Your people. You instruct us to do that, to not forsake the gathering together of the saints, and we've been forced to do that in these past few months. But it's good that we're beginning to come back together, and we're able to meet together in a personal way. And I pray that that will only continue, and that You will lift this pandemic, and this forced separation upon us; and bring us back together and give us this opportunity to fellowship together, as we're able to do right now, at least with some, and thankful for the technology of the age we are able to do this virtually over the airwaves, and meet together as we do in this 'virtual way', as I say.

But bless us, Lord, this morning as we consider this text in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, and build us up in the faith and encourage us. It's a great passage for the age in which we live, because we're living in a time, and the immediate time of uncertainty—at least uncertainty in terms of humanly speaking. But nothing's uncertain with You, and we're reminded of that from this text. You're in complete control. You're in control of our lives and our salvation from beginning to end. And that's what Paul encouraged those Thessalonian believers with when they were living in very turbulent, difficult times of trial and persecution.

And so we're to be comforted by the things we study this morning, and I pray that we will. And that You will open the eyes of our heart, as Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that we might perceive the truth of it and the application of it to our lives. So Lord, bless us as we study this morning. And bless us materially as well. Some of our

members are dealing with protracted problems and I pray that You'd give them encouragement and pray that You give them healing.

And Lord, we pray for our government. We pray that You'd give those whom You have appointed over us wisdom as they deal with this pandemic. And we pray that the best things will be done, and that we will get through this safely and soon. So bless us. Bless this nation in that way. Bless this as a time when people will reflect on what's really important and on eternal things. And may we, as Your people, be a witness and a light in the midst of this time.

So Lord, we pray that You would equip us for that, that You would bless us this morning as we consider this text of scripture in 2 Thessalonian 2, verses 13 through 17, and build us up on the faith, equip us for the rest of this day and the week to come, that we would be men and women that have our confidence in You, live wisely, and may we be lights in this difficult time, and to this generation. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

The English Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, gave a sermon on our passage, 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verses 13 through 17. He narrowed it to verses 13 and 14, and titled it simply, "Election". He began with the statement, "If there were no other text in the sacred Word except this one, I think we should all be bound to receive and acknowledge the truthfulness of the great and glorious doctrine of God's ancient choice of His family."

Spurgeon thought the doctrine of Divine Election both true and glorious. And I say, "Amen", to that. It is true because it is taught throughout scripture. It is glorious because it reveals the greatness of God in our salvation. —It's altogether of the Lord.

But also, election is eminently practical. In fact, all doctrine is practical. That's the reason Paul appeals to it throughout this brief book of 2 Thessalonians. It is the basis for the apostle correcting error and giving encouragement and motivation.

He did that first in chapter 2 with eschatology; the study of the last things; the final events of history; the study of prophecy. And he wrote about this first of all to

correct a misunderstanding. The Thessalonians were a confused bunch. They thought they were in “the day of the Lord”, the final days before the second coming. Confusion is harmful to faith and behavior in the Christian life. So Paul had to correct them. He did it with facts and with logic.

“The day of the Lord” will be known by two events; the apostasy and the coming of antichrist—the man of lawlessness. Neither had happened. So they weren't in “the day of the Lord.” But he went into some detail about that day and the character and the career and the end of that future tyrant—not in order to give a lecture on eschatology, or satisfy their curiosity, but to encourage them.

In those days, antichrist will come as the incarnation of unrestrained satanic power that no one can resist. And then suddenly Christ will come and will slay him with just a word. Effortlessly—He is the Almighty. The encouragement is, Christ, who will slay the antichrist, was with them, those saints in Thessaloniki who were being persecuted by their own antichrists. But Christ is the Almighty One. He's with them. He would strengthen them through those trials. That's the application they could take away from what he had taught. And so they were to persevere. And they were doing that. Back in chapter 1, he gave thanks for their perseverance, and for their increasing faith and love in the midst of tribulation and trials. —Clear evidence of their spiritual life and salvation.

So Paul now gives them further encouragement, based on doctrine. In verse 15 he tells them to “stand firm.” But first he gives the reason that they could do that. And it's due to the Lord's love for them. Paul reminds them of that in verse 13, where he thanked God for their election. Since God so loved them that He chose them for salvation, He will not lose one of them, but bring them all safely home.

Now that's how Jesus defined His mission in John, chapter 6, in verse 39: “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me, (*and notice, He has given them, the Father has given this great company to His Son*), that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day.” He will bring all of His elect ones, His people, home safely. And here in verse 13, Paul gives thanks to the Father that He gave these Thessalonians, whom He loved, whom Paul loved deeply, gave these

Thessalonians to the Son. He thanked the Lord for that. That "...we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (vs13).

Paul and his friends felt compelled to give thanks to God for the Thessalonians' election. Especially after writing in the previous verse of unbelievers, who will be judged for rejecting the truth.

Why did these Thessalonians believe the gospel that Paul and the others had preached to them when they came to Thessaloniki and entered the synagogue and gave the Gospel? Why did they believe, and why is it that they will escape the judgment to come? Why did they respond to Paul's preaching? —It was only because of God's grace. They were His chosen ones.

This is one of the great mysteries of God's revelation, and the Christian life. Not that God chose some and did not choose others. He is God. —He can choose whomever He wants and reject whomever He wants. No, the mystery is not election, that God chose some, (and in fact chose many), but that He chose any. Because all of us are equally unworthy of His love and grace and election to eternal life.

So why is there election? Why did God choose anyone? That question was answered by Moses in Deuteronomy, chapter 7, verses 7 and 8, when he explained to Israel, God's choice of them over the other nations. It wasn't because they were bigger than the other nations. They weren't. They were the fewest of the nations. They weren't the strongest or most advanced. The reason for God's choice of Israel was, as Moses said, because "the Lord loved you." Now why did He love them? No answer is given to that. It's found in His boundless being. Not found in them; Not found in Israel; Not found in the Thessalonians. It's found in God alone. He loves because He loves. That's His nature. And He loved the Thessalonians. Paul called them "beloved by the Lord." (vs13). That's the reason He chose them.

And when was that? From the beginning. The beginning of what? The beginning of time. Now, that's not specifically defined in our text, as "before the beginning of time." But that's certainly supported by other passages, like Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 4, where Paul wrote, "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love..."

Applying that to ourselves as believers, His choice of us from before the creation of the world was a choice made before any of us had done anything—good or bad. In fact, that's what Paul said in Romans, chapter 9, verse 11, where he explains election. He speaks of the choice of Jacob over Esau. And he said, "...though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad...". That's when the choice was made. Before they'd done anything good or bad, God had made this distinction.

Now some hear that and they feel that that's not fair, this idea of choosing. So Paul answers that in verse 14 of Romans 9, "...There is no injustice with God...". That's really where we begin. We want to talk about God, we must talk about One with Whom there is no injustice. "...God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.", (1 John, chapter 1, verse 5).

So there's no injustice with God, Paul says. And then he quoted the Lord Himself who said, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy." (Rom 9:15). It's God's choice and God's will and God's prerogative. God cannot be unjust. That is against His character, which is holy, just, and good. And it's His creation. —He can do what He wants with what is His. But He always does what is right and good.

But election is not about justice. If it were, none would be chosen. All would be lost forever, because all are guilty, all are equally guilty. But it's not about justice. —It's about mercy, which means it is unconditional. It is not based on us, again, it is based on God. It is rooted in Him and His character and His love. In fact, it must be unconditional, since it was from before the creation of the world, before any good or evil had been done. So again, the mystery is not election. Surely God can choose His family out of His creation. The mystery is not that God has chosen some—but that He has chosen any at all.

But that mystery should fill us with awe. And that sense of wonder and gratitude should influence our daily life, especially in times of hardship and discouragement. Well, since God loved us from eternity, and chose us knowing that when we were born into this world, we would be born rebels. Since He loved us then, He won't forsake us now that we are His friends, His sons, His daughter. And He must have a good purpose for the trials that we have. In fact, Paul indicates the purpose in his statement on sanctification. The salvation God chose us for is, "through sanctification by the Spirit, and faith in the truth.", (vs14).

Now since God chose people for salvation, you might wonder why He doesn't simply bring us home at the moment of salvation—the moment of faith, regeneration, faith and justification. Just translate us out of this world so that we wouldn't have to suffer the hardships of this life. And the reason that He has not done that is found in that statement about sanctification—which is the lifelong process of changing us "from glory to glory", as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, in verse 18, making us fit for heaven, fit for the kingdom to come, fit for the eternal state.

The Lord could take us out of this world without doing a moment of service for Him, without learning to trust Him and obey Him in this world, and in the trials and tests of this world. He could take us out of this world without experiencing His faithfulness simply from the beginning, without giving us an opportunity to sacrifice for Him, Who sacrificed so much for us, and to live a life of grateful service to Him. He could have done things differently. But He chose a different way for us.

And it is sanctification, transformation of our lives, our character, from what we are, into being more and more like Christ and doing that, in large part, through the trials and the tests of life. And in that crucible of the difficulties of life, He manifests in us His power and His mercy. He manifests that to us; and through that we learn more about Him. And in doing that to us, He manifests His grace and His goodness to the world around us. —We become a witness to the world.

So God puts us, as it were, in the arena, where in the dust of it, and the blood and sweat of it, we strive against sin, we imitate the life of Christ, and we come to know

Him more personally in that way. And we are given the opportunity to be Christ, as it were, to others, and help them. That's God's will for us, to learn and to grow through sanctification.

It requires a response. The Christian life is a daily struggle with the world, the flesh, and the devil—but not a struggle in our own strength—it is only by the Holy Spirit. The Christian life, as I often say is, “a supernatural life.” Paul indicates that here. Sanctification, he said, is “by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” We grow, we're sanctified as we study the Word of God, by “faith in the truth.”

But first it's “by the Spirit”. In Romans 8, verse 14, Paul identifies “sons of God” as those “who are being led by the Spirit.” That's a present tense. —Continually being led by the Spirit. He leads us through this present life. The Holy Spirit is our energizer and guide. He enables us to see what we need to see in the Word of God, and to aspire to it—to desire it. So, under His powerful control we are able to strive up the path to godliness.

And that's not a mystical thing. His work within our hearts or minds is done in connection with the Scriptures, the Word of God, what Paul here calls “The Truth”, and faith in it. Paul had no doubts about what the Word of God is—it's the truth. It is absolute. It's the foundation for our understanding. We live by faith. That's Paul's description of the Christian life in 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, in verse 7; We “walk by faith, not by sight.”

But our faith is in something. It's in the Bible, a unique book, a one of a kind book. And I say that because it is, and only it is—Divine Revelation. And as Divine Revelation, it tells us everything we need to know about God, the Triune God, and man, about ourselves, about our condition, about the remedy, and the course our lives should take. We are to understand it, believe it, and follow it. And as we do, we grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. We grow in maturity and spiritual strength.

But what Paul indicated here by the order of words is, that can only happen by the activity of the Holy Spirit within us. He takes the initiative, just as the Father did in our salvation. And all of this goes back to election. God's choice of people to salvation,

but salvation through sanctification. Which means election is to obedience and purity. Election is to holiness. It is to service and goodness.

But also and ultimately, election is to glory. That's what Paul says next in verse 14, that "It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." In other words, God has called us to salvation through the lifelong process of sanctification to a life of holiness, so that in that way we may gain glory. That glorification that's coming really begins at the moment of regeneration and sanctification.

Now Paul has moved, in his instruction and his teaching, from eternity into time. From the plan of salvation drawn up before the creation of the world, to the performance of the plan in the present age with the calling of the elect. This notion of a divine call is very common with Paul, and he often connects it with election and predestination. For example, in Romans, chapter 8, in verse 30 he writes, "...these whom He predestined, (*in eternity past*), He also called...", meaning in the present.

This is not the general call of the Gospel that we give in evangelism. In that case we are like the sower in the parable that Jesus gave in Matthew, chapter 13, verse 3. The sower went out to sow, and he scattered seed. And the seed fell on all kinds of ground. Some of it was hard, some of it was rocky. Some of it was shallow, and some of it was very good. The seed germinates in some of the ground. It doesn't germinate in others. And likewise, some respond to the Gospel, others don't. Well, that is giving "the call" that we give, the general call of the Gospel.

But this, that Paul is speaking of here, is not that. This is what theologians call the "effectual call" given by the Holy Spirit. He works through that call that we give. But His call is effectual. It is ultimately irresistible. And it's connected to God's eternal decree of predestination and election. It cannot fail. It is the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of hearers, those who hear the Gospel, to produce within them a response to that Gospel of faith—of belief.

Jesus referred to it as being *drawn* in John, chapter 6, in verse 44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him". We're incapable of coming to

Him unless the Father works upon us and draws us. And the Father does that through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Why can no one come unless the Father draws? Because people are naturally opposed to the message of the Gospel. Paul said in Romans, chapter 8, in verse 7, that the natural man, meaning the unbeliever, the natural man apart from the grace of God, is "hostile toward God", at war with God. It's every one of us apart from God's sovereign grace. In Romans, chapter 3, in verse 11, he wrote that, "There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God." None.

So it takes a supernatural work of God to bring people to the Lord. It's not forced. It's not coercion. It's persuasion, in that when the Spirit causes regeneration, or when the Spirit causes the new birth, suddenly a person is equipped. A person has spiritual eyes to see, ears to hear, and realizes the truth—and believes. It's the natural result of the supernatural work of being born again.

But again, just as with sanctification, (the Holy Spirit working in connection with the Scriptures in the process of sanctification), so too His work of calling people to Christ is in connection with Scripture, the giving of the Gospel. And Paul was reminding them of that moment when he and his friends came to Thessaloniki. They came to the synagogue, they preached the Gospel, and they, these Thessalonians, believed.

"He called you through our gospel", Paul says. That was the reason he could confidently give thanks to God for His choice of them in election. They believed. That's the sign of election. The fundamental sign of election is faith. The elect believe. The non-elect don't. And having believed, Paul could give them the assurance of glory to come. That's what they were chosen for. That's what they were called to, that they "may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (vs14).

So, this brings us full circle from election in eternity past, to the glory we will have for all eternity in the future. It is the glory of Christ. Think about that for a moment. The glory of Christ. What must that be like? That's what you, as a believer, have been called to—'The glory of Christ.' I say, what must that be like? I will say this. It's beyond

us. You can think all you want. You will never begin to scratch the surface of what that is like. But we have some idea of it from the transfiguration in Matthew, chapter 17, when the Lord's face "shone like the sun." (vs2).

And also, in Revelation, chapter 19, and verse 10, we're given, I think, a hint of what is meant here when the apostle John fell at the feet of an angel and worshiped him. And that angel told him, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours...worship God." But if an angel is so glorious that John felt compelled to fall down and worship it, how much more glorious is Christ? His glory is infinite. And that is what we have, by God's grace, been called to—righteousness and glory.

That's what God chose His family to in eternity, and what He calls them to in time, and what He is now preparing them for by trials and hardships. "An eternal weight of glory...", according to 2 Corinthians 4:17. "...beyond all comparison", Paul says, that eternal weight of glory is. Now that's worth the challenges of life that we go through. So as these Thessalonians went through their persecutions and afflictions, Paul urges them to "stand firm and hold onto the traditions." (vs15). And all that he has just said in this chapter encouraged them to do that.

The Lord is in control. Christ is Almighty, and can deter and defeat any antichrists that they will face, and that they were facing, and make them, make these Thessalonians triumph over every situation. And God so loves them that He chose them, from the beginning, to be saved and glorified. The end, therefore, is certain. They had this certain conviction; they should have had it—as we should have it. Therefore, their present trials would not be allowed to crush them, but only used by the Lord, ultimately, to sanctify them.

And He would bring them safely through it all, bring them to their heavenly rest and glory. That's the assurance God's love and election give to every believer. So, "be encouraged", Paul was saying, and "stand firm". That's the goal of doctrine. It is to sanctify us. It is to change our thinking and resolve to strengthen us so that we will not be shaken by the trials of life or drawn away by the material pleasures of the world.

Before Paul gives an imperative, he always gives an indicative. Before he gives a command, he always bases it on fact, on who God is and what He's done. And here he speaks of the "traditions" that he urges them to hold to in "standing fast." That's not extra biblical traditions of men, (such as those that the Pharisees and the scribes held to), but what Paul is referring to here is the instruction the apostles gave, verbally or by letter, instruction that had not yet been codified in the New Testament. But what he's saying, to put it in another way, or simplify it is, "hold to the Word of God." Hold to the revelation that's been given by the prophets of old or given by the apostles. Hold to God's Word, because it is through Scripture, through God's revelation, that we are sanctified; that we are conformed to Christ; that we are made mature and wise and strong; so that we can stand firm. We must be grounded in the revelation of God and the Word of God.

But Paul had more to offer the Thessalonians than encouragement. He also had prayer, which is as important as the doctrine that he has recounted, to give confidence, to stand firm, to persevere—He prayed for that. Through prayer, we go to the source of our strength. We learn about it in the Word of God, and the Spirit of God, as we learn about these things through His Word, uses that to actually bring about real, actual change within us.

Just as we take in nourishment with the food we eat, and it strengthens us physically, it's transformed into energy and what all that's transformed into—so too the Word of God is transformed into energy and life changing work within us. And so, we are changed through the study of the Word of God. But through prayer, we go directly to the source of all of this, and we make our requests known to God, and He hears us, and He answers us. Prayer is effective.

So in verses 16 and 17, Paul prayed for them. "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word." So, you see, divine election doesn't preclude prayer any more than it prevents evangelism.

Both are the means that God uses to accomplish His ordained will. So pray earnestly, and tell the lost of Christ. Those are His means of bringing about His will.

What is notable about this prayer, (almost as a parenthesis in what Paul is saying or what I've been teaching), almost as a kind of parenthesis is what Leon Morris refers to as the place this prayer assigns to Jesus Christ. I don't know if you noticed that. He is linked closely with the Father and He's even given the first position. Now that's unusual. But it shows the equality of the two. This is Trinitarian.

Christ, in His incarnation, was subject to the Father. When He became a man, He became a creature. He didn't lose His Deity, but in His creatureliness He was obedient to the Father, as we must be obedient. But in His divine nature, as the logos; as the eternal second person of the Trinity; the Son of God; He is equal with the Father. "They are one", as Jesus said.

Now, that is a mystery, the mystery of the Trinity, that there can be three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—but one God. We can't really explain it fully, but we can rest in the fact that that's what Scripture teaches. We see it here in the placement of the two names and the order that's given there.

But also in the grammar here. The singular "Who", and the singular "love". —It's really, (if I could get a little technical), a singular participle, (and not plural), that is speaking of two persons in the singular—which refers to the Godhead in unity. In the practical sense, as it applies to us, it shows that the Godhead, the "Three in One", are 'for us' and 'love us'.

No greater love was demonstrated than the sacrifice of Christ. The Father giving up His Son, and the Son willingly dying for His people. Since God gave the greatest gift He could give for our salvation, (and He did so when we were His enemies—when we were estranged from Him), what will He withhold from us for our good? Well, nothing—Nothing at all. Not the comfort and the strength that Paul prays for here; and not what we need for doing what he then speaks of as "the good work and word" that we are to both do and give. He won't withhold that strength.

If He would not withhold His own Son from us when He offered Him up as the sacrifice for us when we were His enemies, and now that we're His children, His sons and His daughters, His family, He's certainly not going to deny us the best that we need. The strength to be faithful in hard times, or even in good times is not within us. We don't have that strength. That's why I say that the Christian life is a supernatural life. It's not in us naturally. —It is found only in the Lord. That's the reason that Paul prays for it and why we must pray for those things. And pray for it daily.

But where did Paul get the confidence to pray for this? Or where do we get the audacity, as it were, to go to the Creator of the universe, the One who holds it all within His hand, (or if we even put it this way, Who holds within the tip of His cosmic finger the whole vast universe), —where do we get the audacity to go to Him and ask for anything? We're weak creatures, coming to the Almighty God. Where do we get that kind of confidence?

Well that confidence comes from His revelation here that He made an ancient choice of us to be His sons and daughters—to be His family. That gives us the right to come to Him, at any time, and always come to Him.

Now, to speak of that is not bragging because, again, a correct understanding of election recognizes that it's all of grace. His choice of one over another, of “Jacob over Esau”, has nothing to do with personal merit. It has to do with God's mercy. Understanding that and believing it, gives us the grounds for confidence in prayer to go before God and seek what we need. It gives us the confidence to live a life of boldness. It affects our behavior. It gives us confidence in our deeds and in our words. Sovereign grace is a great and glorious blessing, and practical.

The Scot and minister, Samuel Rutherford, understood that. He was instrumental in writing a Westminster confession of faith, and its shorter catechism with its famous question, “What is the chief end of man?” Answer; “Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

Rutherford did that through afflictions. He was put in jail for his faith. His first wife died. He remarried. His second wife died. In the course of his life, seven of his

children preceded him in death. All of that, even a fraction of that is enough tragedy to crush a man. But he used to say, "Whenever I find myself in the cellar of affliction, I always look about for the wine." Well, God's sovereign love for His people is "the wine."

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, it's because God, in His infinite and unconditional love, made the ancient choice of you to be in His family forever. And since He chose us from eternity before we had done anything good and knowing we would be born rebels, He will not forsake us now that we are His friends; now that we are His sons; now that we are His daughters; He will bring us safely home.

So the doctrine of Divine Election should make the Christian bold in his or her faith. God is for us. Who can be against us? We are God's chosen ones, loved by God Almighty.

Yet saints sometimes doubt that, and wonder if they are really the chosen ones, and they lack that comfort that Paul prayed for. That's not uncommon, not uncommon for Christians to experience that, because the devil loves to sow doubt in our hearts. Doubts cripple us. And he sows it. The way out of that into confidence and possessing the "good hope" that Paul speaks of here, the hope that the Lord gives us, is through prayer and the Word of God—reading the Bible. In it God speaks to our heart. It is living and active and it has a genuine affect upon us.

As I often quote, Romans, chapter 10, verse 17, "...faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." As you do that, God will enable you to see it, see your relationship with Him and confirm it; see the great blessing of it and have the assurance you need; and have full understanding of this very doctrine that we've been studying and that troubles people so often. Study the Word; Pray; God blesses that.

Still, the fact is, that this Doctrine of Election does trouble people. "It's hard", they say. Spurgeon knew that very well. So midway through his sermon on Election, he asked the congregation if anyone wanted it. "Did they want to be elect, and did they want to have all that election 'is to'?" Election is to a life of holiness and a new life in God's family, as God's children. "If you want that," he said, "then God has elected you.

But if you don't want that—if you want the world instead, and your pleasures, your way, not God's way—then what right do you have to say God ought to have given you what you do not wish for?"

"Supposing," Spurgeon said, "I had in my hand something which you do not value. And I said, 'I shall give it to such and such a person.' You have no right to grumble that I didn't give it to you. You could not be so foolish as to grumble that the other has got what you do not care about. According to your own confession, many of you do not want a new heart and a right spirit; do not want forgiveness of sins; do not want sanctification. You do not want to be elected to these things. You count these things but as husks. And why should you complain of God who has given them to those whom He has chosen?"

That's fair. You can't complain about fairness when you're not given the very thing you don't want, the very thing you have rejected. But for those who want it, it's for them. They've been chosen by God.

So, what about you? Do you want the forgiveness of sins? Do you want a new life, a clean life, a life with good hope of eternity in God's house, and in the new heavens and the new earth? Then do what all the elect do: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His sacrifice for sins—for you. The moment you do, you're saved, and have the very thing God's election is to —eternal life and glory!

Now that's how you know you are one of the chosen ones. Believe. Nothing could be more fair. If you haven't believed, may God help you to do that. And you who have, understand a little more further the great and glorious love that God has for you and will always have for you.

Let's give thanks as we close in prayer for that electing love and then prepare our hearts for our taking of the Lord's Supper. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank you for this great text of Scripture that recalls Your greatness, Your love for the lost. Not just the lost, but those who were in rebellion against You, and yet You chose some, not a few, but multitudes, to be Your family. You sent Your Son to die for them and obtain their salvation. Salvation is of the Lord. It's all of You. We give You all the glory, and we thank you for the blessings that we have in Christ.

And now, Lord, as we come to the Lord's Supper, we pray that You would prepare our hearts for it, that You would give us a sense of the great sacrifice that Your Son has made for us. And in doing that, we pray that You would give us gratitude and thankful hearts.

Thank you for Him. And it's in His name we pray. Amen.

(End of Audio)