



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Ephesians 1:4-6

Ephesians

"Chosen By God"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] In Ephesians chapter 1, verses 4 through 6. So turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1 and follow along with me as I read.

"Just as 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."

Lets bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for the time we have to come together this morning. We thank you that we have this privilege of opening the Scriptures and studying the Word. Thank you for this book of Ephesians that you inspired the apostle Paul to write. You guided his thinking. You breathed the words into him and we thank you that it is inerrant, filled with doctrine that edifies us, builds us up in the faith, exalts yourself, your Son, the Spirit, the grace of salvation.

So we pray, Lord, as we look into the passage before us this morning, that you might bless us and give us a deep understanding of these things. May we be enriched by our study as we understand your sovereign grace. Help us to understand that, to come into a deep appreciation of it, understand what we were and what we now are by that grace, and that that might shape and influence our conduct. We

pray that all that we do would be to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ, and recognize that we fail, we will always fail in this flesh that is infested and infected with the principle of sin.

And yet, we know your grace overcomes that. We thank you for and pray that you would continue to sanctify that we might live lives that are honoring and pleasing to you. Bless us now that our study would be to our edification and to your glorification. For it's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

[Message] Imagine for a moment that you were a passenger on the ill-fated maiden voyage of the Titanic in 1912. You've enjoyed the luxury suites and ballrooms for a few days when, suddenly, tragedy strikes. The ship hits the iceberg and you go overboard. You tread water for a while, but soon you're overcome by the cold Atlantic. Your strength fails, you lose hope and you begin to sink, when, suddenly, a hand grabs you out of the water, out of the deep and into a lifeboat.

What would your reaction be to that? How would you respond? It's really kind of a foolish question because, obviously, we would be filled with gratitude, thanksgiving. It would be difficult to contain the praise that we would heap upon our rescuer. We'd have a deep sense of indebtedness to the person that drew us out of the deep.

And yet, amazingly, when people learn of God's sovereign plan to rescue them – His sovereign plan to rescue His people from the fall, from an end which is far more disastrous, infinitely more disastrous than a watery grave, from a situation and a condition from which people were and are powerless to deliver themselves – often the response is one of horror. It's one of anger, imagining such a plan to be a horrible doctrine rather than what one writer describes as "perhaps the finest, warmest, and most joyous teaching in all the Bible. And that plan, that doctrine is our subject this morning, entitled "Chosen in Christ." It is about sovereign grace.

Paul was a man who understood sovereign grace and he understood the implication. And so it didn't take him long – really,

only two verses – before he started extolling God and His grace. In verse 3, he begins his long sentence, the 12 verses which have been called the magnificent gateway into this epistle. It's a doxology, in which he expresses adoration for God's plan of salvation, giving praise to each member of the Godhead for their work, their part in our salvation, our redemption. Paul began, in verse 3, by blessing "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, in verses 4 through 6, he praises the Father for His sovereign, gracious election love. We read in verse 4, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we could be holy and blameless before Him in love." Divine election, the doctrine of God's selection or choice of a people for Himself, has unfortunately confused many. It sparks controversy and been dismissed as some strange idea contrived by Augustine or John Calvin. And so to avoid heated arguments, often the whole subject is simply avoided.

I had a professor in seminary, who after affirming his belief in divine election, said, "But I don't think it should be taught to the unbeliever. It's for the mature." And I suppose that's a common feeling but one that is not shared by the apostle. Because he barely gets into this letter before he brings up the subject. And, evidently, Paul didn't believe election was only for the mature, something to be kept out of the pulpit, unless we believe that Ephesians should be withheld from the young or Ephesians should not be preached to the church at large.

Paul saw the doctrine of election as basic and important to our understanding of how men are saved and why it is that we have access to the spiritual blessings that he has described in verse 3. And so in verse 4, Paul traces those spiritual blessings to their source. And the source of our spiritual blessings is, as he says in verse 4, "just as He chose us in Him." Now, those words, "just as," which begin verse 4 should probably be given a causal meaning and translated "since" or "because." Now, there are numerous examples in the New Testament, particularly in Paul's writing, in which that word in Greek which is

here, at least in the New American Standard Bible, translated "just as."

Numerous examples where that is translated with this causal sense of because or since. Let me give you one example. Over in Ephesians 4 in the last verse, in verse 32, we read: "And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ also forgave you." Now, that's a fair translation, making a comparison between the way God responds and the way we are to respond. But I think it is even a better translation when we read, "forgiving each other *because* God in Christ has forgiven you."

And I think that's the sense that we could give to the verse here. Rather than making a comparison between our blessings, in verse 3, and our election, in verse 4, Paul is identifying the source of those blessings. Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places which is ours in Christ Jesus is ours because we are in Christ Jesus. And we are in Christ Jesus because we have been chosen to be in Him. Election is the reason for those blessings.

So election is fundamental to all that we have in Christ. It's not a novelty. It's not something that's peculiar to the apostle Paul. In fact, it runs throughout the whole Bible. For example, the Lord called Israel "My chosen people."

And throughout the Old Testament the nation is reminded that God chose them from among the nations to be His special people, His own possession. It pervades the New Testament as well. Christ tells His disciples, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you." Now, that's election in a nutshell. We did not choose God. God chose us.

That is unconditional election. We're not used to that kind of election. In this year in which we are gearing up for the presidential elections next year, we scrutinize our candidates. We make our choices of our candidates based upon what we see in them. We examine what they say, we like what they say. For example, if we like their policy that they propose to balance the budget by cutting spending, that appeals to us perhaps.

Or we may like their position on defense. They're going to support **S****D****I**, something like that. Then we like that and we cast our vote for them. And we may not like them because they had a tryst in Bimini, something like that. We analyze our candidates.

If we like them, we like we see, we choose them, we elect them. That's conditional election. That's the kind of election that we're used to. What Paul is describing here, though, is unconditional election. And that's very clear from the next statement that he makes in this verse, because he says that it took place "before the foundation of the world," which means in past eternity, before the world was begun, before the foundation of creation was laid, before God laid the first brick of this world which He has built, before there was anything.

When there was nothing except the infinite eternal Triune God, that's when God chose us. When the world, the universe, everyone in it was nothing more than a thought, that's when God chose His people. Which is simply to say election is eternal. It is and was forever present in the mind of God. So election is not based on anything good that we have done because it is before we were ever existed – we ever existed.

But could it not be that in eternity past, God formed His plan according to what he foresaw would happen in time. After all, God knows everything, doesn't He? He certainly does. So if He knows the end from the beginning, could He not have foreseen faith in certain individuals or foreseen good works, and based upon what He foresaw, then made a choice? After all, Paul writes, in Romans 8:29, "Whom He foreknew, He also predestined."

Foreknowledge comes before predestination. Well, it's true Romans 8:29 says that. But foreknowledge in that context does not mean having knowledge or having cognizance of something beforehand. It really means something like foreloved. That word, "to know," throughout the Old Testament often has that sense of love or affection.

And let me give you a few examples. It's often used of the love or the intimate relationship that a man has with his wife. In Genesis 4:1, we read that "Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore Cane." Now, there the word, "know" does not mean he had some knowledge about her and knew a few things about her, and so having known these things about her, she happens to have a child. It has to do with an intimate relationship between a man and his wife.

Well, it also has that sense, in the spiritual realm, of love that God has for His people. He tells Israel, for example, in Amos 3:2: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Now, he's not saying to Israel, "Of all of the nations I only know about you. I don't know anything about Syria or Babylon." No. Obviously, he knows all about every nation.

What it means here is only of all the nations of the world, he has a special, peculiar love for Israel. And that's the sense that we have here. Election here – or rather foreknowledge here, in Romans 8, does not refer to a knowledge, a cognizant understanding of things about His people. It has to do with a special love that He has for them. He's not saying He knew something about people and then predestined them.

He knew them, He loved them. He had entered into an eternal loving relationship with them. That's what he's describing. And that's the basis of election. Election arises from God's eternal love.

It's not because of anything in the object of His love. In fact, it is in spite of the object of His love. As Moses reminds Israel, back in Deuteronomy chapter 7 in verses 6 to 8, "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you."

Why did He choose them? Well, it certainly wasn't because of anything in them that commended them. They weren't great. They were small. They were insignificant.

Why did He love them? Because He loved them. That's what Moses says. And if election had been based upon what God had foreseen, then there would be no election. Because Paul makes it very clear that there's nothing in us that commends us to God.

There's no place that we have independent of God's work. He says that in Romans 3:10-11. "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God." So if God looked through time to see who was seeking, He'd find that none sought Him and, therefore, elects none. So election is unconditional because it's eternal.

It is sovereign and free. It is not traceable to anything in us because it was settled before we existed, before we had done anything. It is all of grace. And that's evident also in the next phrase. Not only does it arise from the Godhead, from the first Person, from the Father, but it's also grounded in the Godhead, in the second Person, in Jesus Christ.

It is, as we're told, in Him. It is in Christ, which means our election is made sure by Christ who represents us. It refers to Christ's federal headship. We were elected – or rather, when we were elected we were given to Christ so that He would be our representative, that He would represent us in His obedience and in His death, and thereby secure the salvation to which we have been called. We read of this in the gospel of John for example, in chapter 6.

"All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me," and "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing," Now we can trace that statement throughout Christ's statements. In the Gospel of John in chapter 10, He talks about those whom the Father has given to Him. Chapter 17, in His high priestly prayer, He speaks of those whom the Father has given to Him. Those whom the Father has chosen, He gave to the Son that He be their

representative and assure their salvation, and that implies something very important.

That implies our unworthiness and our inability to save ourselves. We need a representative because we're sinful. That's why Christ was sent to be our representative, and that's why we have Christmas. That's how we remember His coming. He came to be the representative head for His people, those whom the Father had given, because these people were sinful, in desperate need, good not save themselves. And so He sent the federal head.

It shows us that election has to do with sin. We're a sinful people. Election does not mean that God simply forgets about sin – he chooses people, forgets about their sin and that's it. God is a Holy God and He cannot ignore sin. He must deal with sin. And He deals with sin, the sin of His people in their representative, in Jesus Christ.

And so He has chosen some for salvation, something that we would not do. We would never choose God in and of ourselves. And so He must choose us. And then He purchases that salvation through His Son, something that we could not do for ourselves. We're helpless to choose, to purchase our own salvation.

And so He's done that in Christ. Election in Christ does for us what was impossible for us to do for ourselves. It saved us and it assures us that our salvation is eternally secure. But it's a false assumption to imagine that because we are secure, we can sin and we don't need to bother about holiness; and because salvation is of grace and it cannot be lost, sin is a matter of indifference; it's not important. That's presumptuous and that is without any foundation in Scripture.

That idea of grace is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called cheap grace. I think that's a good expression. There are many things that Dietrich Bonhoeffer believed in and taught that I reject, but that is a good point that he made. Election doesn't forget sin. It doesn't create indifference toward sin.

Someone who affirmed their belief in election, but then thinks, "Well, because I'm saved by grace, because I'm secure, because I'm

chosen I can live however I want," does not understand election. Election's aimed at the destruction of sin. It creates holiness and that's its purpose. And that's what Paul states: "That we should be holy and blameless before Him in love." Now there's an exegetical question that we need to deal with for a moment regarding that phrase, "in love."

And that is, should it be joined to that which precedes it in verse 4, or should it be joined to that which succeeds it in verse 5? If it is joined with the statement in verse 5, then we would read, "In love He predestined us." And, of course, that's true. And we've already seen that. We see that as we study through the rest of the passage.

Predestination, His predestination of His people is grounded in His love, his eternal love for them. And that's why we speak of election. And so love is that from which His election springs. But that, I don't think is what it meant here. It's best to connect this phrase with verse 4 with the words that precede.

Because that same phrase, "in love," occurs five more times in this epistle, and it's always used of the human virtue of love. The love that we have for one another, the love that we have for God, rather than God's love for men. And of all those occurrences they all go with what precedes, with the exception of maybe one verse. And so that's the way we'd understand it here. A truly holy life proceeds from love.

A life that is holy, that is orthodox, or so called, without love is cold orthodoxy and unpleasing to God. It issues from life. And that's what election produces, a holy life, a life of love and a life that desires to please God, to serve Him, to serve one another. Now, ultimately, this holiness, this spotlessness is fulfilled in eternity when we stand before Him. That is when it's complete.

But it's also true to speak of our present position in Jesus Christ as holy and blameless. Because when He justifies His people, He declares them to be righteous. And we stand before Him as innocent, as having all the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's our position in

Christ. But I think it goes beyond that as well because the implication of justification is always that we live according to what we have been declared to be.

So it has implication for sanctification, and it may have direct reference to that. Because, in chapter 5 in verses 26 and 27, he uses that same expression in regards to Christ's death and how, through His death, He has sanctified us that we be holy and blameless. So it may have a very sweeping range in its meaning here. We are to be a people that is holy. We are holy in Him.

We shall be holy completely, but we are to be working out that holiness in our life presently, it's to be a desire. And it's what the Holy Spirit works in us. So the person who has this sense that election means I can live a licentious life, who understands by grace, cheap grace, doesn't understand election at all. In verse 5, Paul elaborates on God's purpose in election by stating the method or the manner in which election was effective, and explains further it's goal or purpose. We read in verse 5: "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

Predestination is God's sovereign plan respecting the destiny of His moral, rational creatures. It is a broader term than election. It is composed of two parts. It's composed of election and reprobation. And here it has reference to election, and God predestined people to salvation. That's what election is all about.

Now, predestination should not be confused with fatalism. Oftentimes, that's the accusation that is leveled against predestination, that it's fatalism. It's not. Fatalism is mechanistic, arbitrary, tyrannical. Predestination is the act of the personal all-wise, all-loving God.

And that's clear from the object or purpose of predestination which is stated here, which is our adoption as sons. This word, "adoption," is a word that's peculiar to Paul. He's the only New Testament writer that uses it. And, evidently, he borrowed from or

was influenced by the Roman custom of adoption, by which a child was legally transferred from one family into another family. And then that child was given all of the rights in that new family.

Well, Paul here, is speaking of spiritual adoption, which means that we, at one time, were members of a different family. And the nature of that family is implied in chapter 2, when Paul tells the Ephesians – and tells us as well – that formerly, when they "were dead in your trespasses and sins, they walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air." They were numbered among "the sons of disobedience," the children of wrath, "living in the lusts of the flesh, indulging the flesh." That what all of us are by nature. That's the way we lived in our previous family.

That's the former life. But in God's amazing grace, He adopted us out of that family and into His own family, giving us a new Father. The one who was our judge is now our Father. And giving us access and rights to all of those privileges that he's ascribed, in verse 3, as "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." That's what's involved with adoption.

We have a new Father, and we have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, Paul says in Galatians 4, who comes into our hearts cries "Abba! Father!" joining us into an intimate personal relationship. Not with an angel, as great as that might be, but with the infinite eternal God of the universe. That is a work of grace because we're not natural sons. There's only one Son that is a natural Son. But we, who were at one time enemies, have been brought into that family with all of the blessings, a full claim on all of those blessings and the rights the privilege to have access to them at every moment of our life.

So we might wonder, "Why is it that we were brought into this privilege and blessing, considering what we were, considering the fact that we were enemies, that we were set against God, that we were God haters?" Paul's answer to that is very simple and mysterious. Because he said it was done "according to the kind intention of His will." In

other words, because God is kind and loving, He did it because He wanted to. He didn't have to do it.

He did it because He wanted to. And He wanted to because He's kind, He's loving. It's "according to the kind intention of His will." We see this in other statements that Paul makes. For example, over in 2 Timothy 1:9, Paul writes: "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which He granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,"

So there we have it again. Is it because of our works? Some say it is. He foreknew the good works we do; he foresaw our faith. Paul says it's not according to works. It's not according to anything that's in us.

It's from the foundation of the world. His plan precedes anything that we've done. And so He plans out what will take place before we've done it. It's according to a gracious plan, not according to anything in us. This is a work of grace.

And what he's saying is God loved us when we were still very unlovely. And the reason for that affection, that saving love that moved Him to call us into Christ and all of those blessings is, to put it very simply, a mystery. We can't really fathom why He did it. We don't really know. But while we don't know why God chose us, why He loved us, what it was that drew Him to us rather than someone else, we are given the ultimate reason for His choice, which Paul says, in verse 6, is to be "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Now, this is the first of the three refrains we see at the end of each section in this long sentence of Paul's. He concludes each section – first one dealing with the Father, the second one dealing with the Son, the third dealing with the Spirit, with that refrain, "to the praise of the glory of His grace," which gives us the sense of the purpose of this whole great sentence that he has been – that he began in verse 3. It's to praise God, and so he does. He stops and praises

God. This is why God has chosen us. It's all to be to the praise of His glory.

That's the ultimate purpose of all things. In the words of the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." The ultimate goal of election is not our salvation. The ultimate goal of election is not our holiness. Those are intermediate goals which issue into the ultimate goal, which is glory to God, to magnify His greatness.

Well, is that reason for boasting. Sometimes people think that, "Well, election causes arrogance." Well, think about it. Is election a reason to boast? Is it a reason to feel proud about ourselves?

I mean, after all, we're now numbered among an elite group; we're the chosen few. Not at all. In fact, it's because we have absolutely nothing to boast in, but God chooses us. Election, if you really understand it, is a kind of deflating doctrine to man and to human nature. Men are so utterly destitute that the only way that they can be saved is by God's sovereign election.

And if we should ever feel a sense of self-sufficiency, if we ever to be a little puffed up and proud about the fact that we are elect, that we are chosen by God, then we need to recall Paul's words to the Corinthians. They had, evidently, as you read through that first epistle, a problem with pride. And so, Paul, on various occasions addresses that pride, and I think he's doing that in chapter 1, verses 27 through 29, when he says, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things that are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, that He may nullify the things that are, that no man may boast before God."

So what are we boasting? Do we boast in our foolishness, our weakness, our baseness? Do we walk around and say, "Oh, I'm such a fool"? "I'm so base. Other people aren't base, but I am base." Nobody does that.

If we're going to boast in what we were before God – or when God called us, what he saw in us that moved Him to call us, that's what we'd have to do. There's nothing to boast in. Election does just the opposite. It points out to us how destitute we were. It robs men of every reason for pride, and as Spurgeon said, "Leaves us prostrate and broken saying, 'Lord, I am nothing. I am less than nothing. Why me? Why me?' "

No, a true understanding of election creates humble hearts. But election brings glory to God because having chosen the foolish, worthless, base things of this world, he makes us acceptable in Christ, "in," as he says, "the beloved." This is the only place where Christ is called "the beloved." It's a term that refers to Israel. And here he applies it to Jesus Christ.

There's a lot we could say about that term, and we really don't have time. But we are acceptable in the beloved. Now, if Christ is *the* beloved, the one who God the Father loves above all, what does that say about us who are in Him? It says He loves us. He loves us as He loves Christ because we are in Him.

And when He sees Christ, He sees us. And when He sees us, He sees Christ. And He loves us and sees us as blameless. Not because of anything we are by nature. We're fools, we're base, of ourselves but in Christ, we're different.

And that's God's transforming grace. He takes those that are foolish, and in Christ we become wise. Those that are worthless, are base, in Christ become very much different. We become new people. We become precious to Him.

We become a royal family, part of His family, His race. And that should make us humble not proud. And that should make us holy. How can we sin against a God who's done that for us. We who deserve wrath have been given life. And not just life, we've been given eternal life.

We who were hopelessly in debt to God have not only had our debts cleared, we have been made kings. We're seated with Christ in

the heavenly places. Now, does that move a person to say, "Therefore, I will sin against God." Now, if one has a proper understanding of what we have in Christ, by virtue of our unconditional election, one is not moved to sin, one is not moved to self-sufficiency. One is moved to gratitude, to thankfulness.

We can hardly contain ourselves from heaping praise upon the one who reached down and rescued us from the deep. That's what election does, and election should make us bold. We're members of God's royal family. What does it matter what the world thinks of us. If he chose us for Himself when we were His enemies, how much more will He do for us now that we are sons "in Christ the beloved"? Well, he'll do much more for us.

So what does it matter what the world does. What kind of a threat does the world really pose to the one who's in Jesus Christ, who has access to all of the wealth of heaven. It really can't pose much of a threat at all. So it should make us bold. It should make us fearless.

So I would conclude from this that the doctrine of election is imminently practical. It's a doctrine that should be taught to the young. It should be taught to the old in the faith. It should be taught from the pulpit of every church to the whole church of God. It is a significant doctrine; it is a basic doctrine; it is the milk of the Word.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that great English Baptist preacher, was a great believer in divine election. He called it a great and glorious doctrine. And he addressed many of the mistakes and the misconceptions that surrounded doctrine with some very insightful challenges. In fact, some of those are contained in a little pamphlet that we have in the book room, called "Election." It's one of the sermons that we put in print.

"And to the person who is offended by the idea of election, that God would unconditionally choose some and not others, who think that election is unfair," Spurgeon said – and I'm paraphrasing some of his words – "you desire election. You want to be among the elect, then you may have it. God elects men and women to holiness. If you

desire holiness, then election is for you. But if you don't desire these things," Spurgeon writes, "why on earth could you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like to other people?"

In other words, if you really want it, you can have it. But if you reject it by rejecting Christ, then you have no complaint. It's not unfair that you should not have the very thing that you don't want. So it's not unfair. Election is not unfair.

But election is not fair either. If election were fair, none of us would be elected. We don't deserve election. God is not in debt to us. He doesn't owe us something that's not ours.

This is His creation. God is sovereign, God is wise, God is good, and God has a right to do what He wants with His creation. We have no claim on God. And as Paul tells us, we cannot answer back to the one who made us. Why has He made me this way?

Whether we like it or not, we have no claim on God. God does not have to give us anything. And if God were to give us what we deserve, if God was going to be strictly fair with us, then we would all go to hell. And that's the simple fact that God does not treat us fairly in election. He treats us graciously. He gives us what we don't deserve.

But then Spurgeon addresses those who may be discouraged by the doctrine of election, thinking that they may not be elect. After all, it's for the few. It's not for the few. Election is the greatness of God's grace. Think back to what He promised Abraham. He said, "Look at the stars of the heavens.

"Try to number them. You can't. That's what your descendants will be like. They'll be like the stars of the heavens." We can't appreciate that living in the city, but if we get out in the country, if we could down to Israel, into the area of the Negev where he lived where there aren't many lights – and certainly weren't any back then, we could see the sky and the Milky Way blazing with lights, can't

even begin to number them. Their numbers are so great they blur into a great light.

Sand at the seashore, that's how many they are that are going to be – that God has elected and chosen to Himself. It's innumerable. And so Spurgeon reminds the discouraged of that. There is a vast number of the elect. But if you're discouraged and you think you may not be, then he challenges that person to go and try the Master.

"You have nothing to lose," he said. "Even if God should reject you and wave you off with His hand, which is a thing that is absolutely impossible for Him to do to those who come to Him. But even if He should do that, you won't be more damned than you were to begin with. You don't have anything to lose by it. So go and try the Master."

Then he writes, "Besides, supposing thou be damned. Thou wouldst have the satisfaction at least of being able to lift thine eyes in hell and say, 'God, I asked mercy of Thee and Thou wouldst not grant it. I sought it, but Thou didst refuse it. That thou never shall say, oh sinner. If thou goest to Him and asketh Him, thou shalt receive, for He never has spurned one yet.

"Is that not hope for you? What though there is in a lot of numbers. Yet, it is true that all who seek belong to that number. Go thou and seek. If thou should be the first one to go to hell, tell the devil that thou didst perish thus. Tell the demons that thou art a castaway after having come as a guilty sinner to Jesus.

I tell these it would disgrace the Eternal – with reverence to his name – and He would not allow such a thing. He is jealous of his honour, and he could not allow a sinner to say that." That's true. And so if you're here and you wonder if you're one of the elect, then go to Christ. Go and try the Master. Believe in Him and become one of His elect.

God from eternity past, from before the foundation of the world, chose people for faith. He chose men and women to believe, and the elect believe. And so if you believe, then you'll want to be elect. And

I invite you to believe, to trust in Christ and enter into the company of the elect and enjoy that great and glorious doctrine as Spurgeon said. Well, with that let's close with a word of prayer. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for the truth that's set forth here. Sometimes this is a difficult doctrine for people to understand. And yet it is a great and glorious doctrine when we do understand it and we do come to appreciate it. We can never fully appreciate these things. We can never fully plunder your grace, your infinite love.

But we pray that you would continue to increase our understanding of all that we have in Jesus Christ, and that we have it through your mercy and your grace. We did not earn it. We could not achieve it of ourselves. You achieved it for us. You chose us for salvation and then you purchased that salvation, assuring us that it would be ours.

We thank you for that. We thank you for the cost that it cost you in the death of your Son Jesus Christ. In His name we pray. Amen.