



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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### The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Romans 8: 29-30

Romans

“The Golden Chain”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our scripture this morning is Romans 8:29-30. I was telling my wife last night what I'd be preaching on and I told her I'm going to preach on election and predestination and she laughed and said, 'you do that every Sunday.' I said that's not true but you can't help but preach it when you come to Romans 8:29 so if you're visiting and you've never in your life heard a sermon on election of predestination, you've come to the right place and it only gets better because before long we're in Romans 9. Well this is a great text and what I'm going to do is begin with verse 28 because verses 28-30 are really a section of scripture to themselves and so we read at great promise that Paul records in verse 28 and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God to those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the first thorn among many brethren and those whom he predestined, he also called. and these whom he called he also justified and these whom he justified, he also glorified. May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, it's a great privilege to be here this morning, to be gathered together with the saints, your people whom you have saved and we read about that great salvation and this great text of scripture and how from beginning to end, salvation is your work and so as we consider together, we pray that you would give us an appreciation for your grace and if we truly understand the text that we read this morning, we must come away with an amazement at your grace because that is what this text is about, how you save and your plan of salvation

extends from eternity to eternity and we are but the recipients of the great gift of salvation, received through faith but a gift still as is the gift of faith. So Father, bless us as we study this text, give us an understanding of it. For some it may be a bit difficult but Father, for all of us, the scriptures are a closed book unless you open our eyes and our mind to understand it and that is a part of your grace in our lives. We who understand the gospel, we who have believed the gospel, we who understand your word do so because the spirit of God has opened our hearts to receive it and he does so whenever we read the bible. He illuminates the page of scripture, he illumines our mind so that we an understand and we pray for that ministry this morning. May the spirit of God guide us in our thinking and give us an appreciation of the great truth that Paul gives to us here.

We pray for ourselves spiritually, we are a needy people. We pray that you build us up in the faith in this hour and this evening when we return to this room to celebrate the Lord's supper and remember him and what he did for us in his first coming and remember that he's coming again. Bless us, Father, spiritually today and in the days to come, may we be a people who give our attention to the scriptures and read them regularly, daily and apply ourselves to knowing your truth. But Father, bless us also materially. We are physical creatures, you've made us that way, you have made us dependent upon the world around us and we are dependent upon you for everything that we receive, every breath of life that we have, every beat of our heart is a gift from you. As Paul told the philosophers of Athens, it is in you that we live and we move and we have our existence. Whether we know that or not, whether we believe the truth or not, whatever the state of our mind or our spiritual condition, we exist by your will.

We exist in the environment of your spirit who keeps all things in their place and the environment of our Lord Jesus Christ who holds all things together by the word of his power. History is moved along by your \_\_\_\_, your will. We are absolutely and completely dependent upon you and so we look to you for the blessings of life and the needs of life and we pray for that, we pray that you'd provide for our daily needs. We pray for those who are sick, we pray that you give them healing and give them encouragement. We pray for those who are unemployed that you might give them work in the midst of the difficulties, we pray that you

give encouragement and sustain them and provide for them. Father, those of us who are not experiencing any obvious difficulty or need, make us grateful for what we have because again, it all comes from your gracious hand and we thank you for that.

We thank you for our college students and the fact that so many are here today, we pray that you'd bless them as they leave today and go back to school and give them very successful conclusion to the semester. We pray that for all of our students. We pray that they be diligent about their work and that you would bless them with energy and the ability to concentrate. Give them a successful conclusion to this semester of school but in the midst of all of that, Father, may they not forget you and may they not forget to place the priority upon the spiritual things and may they grow through all of this in the weeks to come and bring them back safely to us for the next holiday and our next reunion. Bless us now, Father, as we sing our final hymn, we look to you to give us joy and give us understanding. May our time together be very profitable for each of us, we pray in Christ's name, Amen.

There's a story about a man who was hiking along a mountain trail when he slipped and fell over a cliff. He had the presence of mind to grab onto the branch of the small tree that was growing out of a crag in the mountainside but there he young, helplessly between heaven and earth. He was alone, there was no one there to help and so in desperation, he looked up at the sky and he said, 'is there anyone there?' And to his amazement, he heard a voice say, 'yes.' So he asked, 'can you help?' And the voice answered, 'yes, but you must trust me, let go of the branch.' The man looked down to the deep gorge below and then he looked up at the sky and he said, 'is there anyone else up there?'

If you've heard me tell that before, I apologize, I think that's the only joke I know but it's a very modern story because today people look up at heaven and they wonder if anyone is up there. One feature of modernity, we are told, is alienation, people feel alone and our advances in technology have not helped. Men look through powerful telescopes into deep space and at distant galaxies light years away and they're filled with wonder but they also feel smaller and more alone. They feel that way when they look at the world around them, which according to social scientists seems impersonal and unresponsive. That's what theologian

David Wells has written, as he puts it, people feel like small cogs in a mammoth machine but the eye of faith, fixed on the revelation of God perceives a very different reality. There is someone up there, the Lord God and he is here with us. In fact, very much involved with us. He takes care of his people, he is so involved with us that when we slip off mountains, our accidents are used by him for our good. In fact, with God, there are no accidents, he makes everything to work to that end for our good.

Paul states that in Romans 8:28, one of the greatest promises that we have in the bible. God causes all things to work together for good, to those who love god to those who are called according to his purpose. God has a purpose for those who love him and in verses 29 and 30, Paul explains what that purpose is and how God is accomplishing it. His purpose is to glorify his children, to make them into the image of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ and as Paul explains, that great purpose is worked out in stages and all Paul lists five parts to God's plan for knowledge, predestination, calling, justification and glorification. There are five great doctrines that have been called the golden chain that got has let down from heaven to pull us up there or we could call it the golden chain that links eternity to eternity because it begins in the mind of God in eternity past and it ends in the coming glory of eternity future. The five links or doctrines in this chain are well-described as golden to God's people because each one speaks to us of God's unlimited love and care for us.

We see that particularly in the first link of the chain, which is also the most controversial, that of foreknowledge. It is those whom God foreknew, Paul writes, that he will glorify. The common meaning of the word foreknow is to know something before hand, to know in advance and so many have defined God's foreknowledge as seen in this verse in that way, have interpreted it to mean God's foresight, explaining that God looks down through time and he sees who will believe in Jesus and those are the ones that he predestines to life in glory. So predestination, understood in that scheme is based on God's foresight of future events. That is the historical position that our minions have taken in their debate with Calvinists but it is a self-defeating argument, which contradicts everything that Paul has taught in the book of Romans and it misses the very meaning of the word foreknew. Paul doesn't say that God

foreknew something about those whom he predestined but that he foreknew them and the difference is very significant.

The meaning of foreknew something about them would be that he looked down through time, he saw something that they would do or something in them, he knew something about them but what Paul says is he knew them. He foreknew them meaning he knew them personally before they existed. Now that's clear from the use of the Hebrew word, 'know' in the Old Testament. We see that in a number of places, it means much more than intellectual understanding, it indicates a personal relationship, one of love and care and we see that early on in the bible, in the book of Genesis in Chapter 4:1, where this word 'know' in Hebrew is used of Adam's relationship with his wife, Eve. The literal reading of that text and I believe the King James version translate it literally is that Adam knew his wife Eve. Now that doesn't mean that Adam knew something about her. Moses wasn't writing that Adam had some perception about his wife or that he could see that she was blonde and blue-eyed, he says he knew her and so this is a special knowledge because this knowledge that Adam had of his wife resulted in the conception of their first son.

So it means he knew intimately, he loved her, he had relations with her as it is translated in the New American Standard Bible and the word know has the same meaning in other texts of scripture. For example, in Amos 3:2, it is used of God's relationship with Israel and there we read literally, The Lord said, 'you only have I known of all the families of the earth.' Now God did not mean by that, you only do I have intellectual knowledge of all the families of the earth. He's not saying that he was ignorant of the other nations and he only knew about Israel. God's omniscient, he knows all things. He created the nations, he set their boundaries, he meant that he had a special knowledge of Israel, he had special love for Israel and so it can be translated as it is translated in some texts, you only have I chosen among all the families of the earth. The word 'to know' in Hebrew is an idiom, it is an expression for love. Paul uses it here in that way to describe the Lord's eternal love for us, for his people. So whom he foreknew, means who he fore loved. Foreknowledge is God's sovereign, distinguishing love as it applies to his election of his people.

That's the meaning of the word. If it were not, if foreknew means foresaw, then Paul has a problem here because he has entangled himself in an impossible contradiction. What would God have seen, had he looked down through time? If this had been the scheme, the way that salvation is worked out, what would he have seen? Would he have seen anyone that believed? Well not according to what Paul wrote earlier in Romans 3:11-12, there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God, there is none who does good. There is not even one. So if God's choice of us had depended on faith that he had previously seen in us, then none would be chosen, all would be lost because none seek, not even one, at least apart from grace.

But Paul was not contradicting himself, he used the word foreknow in the Hebrew sense of fore love. Now of course God does see ahead, he knows the end from the beginning, he is omniscient and he did see who would believe and who would not believe. Most do not question that but the real question is where did that faith that he saw come from? Throughout the New Testament, human beings are described as being, by nature, spiritually blind, deaf and dead. How do those who do not understand and who do not seek, come to seek and understand and believe and the answer is the faith that God foresees in us is the faith that he creates in us. The creation of that faith is based on God's love for the lost, not on the love of the lost for God. Paul is not teaching a divine love that is based on what we do, Paul is teaching divine initiative, we have that taught throughout the bible. This is a love that God had for us first from all eternity before we existed. It's what Moses taught in Deuteronomy 7:7-8, when he reminded Israel of God's great love for them and the reason that they were his chosen people.

He said the Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, but it was because the Lord loved you. In other words, God's choice of Israel had nothing to do with Israel, it had everything to do with God and who he is. He chose them because he loved them and he loved them because he did. That's it. It was because of his own good pleasure that he chose Israel but people find that very hard to accept. They feel that there must be something of human merit involved in election, even if it is human merit of the smallest degree. For example, this is a relatively recent explanation of Deuteronomy 7, by some Orthodox Jewish men, Dennis Prager and Rabbi Joseph Telushkin in

their book "Why the Jews?" They write, 'God chose the Jews simply because they are the offspring of the first ethical monotheist, Abraham. That is their single merit.

Well, now, that's not much merit, that's just a little bit of merit, but that's merit and that misses Moses' point all together and it's wrong. According to Joshua 24:2-3, God called Abraham out of err of the Caldeans when he was idolater, when he was a pagan. There was no merit in Abraham, Abraham was not seeking God, God sought him and God found him in the darkness of idolatry and his grace prevailed upon him and he called him out and Abraham followed and what was Israel like when God called it out of Egypt? It was a nation of slaves, there was nothing glorious or commendable in that. In fact, they grumbled against God for the next 40 years, so why did God choose them? Not because they were great or a desirable people, they were not. He loved them because he loved them. That's the reason for election and if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, that's the reason for your election.

The only source of God's election and predestination is God's inscrutable love. Now that may not raise your self-esteem but it should raise your adoration of the Lord and it should give you the assurance that God's purpose for you will be accomplished. Now he is working all things together for your good and will ultimately glorify you. His love for you is eternal, his love for you is unconditional, his commitment to you is unshakeable and that should give you strong assurance of your salvation and your security in him and it is the basis for the next link in the golden chain, predestination. Those whom God foreknew or fore loved, he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son. The Greek word that is translated predestined, like the English word is made up of two words and it means to determine to a point, to set the boundaries of, to designate beforehand or we could translate it preordained. It is the same word that Peter used in Acts 4:28, when he said, 'those who crucify Christ did whatever God's hand purposed and predestined to occur or decided beforehand should happen and God did the same for his elect people. Our destiny, which is, as Paul says, to become conformed to the image of his son was determined beforehand, it was determined from all eternity.

Now that means, first of all, that it is certain to happen. God's plan cannot fail, God cannot ordain something and it fail to occur so this is a second ground of encouragement, a second ground of assurance that we, who love God, will be glorified but again, it indicates very clearly that the decision involving our becoming Christians and becoming the objects of God's constant favor was God's decision long before it was our. As John Stott points out, this is not to deny that we decided for Christ and freely but to affirm that we did so only because had first decided for us. The emphasis of these verses is on the sovereign grace of God, which was before the world was. So all who are saved can only trace their salvation from beginning to end, to God alone.

Now that's not only the teaching of the bible and is certainly the teaching of the bible and we can go to many other texts of scripture besides this one to prove it but that teaching is also confirmed by our experience. J.I. Packer made that point very well in the book that he wrote nearly 40 years ago evangelism and the sovereignty of God, a book that brings together God's absolute sovereignty over all of life, with man's responsibility but in that book he pointed out that even people deny the doctrines of God's sovereign grace, acknowledge those doctrines, the doctrines of predestination, the doctrines of election, acknowledge it at least implicitly when they give thanks to God for their salvation and what Christian doesn't give thanks to God for his or her salvation.

We all know that God saved and we praise him and thank him for that. Now why do you do that he asks? Because you know in your heart that God was entirely responsible for it. You did not save yourself, he saved you. Well, we acknowledge the same thing when we pray. When people pray for the conversion of others, they recognize that God's work is necessary for salvation, nobody can be saved apart from him. Why pray if it is all dependent upon us? If it is our will, our understanding, if it's our work of going out and giving the gospel, if we do it all, why pray? So as Dr. Packer puts it, on our feet we may have arguments about it but on our knees, we are all agreed. Now there are objections to all of this, I know that, unconditional election and predestination produce arrogance in people who take pride in being the elect, the chosen few, these doctrines cause apathy in people's spiritual life and a lack of concern for the lost and predestination is a disincentive to evangelism, after all if God is going to save people,

then he'll save them and the doctrines foster uncertainty about salvation. What if I'm not one of the elect? What if I've not been predestined to life? I'm without hope.

Well these are some of the objections that are raised but none of these objections are true. Very often what people do who oppose these doctrines of scripture is they don't really oppose the doctrine, they oppose a caricature of it, they build a straw man and attack that and that's the case here, rightly understood, election does not produce arrogance. I'm not saying that they're not arrogant Calvinists, I've known plenty but that's in spite of the truth, that's in spite of the doctrine. What do we have to boast about if we really understand what Paul has said here. If we really understand grace, God did it all and he did not do it for me or for you because we are worthy, just the opposite, we are unworthy, that's what magnifies the grace of God. That doesn't produce pride, that produced humility if rightly understood and predestination gives incentive for evangelism, it doesn't cause disincentive for that. The Bible is very clear, Christians are responsible to give the gospel and people are responsible to believe it. Salvation is through faith, divine election is God's choice of people to be saved through faith, not apart from it. It is his work, though. We are saved by grace through faith and the fact that God saves assures us that our evangelism will succeed, not dependent upon us.

We're responsible to go out and give the gospel but the success of God's plan of salvation does not hang upon me or you on your skill or my skill because we're obedient, we have the assurance and the conviction and we should have the confidence that God will bless it and so we go forth and do that with that kind of confidence and if a person fears that he or she is not chosen, God has not ordained him or her to glory, that issue can be settled, it's very easy to do. Believe, trust in Christ, that is the great evidence of election. Those who have been chosen believe in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, who taught unconditional election and absolute predestination said to the Philippian jailor, 'believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.' Believe. That was his answer to 'what must I do to be saved?' As for predestination causing apathy in the Christian life, well notice the goal of God's predestination. It is to become conformed to the image of his son. That change begins when a person is born again by the grace of God. We become new creatures and when we become new creatures, we begin to become increasingly like God's son. Now that doesn't produce

apathy, just the opposite because we are being made like Christ, we will have the desires of Christ, we will want to be obedient, we will desire to be holy, we will be desire to grow spiritually. That, too, is an evidence of the election in the new birth.

Paul makes that point elsewhere in Ephesians 1:4, he writes in regard to election that God chose us before the foundation of the world that we would be holy and blameless before him in love. In other words, God chose us to be a people who believe and behave. So the goal of election is not just salvation for the wrath to come, the goal of election is also faith and holiness and we see that in the purpose of predestination as Paul states it here, which is to become conformed to the image of Christ. That's the first purpose, the second purpose of predestination and this is really the ultimate aim is that as a result of our conformity to Christ, Christ would become the first born among many brethren. The first born means the heir and the supreme son in the family. This doesn't speak of Christ as being a being who had a beginning as God's son. Jesus Christ is God's eternal son. This is a title that speaks to him as the heir of creation, as the supreme one over creation and it's a title, then that marks him off as unique from us. He is the preeminent one, he is supreme and God gave him brothers to witness his glory and in so doing, glorify him and enjoy his fellowship and not just a few will do that.

God gave his son a big family, many brethren. The elect are not a small company, a chosen few, but a countless multitude because God's grace is abundant. With verse 30, we come to the third link in the chain: calling and wit it we move from the mind of God in eternity past to the application of his plan in history. Those predestined in eternity are called in time. This is not the general call of the gospel that is often rejected by men and what the Lord spoke of in Matthew 22, when he said many are called but few are chosen. This is the same calling that Paul mentioned in verse 28. It is the infallible call that is applied to the elect and so because it's applied to the elect, to those whom God has set his love upon from eternity, those he predestined to be conformed to his son, they must respond to the call, they will respond to the call. So this is what theologians effectual calling, which is God's work through the Holy Spirit who brings people to faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord referred to this in a different way, he referred to it as being drawn in John 6:44. No one can come to me, he said, unless the father who sent me draws him.

Now why is it that no one can come unless the Father draws? It's not because God is keeping out multitudes who want in like the border patrol. It's not as though there are multitudes who are pressing to come in, but God's just got a few that he will let in and the others don't qualify. People must be drawn by God because they haven't the desire to come and they haven't the ability to come of themselves. Paul explained that earlier in the chapter, you remember, in verse 7 where he writes, 'the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.' So because man is not able to do that, which pleases God, not able to believe, God must do a work of grace in him.

God must do a work of grace for anyone to be saved and the Holy Spirit does that by calling people to Christ, not bringing them against their will, that's not what effectual calling means. God doesn't drag people kicking and screaming into the kingdom of God, he brings us by making us willing and so we come and he does that when the gospel is preached. People hear about Christ's death for sinners, they understand it as true, maybe they didn't understand it before or they understood the words, they just didn't believe that it could be true but they hear it again and they believe that this true, they understand it, they believe it is true, they realize their need of the savior and they believe. Now they believe and they respond but they do so because of God's grace. That is the work of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling. He awakens faith in people through the truth that is given so that they respond to it.

A great illustration of that is found in John 11, when Christ calls Lazarus out of the tomb. 'Lazarus come forth.' He was a dead man, the Lord had even delayed his arrival at Bethany to ensure that Lazarus would be dead and everyone would know that was dead and so he approaches this tomb where a dead man lay and he had the stone removed. He called for Lazarus and said that if he had not said the name Lazarus, all of the tombs would have emptied but he called for Lazarus, he came to life, he came to Christ because Jesus called him. It's the same for us. We are raised from spiritual death to life and to faith because the Lord calls us, he brings us to faith and at the moment of faith, the believer is justified. That is the fourth link in the golden chain and of course it's the great theme of the book of Romans, particularly of chapters 1-4, justification is God's act of declaring sinners righteous or right with him. Not

because of their own merit but because of what Christ has done by dying in their place and paying for their sins. As a result we are forgiven when we believe.

We are not made sinless, we still sin, justification doesn't change our character, doesn't change our nature, sanctification does that, justification changes our status. It changes our relationship with God, it's illustrated for us in Deuteronomy 25:1, where Moses gave instruction to the judges of Israel, he told them how they were to try the cases between litigants in the nation. They were, he said, to justify the righteous and condemn the wicked. That doesn't mean make people righteous or make people wicked, it means to declare them to be what they are. If they are innocent, declare them innocent, if they're guilty declare them guilty and that's what God does in justifying the believer. As the judge of all the earth, he declares us innocent of sin, he declares us righteous in his sight and freed from the penalty of the law even though we did sin and even though we are guilty but God can forgive the believer righteously, he can make that declaration justly because we have a substitute, Jesus Christ who took our punishment in our place on the cross and he removed our guilt.

So when a person believes in Christ, he or she identifies with Christ. That's what we do in faith. We, as it were, lay hold of Christ, we join ourselves to Christ, we are united with Christ and being united with Christ, he is united with us, his righteousness becomes ours, we receive the righteousness of Christ, it is as though we are clothed in Christ, clothed in his righteousness and as a result, we are completely and forever accepted by God, just as his son is accepted and loved by him. We continue to be sinners, that's true, but God no longer counts our sins against us, they've all been paid for. Instead he counts Christ's righteousness to us and sees us as his sons, not as sinners. We can never be separated from his love as a result of that anymore than Christ can be separated. Because we're in Christ, we can't be separated from God and because we have the righteousness of Christ, we will also have the glory of Christ. Those who have been justified will be glorified. That's the fifth and the final link in the chain, glorification. All of God's people will possess his glory. We enter into glory at the moment of death. We have that hope before us. Jesus promised us that in John 14:2, he told his disciples not to be troubled, he had told them that he'd be leaving but let not your heart be troubled, he said.

He's going to prepare a place for them in his Father's house or many dwelling places and so he has prepared a place for us and so when we leave this world, we go there, we enter into a place of light and joy beyond our comprehension in the company of Christ and his people. That's a great hope that we have. We enter into glory. Paul is not looking at that, he is looking beyond that to the end of history and the return of Christ which will usher in a new age and ultimately the new heaven and the new earth. The glory that Paul speaks of here is the glory of the resurrection. That's what John refers to in 1 John 3:2, where he writes, 'when he appears, we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.' When the Lord Jesus Christ is seen by us in the scriptures, when we read the bible and we see Christ and we understand his truth, that changes us. That's 2 Corinthians 3:18, as we see him we are transformed from glory to glory. We are spiritually transformed, sanctified through the reading of scripture but the day will come when we will see Christ physically and that's when we will physically be changed. We will be transformed, we will be glorified. Our bodies will be raised and transformed into the appearance of Christ perfectly fit and adapted to the glory of the world to come, which has been delivered from all the consequences of sin. We will be transformed then, spiritually and physically and made whole. That's our future.

But what about our present? There seems to be a missing link in this chain. If you've been looking at it carefully, we have been justified and we shall be glorified, what about being sanctified? Paul doesn't mention it. It's very important but it's not mentioned here. It is, however, I think, implied in both the words justified and glorified. All who are justified are being sanctified, you cannot separate the two. If a person is being sanctified, he or she has been justified. There's no such thing as a Christian who has been justified but is not being changed, not being sanctified. In fact, sanctification was eluded to in the goal of being conformed to the image of Christ, that's what sanctification does. It produces Christ likeness but also sanctification is part of glorification. The difference is one of degree not one of kind. Sanctification is the process of changing us into the likeness of Christ, glorification is the completion of that process or as F.F. Bruce put it, sanctification is glory begun, glory is sanctification consummated. That's our destiny, we will be delivered from sin, we will be

delivered from the effects of sin and given new bodies and a new world, transformed by the glory of God.

But you'll notice Paul writes of our future glory in the past tense. Did you notice that? He doesn't write 'these whom he justified, he will also glorify' but 'these whom he justified, he also glorified and he did that purposely, he did that to maximize our confidence and encouragement. This is what is sometimes called a prophetic past tense and the idea is that our glory to come is so certain to occur that it can be spoken of as already accomplished, as a past act, as something that's already happened, it is that certain. The believer in Jesus Christ is assured of final salvation. It is God's will, it is his plan and his plan cannot fail. Paul told the Philippians that in so many words in Philippians 1:6, he wrote, 'I am confident of this very thing that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.' If he began the work, he will complete it. He's not like us where he begins a work and halfway through gets frustrated with it and stops. There's a lot about you and me that can frustrate God, but it doesn't. He continues to work with us and promises to complete it.

Our salvation is, from start to finish, God's work and it's good that it is because if it were left to us, we would never begin it and were we to begin it, we would near complete it but we're not left to our own keeping. God began the work of salvation in eternity past and he will see it through until eternity future and he is working everything in the present for our good to accomplish that. No greater comfort than that. Life is not impersonal, we are not just little cogs in a universe that is some giant machine. Life is not impersonal, life is not governed by chance, without plan, without meaning, without purpose. God sovereignly rules over everything wisely, powerfully, purposefully with infinite love and care for his people. Is there any greater truth than that? I don't think so and yet many people resisted. They reject the idea of God being absolutely sovereign and holy and like that guy who was hanging off the cliff asked, 'is there anyone else up there?' but there's not. This is the God of the bible, this is the only true God, this is the God with whom we have to do.

There is one God, he is the triune God, God the Father, God the son, God the Holy Spirit and he has given one way of salvation, it is through the son, it is by faith in Jesus Christ

and he sovereignly, effectively calls sinners to himself. He calls us through the gospel, through the invitation to believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Maybe he's calling someone here this morning, telling you to let go of the world that you love, telling you to let go of your self-satisfaction and the idea that you think you're okay and realize that you are not, realize that you are a sinner and that you need a savior. Let go of yourself and lay hold of Jesus Christ through faith. There's only one savior and that is him, Jesus Christ, who died in the lace of sinners so that all who believe will have forgiveness and life forever. If you hear the call, don't resist, don't hang on to unbelief, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in him and at that moment, receive justification. The declaration that you are right with God can never be separated from God that you have forgiveness and life. May God help you to do that. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for the great truths of this text, five great doctrines that each assure us of your sovereign, infinite, unwavering care and love for your people. You have chosen for yourself an innumerable multitude. You have given your son a family of brothers, a multitude, more than we can count and we praise you for that and we thank you. We, who have believed in Jesus Christ, thank you for the faith that we have received from you, from the life that we have received from you and we give you the praise. May we live now in light of that great truth, may we live with the assurance of our salvation and the confidence that as we go forth to be lights in the world, we can do so effectively by your grace and may we have the desire to that, we pray. We pray these things in our savior's name, Amen.