



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Romans 9: 6-13

Romans

“Divine Election”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] I have a New Year’s message this morning and that is read through the bible this year. And read through it with a submissive spirit, meaning when you come to texts of scripture like the one we’re going to read this morning, read through it with a heart that has yielded to God and ready to accept His word. I say that because our subject is divine election and the text is Romans 9:6-13, a text that may prove controversial for some in the audience. I suspect not for many but for some, and yet what it should be is a text that is a great encouragement for all because that is the reason God has revealed this great truth to us. And so may that be the consequence of our time together. May it be an encouragement and may God help all of us to read and study it this morning with yielded hearts.

The text begins with verse 6, “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: ‘Through Isaac your descents will be named.’ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is the word of promise: ‘At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.’

And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the

younger.’ Just as it is written, ‘Jacob I loved but Esau I hated.’” May God bless this reading of His word and our time of study in it together. Let’s bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we come to a glorious text of scripture this morning. All scripture is glorious, all of it is inspired of God and all of it requires our submission because it is your word. This is a great text because it reminds us of the origin of our salvation. It does not rest with us. We’re responsible, we see that throughout the word of God, and that cannot be denied and is not denied. But what we see here is the reason we are able to be responsible, the reason we are able to believe.

We see the origin of our salvation in you and in your good pleasure to save people from their sins. And we know as we read the scriptures and the great promises that you made in word of God that the number of those whom you have set your infinite, eternal and unconditional love upon is an innumerable multitude, a vast host of people. You are great in your grace and we thank you for that, we praise you for that and pray, Father, that as we study together we would get a sense of that and an appreciation for our salvation and the mercy that has brought us into your family.

So we look to you to bless us. We are responsible to read our bibles, to study them, to think about them, to sit under the ministry of the word of God and the church is responsible to teach the truth and yet, ultimately, Father, the teacher, the successful teacher, the effective teacher is not man, it is the third person of the Trinity, it is the spirit of God and we pray for that ministry this morning. We pray that our hearts would be yielded, that our hearts would be opened by Him to receive your truth, to think clearly and we look to you to bless.

May our time together be edifying for each of us. May it be a time of being built up together and conform to Christ’s image. But more than that, may it be a time in which you’re glorified. So pray your blessings upon us spiritually but also physically, Father, we have material needs, we pray for those who are sick, we pray for those who are recovering from surgery, from various medical procedures we pray that you would bless, bless with health, bless with encouragement. Bless those who are discouraged from the difficulties of life, from the pressures at work or the difficulties from lack of employment.

Father, you know our needs far better than we do. You know that your people have great difficulties in life, sometimes they’re personal in their relationships of one person to another, maybe it’s a division within the family, a Christian home is suffering. We know these things happen within Christian homes. There are difficulties between spouses and

children rebel and parents lack wisdom on how to be good parents. Father, we pray your blessing upon your people, that you give encouragement, that you give wisdom, that you give all kinds of healing, physical, emotional, whatever the case may be.

We look to you to bless and we pray that through our time together you would take the truth of this great text and apply it in a variety of ways to various needs that every one of us have. Bless our nation, we pray. We are at a time of crisis and warfare in our history and we pray that you would bless us, protect our soldiers and give victory and establish justice. We pray for our leaders to that end. We pray that you give them great wisdom as they govern this land.

Father, we pray most importantly that this time hearts throughout this land would be open to the gospel and that you would use us, those of us here in this auditorium to proclaim the good news and do so effectively and well. Bless us as we return this evening to worship our Lord, to remember His first coming and His death for us and remember that He's coming again. History is moving toward that great day, that day when He will return in His glory and He will come with His reward, may we live for that. Prepare our hearts to study together. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] Have you ever wondered why it is that some believe the gospel and others don't? How do we explain the spiritual divide among people, among friends and within families? Two college students attend a Christian meeting, one understands the message of salvation in Jesus Christ and believes and leaves full of joy while the other gets nothing out of it and leaves unimpressed and unbelieving. Two sisters grow up in the same household, go to church every Sunday, hear the same bible stories, are taught the same prayers by their parents but one believes and the other doesn't. Why is that?

Why do two people who have the same advantages and opportunities respond in completely different ways? Is it because the gospel is not explained clearly or forcefully enough? Is it a problem with the gospel, with the message itself? These are questions that we sometimes have, questions that the early church struggled over, particularly over the widespread unbelief of the Jews, the very ones for whom Paul said the gospel is for first of all. It is to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Why then is it that they had not believed? Particularly when things went so well. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost 3,000 were saved in one day and daily souls were added to their number. Within a short time the church was a large minority within Jerusalem and it was growing. And then came persecution, the church was scattered, but it

didn't die, it only spread. The gospel went west from synagogue to synagogue, many in the synagogue believed, but many didn't. In fact, most didn't. And gradually the church changed from being predominantly Jewish to being mainly gentile. What had happened?

God had made great and glorious and unconditional promises to Israel of a kingdom and of eternal blessings, but the Jews had largely rejected their Messiah and they had not obtained salvation. Had God changed His mind about the Jews? Had His word failed? This is the question that Paul takes up and he answers in Romans 9, 10 and 11. It concerns the problem of Jewish unbelief and the integrity of the word of God. And so it has direct relevance for the church, because if God's promises failed for Israel, will they also fail for the church? Can God be trusted?

Paul's answer is yes, God can always be trusted. His word has not failed. His promises are unfailing and His purpose steadfast. As Paul explains, God's promises were not made to all the physical descendants of Abraham, they were made to his elect, those who had been chosen for salvation and who by grace believed. This was the answer to the larger question of why two people with the same advantages and the same opportunities responded completely different ways to the gospel. It is not because one is smarter than the other. It is not because the message has failed or the preacher wasn't clear in his explanation, though certainly that is often a problem.

But ultimately the reason some receive the gospel and others don't, the only reason anyone receives it is because of divine election. That was the reason for the division among the Jewish people. And Paul explains this from the Old Testament scriptures by tracing God's choice of individuals through Israel's early history. Just as it is written, Jacob I loved but Esau I hated.”

Now for many this is very difficult. It doesn't seem fair, but for people who believe the bible, who read it as God's word, election cannot be denied. It cannot be avoided and Romans 9 is the classic text on divine election. So what some people have done is explain it differently and argue that Paul is not describing the election of individuals to salvation but national election, the election of nations to historical tasks and privileges. Isaac, Esau, Pharaoh, some of the main characters in this chapter do not represent themselves so much as their people. Israel, Edom, Egypt. It's not their eternal destiny that is in view, but the places of their nations in God's plan of history.

But even if this chapter were not about salvation, that does not really change anything because it is still about election. And in election God has clearly passed over

nations and in passing over nations left multitudes in a situation of spiritual ignorance and excluded from the very means of grace by which people are brought to salvation. But that really doesn't solve the problem for those who feel that election is unfair. But neither does that idea fit the context which is all about eternal salvation. We see that from the very beginning of the chapter, it was because Israel failed to obtain salvation that Paul was willing to be accursed in order to save his people.

The vocabulary that Paul uses indicates that that is the subject. For example, in verse 8 we have the expression, “Children of God.” That always refers to those who partake of salvation. Paul is explaining why God's word had not failed, why His promises of eternal blessings were not broken when so many in Israel were in unbelief and unsaved. That problem isn't solved by saying that Israel was chosen for a privileged place in history. Paul has already stated that in verse 4. He states that Israel had the adoption as sons.

This is what increased Paul's grief about Jewish unbelief and this is what raised the very question of the failure of God's word. The solution is found in God's sovereign election of individuals to salvation. His word did not fail Paul says in verse 6. Israel failed to believe His word, they failed to believe the promises that are clearly set forth in scripture, but God did not renege on His word. He never promised salvation to every Israelite or Paul writes, they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel.

In other words, there have always been two kinds of Israelites, those who are physical Israelites only and those who are spiritual Israelites as well. And God's promises are to the spiritual Israelites who receive those promises by faith. This is what Paul referred to back in chapter 2 when he spoke of the true Jew. He is not one outwardly in the flesh but inwardly. Circumcision is that which marks out a Jew outwardly. It's the sign of the covenant in his flesh. It is a blessing and a great blessing. It testifies to great proof and was a constant reminder of the great truth of the word of God and of the covenant, but it didn't save. Nor do any of the blessings that Paul mentions at the top of this chapter save the Israelite any more than baptism and bible teaching saves the Christian.

Most of Paul's contemporaries though believed that these blessings, these privileges that are listed in this chapter did guarantee salvation and that all of Abraham's descendants through Isaac were true Israelites who would inherit God's

promised blessings. Only those who committed outright apostasy and rejected their inheritance would be excluded, but the Jewish rabbis of Paul’s day, the common theology of his day was that every physical Israelite would be saved.

As Paul explains, there is an Israel within Israel. It is what Paul calls the Israel of God in Galatians 6:16, “These are the ones to whom the promises belong.” And Paul supports this distinction between those who are physical Israelites only and those who are spiritual Israelites and he explains the difference in verses 7 through 13.

Salvation has always been based on God’s grace in sovereign, unconditional election.

Paul proves that by going back to the beginning of Israel’s history to the patriarchs, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Abraham was chosen by God when he was living in Ur of the Chaldees in Mesopotamia which is modern day Iraq, living there in darkness. You don’t think of Abraham in that condition, but that’s how he began. For 70, 75 years of his life he lived in ignorance and he worshipped idols. Now we know that to be the case because of what Joshua tells us. At the end of Joshua’s life he gave a great sermon to the nation.

He reminded them of their origins and their history and he begins with Abraham and he quotes the Lord who said, “From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the river, namely Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor and they served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the river and led him through the land of Canaan and multiplied his descendants.” Abraham was called out of paganism, when he was worshipping false gods. Abraham was not seeking God; God sought him and took him out of darkness.

And what we see in the experience of Abraham, we see in the experience of every man and woman of God through the word of God and throughout history and that is God’s divine initiative. It’s the principle set forth in 1 John 4:19, “We love, because He first loved us.” We believe because He called us. We see that in Abraham. So Israel’s history began with election. Though Paul doesn’t begin his argument there, perhaps because the Jews would have recognized that their origin was in God’s choice of Abraham, but they would also have argued Abraham’s election guaranteed their salvation. It was their birthright because they were descended from Abraham whom God chose.

So Paul begins with Abraham’s son, Isaac, to show that physical descent is not enough. And every Jew who understood the bible would certainly have had to agree

because Abraham had two sons. But God said through Isaac your descendants will be named. Paul doesn't mention the first son, Ishmael, but from God's choice of Isaac he proves that it is God's race, not natural descent that determines Abraham's offspring. Verse 8, “It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants. For this is the word of promise: ‘At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.’”

It would be a miracle of grace because Sarah was barren. God had promised Abraham children, but for years he had had none. And Sarah was the problem. So she offered Abraham her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, to solve the problem and by her Abraham had his first son, Ishmael. It was assumed that the promise given to Abraham of innumerable multitude, that numbers like the stars of the heaven and the sand of the seashore would be fulfilled through this first son, Ishmael.

But 13 years later God told Abraham that the son of promise would come through Sarah. By now Abraham was a very old man; he was past the age of producing children and Sarah was still barren. And so this promise seemed to be an impossibility. It could not happen. In fact, as Sarah heard this, she laughed. She laughed in unbelief. That was the point of God's timing in all of this, to present an impossible situation, a situation that in human terms is impossible. Isaac would be born by the power of God, not by the natural strength of Abraham and he would become a great example of God's grace.

A year later, he was born and then we read in Genesis 21:12, the Lord said to Abraham, “Through Isaac your descents will be named.” And Ishmael and Hagar were then sent out, sent away from the family. God provided for them. He was gracious to Ishmael; he made him a great nation. But their separation from the family illustrated the truth, that human merit and God's grace cannot be joined. They are irreconcilable. And so the son of Abraham's natural strength was put away, separated from the son of grace and the child of promise.

Isaac is an example of God's grace alone. And his experience illustrates our experience spiritually, our spiritual conception and our new birth. It is all of God and it is the supernatural outworking of His election. So in Isaac Israel had the proof that God's grace in His sovereign election determines the offspring of Abraham, not natural birth. Ishmael was a natural son; Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham.

Ishmael was even circumcised, but he was not chosen to be the heir of the promises and he was sent away.

As someone had said, “What counts is grace, not race.” Someone might object that the reason Ishmael was rejected is because his mother was an Egyptian slave and not Sarah, he was not of pure parentage, Isaac was. Also, the promise about Isaac was made well after the birth of Ishmael. God had seen the sort of person he was, that he was a wild ass of a man and rejected him because he was unworthy.

And so Paul answers both objections in verses 10 through 12 with proof from the next generation, the, the twins born to Isaac and Rebekah, the brothers, Jacob and Esau. Both children had the same mother and father, had very different destinies of both were prophesied before they were born. Verse 10, “And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’”

Now that answers all of the objections about parents and about merit. It is the scriptural proof of divine election taken from Genesis 25:19-26, and like Isaac’s birth, this shows God’s grace. Rebekah was barren like Sarah, the couple was unable to have children. Isaac prayed for his wife, the Lord answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant with twins. As they grew the children began to struggle in her womb. She sensed something ominous in that. She was alarmed, she asked the Lord about it. And He answered her with an explanation, “Two nations are in your womb and two peoples will be separated from your body. And one people shall be stronger than the other and the older shall serve the younger.”

So this did involve national election, but the last statement, “The older shall serve the younger,” makes it plain that basically and primarily it involves individual election. It was a choice that went contrary to custom in the ancient world which was to give presence to the firstborn son. But there’s no natural cultural advantage in this birth that influence God’s choice. In fact, it was against all human advantage that God made the choice that He did. His choice of Jacob was made before either child had done anything good or bad. It was unconditional. It had nothing to do with merit of any kind.

God’s choice of Jacob over Esau did not take into account either one’s natural abilities and if it had, then of course Esau would have been chosen because he was the

stronger and in many ways the more noble. But it didn't take account of that, it didn't take account of one's religious devotion, it didn't even take account of their faith. Nothing about them influenced God's choice. It was a sovereign and free choice and it was made in this way so that, Paul says, God's purpose according to His choice would stand not because of works but because of Him who calls. And that is the reason that it was determined that the older would serve the younger. God's choice.

God's purpose, as it's mentioned here, is His eternal plan. Election does not occur in time, it happens in the past, it happened in the past when God determined to have a people for Himself and planned the way that He would save them. In fact, this word purpose is used in the previous chapter, the great verse that we studied some weeks ago, Romans 8:28 and we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God to those who were called according to His purpose, His eternal purpose, His purpose to save.

And so this is a plan that goes back into eternity. It's not a plan formed in time according to the circumstances and the changing circumstances of life. This is God's eternal plan and purpose and Paul states that very clearly, using the same word in Ephesians 1:11, “We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things according the counsel of His will.” So it is a plan, it is a purpose that is according to His will, not ours. We have nothing to do with it.

His choices are unconditional, they are apart from anything in us. In that way, God guaranteed that His purpose to bring into existence a people for Himself would not fail, that His choice of people such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would stand, as He says. If it had not been all of Him, if God's plan had depended in some way upon us, upon our works, upon our faith, upon our faithfulness, then His purpose would not have stood and His word would certainly have failed. That is the reason that election must be unconditional. It must be according to God's sovereign and free choice. And people who have problems with that, who have a difficulty understanding that, I think their problem can be traced to a deeper problem, a more fundamental problem and that is with understanding the nature of man, the condition of man failing to understand what wreck and ruin the fall brought upon mankind.

The Medieval theologian Anselm put it this way, “You have not yet considered how great your sin is.” Our sin is so great that were any bit of God's plan left to us, its purpose would come to nothing and not stand. No, it must be an election

that is unconditional, the initiative must be with God. In fact, not only must it be with God, the whole work must be with God and that's what Paul says it is. Philippians 1:6, “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” It is God's sovereign. And yet the fact is many people see it differently.

Arminians reject unconditional election for what is called conditional election. That is stated explicitly in their early confession of faith which was drawn up in the early part of the 17th Century, it's called the Remonstrance and the first article of it is entitled *Conditional Predestination*. It states election and condemnation are conditioned by foreknowledge and made dependent on the foreseen faith or unbelief of men. In other words, God elects us the way that we elect our politicians. We look at them, we consider them, we see something good in them, we like what they say and we vote for them. And that's what God does with us, He looks down through time, He seems something good in us, He seems the promise in us and He chooses us based upon what He has seen in foreknowledge.

Paul said God's election of Jacob and His rejection of Esau considered before either one was born and had done anything good or bad. Election is not conditioned on us. Foreknowledge, rightly understood, does determine salvation. We considered that when we studied Romans 8:29 where Paul wrote, “Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.” Predestination is based on foreknowledge. But foreknowledge in that verse does not mean foresight. It means foreloved. It speaks of God's eternal love and election of those He predestines to eternal life.

If it didn't, if foreknowledge were foresight and God chose people based the faith that He saw in them as He looked down through time, then the question is to be asked, who would be saved? Would be saved? I ask that question because we go back some chapters to chapter 3:10-11 where Paul is summing up his indictment against mankind. He's condemned the gentile in chapter 1, he's condemned the Jew in chapter 2, he's shown that we've all fallen short of God's glory as he'll later state.

And then he brings his final indictment against everyone and quotes the Psalms and Old Testament scriptures where he says, “There is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands; there is none who seeks for God. None.” Now that being so, God would have chosen no one if it were based upon what He saw as He looked

down through time because what He saw would have been no one understanding and no one seeking Him and no one believing.

There's a story about an old Christian who frequently testified I would say partly by God's work and partly by mine. And that confused and puzzled some people until He said, "I resisted, God did the rest." That's true. Paul makes it very clear that election is not based on anything in us. It is according to God's choice, His will alone. His election is unconditional. That is the only way that it could stand. Paul concludes with a final quotation of scripture. "Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved but Esau I hated.'" That is taken from Malachi 1:2 where God affirms His love for Israel by recalling His choice of them, Jacob's descendants over Edom, Esau's descendants. He loved Jacob, He hated Esau.

Now that statement sound shocking to us, but it's not to be taken literally, not in the sense that God had animosity or malice toward Esau. It has the same sense in which the Lord used the word hate in Luke 14:26 where He states that we cannot be His disciples unless we hate our families, unless we hate our own lives. Now that doesn't mean that we're to be hostile towards our families and we're to do damage to ourselves. It means that we are to put Christ above everything, above our family, above our very lives. We are to choose him over all others.

It has the idea of love less. We're to love ourselves less; we're to love our families less. We're to love Him more; we're to love Him above all things. And that's the meaning here, God put Jacob, He chose Jacob above Esau as individuals, not just as nations. Primarily as individuals and His choice of the individuals affected the nations. He chose Jacob and rejected Esau. God's only motivation for doing that, His only motivation for choosing Jacob is love, for love, eternal love, unconditional love.

Is that unfair? Not at all. How can it be considered unfair for God to save helpless, undeserving people, which we all are if that is His desire? As Paul will explain in verse 15, election is due to God's mercy alone. It is a reason for joy; it is a reason for gratitude. But still, this subject of election is a difficult one for many because it doesn't fit our natural way of thinking and also because there's a lot of confusion and false ideas about election.

A few years ago I was driving somewhere at night and I turned on the radio and I turned it on in the middle of a conversation in which a person was telling about

an odd experience that he had while waiting for the subway. He was standing there when he noticed a man coming toward him through the crowd. He was young, he was well-dressed, he was rather common looking so it was nothing about him itself that really caught his attention. What caught his attention was what he was doing. He was speaking to people in the crowd. He wasn't speaking to everyone. He'd come to one person, stand there, say something to them then move onto another person, say something, move on. So he was very curious about what was being said when eventually the man came up to him, looked at him for a moment and then said, “You can stay.” And then he went on.

He said after the man left they had a sense of relief, like he had made the cut, like he was worthy. And he told the story with some amusement and he recognized the absurdity of it, but I thought that is probably how many people imagine the doctrine of election to be. It's random, getting chosen is a little bit like winning the lottery. It's outcome of chance and it produces pride, a sense of making God's cut, of being part of the chosen few, of being worthy.

Course there's nothing random or impersonal about election. It is according to God's purpose and His purpose is all-wise. We may not understand it, but it is not random. It is wise, it is according to His purpose, it is the purpose of saving a people for himself, it is for His glory and the display of His goodness and His mercy. And rightly understood it does not produce pride. Just the opposite.

What do we have to be proud about? If we really understand this doctrine, what's going to puff us up? God chooses no one because of his or her birth or works or merit of any kind. Paul made that point very clearly to the Corinthians who did have a problem with pride. They were an arrogant people. They were an immature people and so he addresses this issue in 1 Corinthians 4:7. Paul asked, “Who regards you as superior?” Well, they regarded themselves as superior, but the question is asked. “Who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

The question is rhetorical and the obvious meaning is nothing. You have nothing that you did not receive. Everything that you have is a gift, even your faith. You can take credit for nothing. So there's no ground of boasting in ourselves. Our boast is in Christ alone, in God's sovereign and free grace. Nevertheless, these are

some of the objections to election that are commonly cited against it. It produces pride, it leads to indifference to godliness, it hinders the gospel.

Well, let me try to answer some of those questions briefly. First, that unconditional election fosters apathy in a Christian life. That if one's elect, one knows that he or she is secure and lives life pretty much the way he or she feels like living in it. Nothing in the bible supports that. Both Peter and Paul say that election is to obedience and good works. In 1 Peter 1:1-2, Peter says that we were chosen to obey Jesus Christ. Election is not simply to salvation. Election is to salvation through faith. People are chosen to believe. And in Ephesians 2:10 where Paul concludes that great statement of salvation by grace alone, he says that, “We were created in Christ Jesus for good works,” that were predestined for us to walk in.

And so the life of the elect is marked out by faith and obedience and history has given ample support to that. In his book, *The Age of the Reformation*, Preserved Smith, who was no champion of Calvinism, gives testimony to its vitality and morality. After giving a brief but a rather harsh critique of the doctrine of election, he writes that here was another side to it as seen in what it produced in those who held to those doctrine. He writes, “There was a certain moral grandeur in the complete abandon to God and in the earnestness that was ready to sacrifice all to His will. And we judge a tree by its fruits, at its best it brought forth a strong and good race, the rank and file of the Huguenots of France, the Puritans of England, the choice and sifted seed wherewith God sowed the wilderness of America. These men bore themselves with I know not what of lofty seriousness, and a matchless disdain of all mortal peril and all earthly grandeur. Believing themselves chosen vessels and elect instruments of grace, they could neither be seduced by carnal pleasure nor awed by human might.”

Well, that was honest if grudging praise and true. Those who truly understand the sovereignty of God increasingly become abandoned to God. And God never abandons them, never abandons us. His promises never fail us. They are certain and sure. We have that confidence. And those who understand these things, understand the greatness of God's sovereignty, their earnestness is witnessed in their obedience and in their evangelism. The doctrine of election and the belief that salvation is entirely God's work does not undermine the gospel.

Everyone is born into this world lost and in need of a savior. And everyone is responsible to understand that and to believe. The sovereignty of God does not eliminate the responsibility of man. You read the bible, they are both clearly stated. Now you and I may not be able to systematize them as we like and bring them together and fit them together in a way that completely pleases us or satisfies the critic, but nevertheless, as we read through the bible with a submissive heart, we see very clearly that both man’s responsibility and God’s sovereignty are clearly stated.

The elect must believe to be saved. Election, though, is the guarantee that they will believe, that God’s choice and His purpose will stand. And the fact that salvation is God’s work, that we sow the seed but He gives the growth is incentive to go out into the world and proclaim the gospel. The elect are there and they will respond. The doctrine of election was a great spur to Paul in his mission to the gentiles. He wrote to Timothy, “I endure all things for the sake of the elect, so that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus,” 2 Timothy 2:10.

With that conviction, Paul went out into the fields of the gentiles, one gentile nation to another enduring great hardship. And that statement he makes reminds us that the elect are there but they must be brought by great effort on the part of the church. We go out and we suffer much and Paul suffered throughout his whole ministry, but he was glad to endure that because he knew by preaching the gospel, God’s people would be gathered and they would respond. And so energized by that conviction, by the knowledge that he would succeed, he would not fail as he went out doing the work of the Lord, he went forth with great confidence.

And election has been a motivation for many others, Charles Spurgeon is one. Spurgeon’s hero, George Whitefield was another. And Whitefield’s her Jonathan Edwards was another. Whitefield and Edwards were the men that God used so greatly in the Great Awakening both in England and in the Colonies, one of the greatest periods of revival in the history of the world. Men who were Calvinists, five point Calvinists as was Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

And Spurgeon was a great evangelist. He had no difficulty preaching election and preaching the gospel and preaching them together. He wrote, “If you love to be saved by Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ elected you to be saved. If any of you desire to have salvation, you are elected to have it if you desire it sincerely and earnestly. But

if you don't desire it, why on earth should you be so preposterously foolish as to grumble because God gives that which you do not like to other people?"

It's a good point. Do you want to be saved? Believe. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Election hinders no one from coming to the gospel. It is the reason that all who do come come. It answers the question of why it is that some believe the gospel and others don't. Why two people who have the same opportunities and advantages respond so differently, why Jacob desired the birthright and Esau despised it. God has chosen one and not the other. It is His sovereign right to do so. It is not unjust; it is merciful. Merciful. So if you're lost and want God's mercy then believe in Jesus Christ. Trust in Him for salvation as the one who died in the place of sinners and bore the penalty as our substitute.

The Lord receives all who do. He turns no one away. All who come are received by Jesus Christ. So believe. Come to Christ, and in doing so, discover that you are one of His elect. May God help us all who understand that, to rejoice in it, rejoice in God's grace that would save sinners such as us. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you. What a great truth it is to know that Adam brought us down into the wreck and ruin of sin that we are in. Because of that fall, we have been born to this world dead and trespasses and sins. Lord, if it depended upon us, if salvation were in any way dependent upon us, we would not be saved, you would not have chosen us. There was nothing there to make us worthy of your choice. We'd be rejected. But your choice has nothing to do with anything of worth or value in us, it has to do with your love. That's the explanation and the explanation is beyond explanation. But nevertheless, there it is. You're for love, your eternal love, your unconditional love chose a people for yourself and a people beyond number, a vast host of men and women chosen from the foundation of the world. We give the praise to you, we thank you for that and pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

