

U - Unconditional Election

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Preacher: Jonathan Smith

[0 : 00] Well, are you ready to jump into our second week?

It's a question. It's our second week. If you're new here this week or it's your first week here, it's our second week in a five-week series or five-sermon series looking at salvation.

That's the big theme for this series is salvation, how and why does God save us? And we're going to look tonight at this doctrine of election. We're going to ask the question, is election which means that God has chosen for himself a people who he will save?

Has he done that conditionally? It's conditional on our believing in him or has he done it unconditionally? That is, that despite us, he has chosen us of his own free choice.

That's the question before us. But before we look at that, I think we need to back up a little bit. There are people here tonight who have been Christians for many, many years, but there are also people who aren't yet Christians or are new Christians.

[1 : 08] And I think we need to back up a bit and talk firstly about salvation in general. Why do we need to be saved? Maybe you don't believe that you need to be saved. So I want to tell you that the story of the Bible starts in the book of Genesis.

We had a great sermon this morning from Wayne on Genesis 1, the first page in the Bible and you can download it from the internet. I would. I'd listen to it ten times. It's great. And as Wayne told us this morning, God in the very beginning of creation created for himself all that there is.

And God is like an artist, a creative artist, and he had fun and enjoyed the act of creating everything that there is. And he created everything perfect. Everything existed in rhythmic perfection.

But only one or two pages later in the Bible, we read in Genesis 3 that a devastating thing happened, that sin entered the world, that Adam and Eve, the first human beings, had the opportunity before them either to follow God and follow his word and love him and be devoted to him or to choose Satan and sin and death.

And tragically, they did what any of us would have done in the same situation and they chose sin and death. And the Bible says that from that point onward, right up until now and including now and into the future, everyone who has ever lived, aside from Jesus Christ, our great Lord and Saviour, every one of us is a sinner.

[2 : 40] And we're sinners by choice. And we're sinners by nature. We have imputed sin and original sin.

We sin by commission and omission. And what I mean by all that is we're sinners by imputation. We're imputed with sin. It's as if we were there in the garden ourselves.

It's as if we participated in the sin of Adam and Eve because we're descended from them. We have imputed sin. We also have original sin that every one of us from the cutest little baby Joshua is born into sin.

Every one of us has original sin. And that sin extends to every part of our being. We also sin by commission and omission.

And by that I mean we do things that are sin, actively and willingly by commission. And we also sin by omission. We don't do the things that we ought to do. And the result of all this is tragic.

[3 : 50] The Bible says that every one of us deserves eternal condemnation because God, the being who we have sinned against is infinitely good and infinitely holy and infinitely pure.

And so when we sin against him, when we do that which he would have us not do, we deserve an infinite punishment. The Bible's clear that that punishment is conscious, eternal, torment in hell.

And it's a tragedy. That's why we need to be saved. And if you're sitting here and you think you don't need to be saved and you're not a sinner, the Bible just says that's because of your sin that you're thinking that way.

We saw last week that in that condition, being sinners by nature and choice, we are dead spiritually. That there's no way for us to choose God.

If we're given the choice, we'll always choose evil and sin just as Adam and Eve did. That just as a shark will never choose to eat seaweed over a seal, we will never choose to do good over doing evil.

[5 : 04] That's just who we are by nature. So tonight, we're going to look at this issue of election. We know that God chooses people to save out of that condition of sin.

How does he do it? Is it conditional or unconditional? First of all, I want to say that both of the options that we're going to look at tonight, the Arminian position and the Calvinist position.

You know where I'm standing. The Arminian position and the Calvinist position, both of these positions are Christian positions. You can take either one of them and you're welcome to worship here. You can be a Christian. Both believe that in response to that devastating sin that God took the initiative that he sent his only son into the world to live the life that we could never live, a life without sin, a life of perfection, to die the death that we should die and we deserve to die, death for sin.

And that after he died to take our sin upon himself as 2 Corinthians 5, 21, I think it is, says, God who made him, Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin so that we might have the righteousness of God.

It's called the great exchange in church history. It's that Jesus takes our sin and gives us his perfect righteousness so that when you're judged, when you die, God doesn't judge you for your sin but he accepts you as a forgiven sinner, someone who has the righteousness of Jesus.

[6 : 37] That's the gospel and both of these positions agree on that. So this is a family debate, family argument. It's okay. That being said, why don't we look at this chart that I've got here.

It just outlines these two sets of kind of frameworks of looking at this issue of salvation. If you weren't here last week, I did a whole kind of church history lesson on how this came about and you can get the sermon off our website, holytrinity.org.au, just Google it anyway, you can get it.

So just really quickly, I'll race through these. Five points of Arminianism. This is what they believe about salvation. First of all, that we have free will, that humans have completely free choice as neutral kind of moral agents to choose God or to reject Him.

Secondly, we're going to look tonight at conditional election. This is that God, before the foundations of the world, before He created anything, looked forward into the future. He saw those who would choose Him, those who would exercise their free will to choose Him and in response to that, He chose them.

So it's that kind of cooperation, understanding. Next of all, universal atonement. This is next week, that when Jesus died on the cross, He died for everyone, everywhere.

[8 : 02] That everyone has the opportunity to come to Him. That's where resistible grace comes in or prevenient grace that God has made available salvation for all people, that His hand is extended to every single person, but though that people can, if they're willing, reject that offer.

And turn away from God. And finally, perseverance of some saints. This is that a bunch of people might become Christians, but along the way, some have the opportunity to walk away from faith, to reject God, to effectively end up in hell because they have chosen to walk away from that salvation.

On the other side of the fence, we have the Calvinists. They've got their TULIP acronym here, starting with total depravity. We looked at this last week and I tried to convince you that this is an accurate understanding of humanity, that all of us are staying to our very core with sin.

Given the free choice, we will always choose sin over following God. And so, because we're spiritually dead, we can't choose God.

Dead people don't choose anything. They need to be saved by God. God needs to break into their life and save them. That's where unconditional election comes in. All of these flow on from one another.

[9 : 18] Unconditional election that God doesn't look forward and see you choosing Him and in response chooses you, but rather, before you've done anything good or bad, He chooses you of His own free choice, not dependent or conditional on anything you do or say who you are.

Limited atonement is this that we're going to look at next week, that when Jesus died on the cross, His death achieved salvation. It didn't just achieve the offer of salvation, but it achieved the effectual salvation of those people who He died for.

So, Jesus died for this group called the elect, this group that God had chosen. Irresistible grace is that once you can fight against God, you can wrestle God, you can say that you don't want to be a follower of Jesus, but in the end, God's going to win that arm wrestle.

He's going to make you a Christian, whether you like it or not. And fifthly, perseverance of all saints. This is that if you're a Christian, God is going to ensure that you stay a Christian right to the end of your life.

It's not the question of can I lose my salvation, but the question is can Jesus lose a saint? Okay? So, that's how it's going to play out for the next three sermons. Tonight, conditional election or unconditional election.

[10 : 33] a way of helping us understand those two options. And again, I just want to say this. There's a lot of big words and a lot of jargon and I wish it wasn't so, but these two frameworks aren't the important thing.

These are kind of lenses to help us focus in on the bigger question about salvation and what we want to do by the end of tonight is have looked at what the Bible says about the issue.

We don't believe Jacob Arminius spoke, you know, absolute truth. We don't believe that John Calvin spoke absolute truth all the time. We believe that God has spoken in his word, the Bible and it is absolute truth.

So, that's where we want to go for our beliefs. But, just so, to make it a little easier, I said last week the Arminian position was a synergistic position or a two-handed position that God reaches down.

It's like you've fallen out of the whitewater raft. God reaches down and it's up to you to grab hold and then you can be pulled into the boat of salvation. That's synergism, two hands.

[11 : 41] In the Calvinist approach it's monogistic. It's one hand, you're dead floating down the river, you've got no hand to reach up, you can't do anything. It's God that hauls you into the boat and makes you alive again in Christ, okay?

So, I might refer to those two, monogism, synergism. So, why don't we jump into these two issues and I just want to not spend too much time on Calvinism and Arminianism but just kind of summarise each position really briefly.

So, firstly, with the Arminians, this point of conditional election flows on very naturally from their first point which is about free will. So, if we have the ability, the free choice to choose God then it's necessary that there be conditional election if you think about it.

See, they say that for there to be genuine love, for you to genuinely be devoted to Christ, you need to have the genuine choice of whether to follow Jesus or not.

So, God can't by definition choose a people for himself irrespective of their choice or their will or their decision because that would be violating their free will.

[12 : 58] It would be nullifying their free will. Therefore, they say this, like I said, God looks forward into history, he sees who will exercise their free will and choose him and in response to that or in cooperation with that, he chooses them.

That's conditional election. Okay? When it comes to unconditional election, the same point flows on very naturally from total depravity.

If everyone is dead in their sin, just dead in the water, spiritually unable to respond to anything, always by nature choosing sin rather than holiness, and godliness, then God's got no condition to work with.

God saves us despite ourselves. God looks forward into history and sees a bunch of people who won't choose him no matter what and so out of his mercy and love, out of his own free sovereign will, he chooses for himself a people.

Now, he could have saved everyone. God's powerful to save everyone whom he chooses. By the same token, he could have chose to save no one.

[14 : 17] In fact, he would have been more right and just not to save anyone. We'll talk about that a bit later. But in the Calvinist understanding, God chooses for himself a people to love, a people to cherish.

and he did that before the foundation of the world. He did it before any of us could choose anything.

That all of us were on the train and that there was, you know, express way to hell. All of us deserve condemnation and Jesus chose to save some.

So, just by way of summary, you could say this. Arminians say that faith is a prerequisite for election. The Arminians say faith in Jesus is a prerequisite for election, that Jesus saw who would choose him and that was the prerequisite for him to choose them.

Calvinists say exactly the opposite, that election is a prerequisite for faith, that apart from God choosing you, you would never have faith in him.

[15 : 25] you would never have chosen him. Complete opposite views. We're going to look tonight at what the Bible says about both. The funny thing is, is that both of these positions with their opposing views go to exactly the same text in the Bible to prove their point.

Of course, they have many texts throughout the Bible but this would be their banner text and it's Romans chapter 8 verse 28 to 30. You might go there if you like, I'll read it for you.

Whether you're a Minion or a Calvinist or you have no idea what those two things are, this is a great, great Bible text for Christians. So encouraging for people who are suffering because of their faith.

So encouraging for people who are putting all their hope in heaven. It's a great text. Romans chapter 8 verse 28 to 30. Paul says, We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son in order that He might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom He predestined, He also called.

[16 : 41] And those whom He called, He also justified. And those whom He justified, He also glorified. It's a great passage. No matter where you sit. That God has chosen a people for Himself because He loves people.

He wants a family. He wants to spend eternity with a family whom He loves and who worship Him. Now, the Arminians take this text and they say, Exactly.

Those whom He foreknew, He predestined. Right? So, God foreknew, He kind of looked ahead and He saw the people and so He predestined them.

Gotcha. Those whom He foreknew, He predestined. There's a condition. Now, the problem with that is that it's not what it says in the text.

It does not say in this text, those whom God foreknew would believe, He also predestined. You've got to read something into it or you've got to reinterpret it.

[17 : 50] You've got to do a different translation. It doesn't say, those whom God foreknew would believe, He also predestined. I've got to figure out the meaning of this word foreknew because this is what hangs, this is what a lot of this Arminian understanding hangs on.

You hear a lot about, if you look into this, the foreknowledge of God. That God knows ahead of time who's going to choose Him and so He chooses them. That's foreknowledge. I just don't think that's what this means in this text.

It doesn't say, those whom God foreknew would choose Him. And further than that, it's not the meaning of the word foreknew. To foreknow someone is to love them before they're even on the scene.

For, to do something before something happens. New in the Bible, right from cover to cover in Scripture, means to love someone, to take a special interest in someone.

When Adam saw Eve in the garden, he was really impressed with her. His perfect creation. Beautiful. He really wanted to get to know her. And so it says, Adam knew Eve.

[19 : 05] And it doesn't just mean he got to know her and her hobbies and where she grew up. And it doesn't just mean that he knew something that she would do in the future. It means that he loved her. That he took her apart from the rest of the creation and had a special love relationship covenant with her.

Four knew. God ahead of time. The foundation of the world, it says, before anyone came on the scene, God foreknew them.

God foreloved a group of people. And those who he foreknew, he also predestined. This is going to be a major passage for us as we go through the rest of the points.

Because it points to a God who, from start to finish in salvation, is intimately involved in everything that happens. You might have picked by now, by my tone, that I'm with the Calvinists on this one too.

I wasn't always with the Calvinists at all. I remember last week, when I first heard about this, I rebelled against it strongly. I kicked and screamed and punched and fought against all of this.

[20 : 21] It seems so foreign to me. I think it seems foreign to most Christians. Most churches won't teach that side of the page. And many of you might be wanting to kick against this now.

And so I want to go to the Bible now and take a few verses. If you don't believe in the Bible, if you don't believe that this is the ultimate word of God, infallible and good for all instruction, then this won't help you.

But if you're like us here at Holy Trinity, you believe that the Bible is God's sweet, sweet word to us. That it's his infinitely good and wise counsel and his very words to us, then I hope these texts will make an impression on you.

These are the texts that I got taken to after I fought and kicked for a little bit. And these are the texts that turned my mind. So, listen to some of this. Acts, chapter 13, verse 48.

Luke writes, Notice that he doesn't say as many believed, as many that believed were chosen and ordained for eternal life.

[21 : 47] It's not that way around. It's that as many were ordained, as many who were chosen by God to eternal life, they believed. Similarly, Jesus says, Jesus talks about election probably just about as much as anyone else.

Everyone picks on Paul and says that, you know, he's the bad guy and Jesus would never say something like that. Well, the election is right throughout Jesus' teaching. He says, You did not choose me, but I chose you and I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

He also said to the Jews in John chapter 10, 26, You do not believe because you do not belong to my sheep. He doesn't say, You're not my sheep because you don't believe.

He says, You don't believe because you don't belong to my sheep. Remember, sheep is a metaphor for God's chosen ones, that he's the shepherd and his people are the sheep. What about 2 Timothy 1, 9?

God saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

[23 : 01] 1 Peter 2, 8-9, he says, Those who disobey God and God's word, they stumble because they disobey the word as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Mark 13, 20, Jesus says, If the Lord had not cut short those days, the last days, no one would have been saved. But for the sake of the elect whom he chose, he has cut short those days.

Romans 9, 11-13. Romans 9 is the firecracker in the Bible when it comes to election. And we'll probably talk about this in future weeks more closely.

Read Romans 9 and see what you can make of it. Challenge you. To some, it's the most glorious, one of the most glorious chapters in the Bible. To others, it's a real thorn in their flesh.

[24 : 07] Romans 9, 11-13. It's talking about Jacob and Esau. In the Old Testament, these two brothers says, Even before they had been born or done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose of election might continue, not by works, but by his call, she was told, The elder will serve the younger.

And as it is written, I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau. Finally, part of our reading from tonight, Ephesians 1, 3-6.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

he destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of his will. According to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the beloved.

Lord, there's a lot of text to chomp through there. I challenge you to look into this more deeply than we've got time to tonight.

[25 : 31] But I know as I read that and as I introduced this topic, I know that many of you will have objections. These objections have been coming up against this doctrine for the last 2,000 years.

So I want to address a couple of them now. Let me try and kind of guess, foreknow the questions that you might have.

First of all, the most obvious one, why does God choose some and not others? If this is true, if God elects some and passes over others or if God elects some and rejects others, why is that so?

If he had the power to save everyone, why didn't he do it? It's a good question. People will say to me, doesn't God love everyone?

In our prayer book service in the church, we'll say, God desires that none should perish eternally, but that all should turn to Christ and live. If that's God's desire, why doesn't he do it?

[26 : 34] Why doesn't he fulfill it? And we're going to talk about this a lot more next week. A lot more next week. It's true that God desires that none should perish.

It's in 2 Peter 3.9, the Lord is not slow about his promise as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, not wanting any to be unbelievers, but all to come to repentance.

repentance. We'll talk about this more next week, but I think what needs to be said first of all is that it's the wrong question, or it's the right question from the wrong angle.

The question isn't, why does God not choose some? The question is, why does God choose anyone to begin with? If you know your Bible, just take a look at how we behave towards God from cover to cover.

It's just sin, sin, sin, rejection. God would have been right to obliterate everyone at so many points along the road, just kill everyone.

[27 : 40] He doesn't need us. God is Trinity, perfect relationship within himself. He could exist for eternity and not be lonely. He could exist for eternity and still be loved.

He doesn't need us, but he wants us. He loves us. But he could have and perhaps should have let all of us be condemned for eternity.

The question isn't, why does God not save some? The question is, why would he save anyone? What about this question?

How can God, if this is true, if Calvinism is true and that everyone is dead in their sin, unable to turn to God and the only way that they can turn to God and believe is if God wakes them up, if he regenerates them, gives them life and the only way that they can have life is because he chooses them, why does God still condemn people who he doesn't choose?

It's a fair question. Is it unjust for God to condemn those who he hasn't chosen? it's a question that Paul was asked when he was writing the book of Romans.

[28 : 59] Exactly the same question. Romans chapter 9. I'm going to read it to you. He's just talked about how God hardens whom he hardens. He gives life to those who give life.

He chooses whom he chooses. It's his choice and he says this. Listen to this. It's really important. He says, what then are we to say?

Is there an injustice on God's part? By no means. By no means. For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy.

I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy.

For the scripture says to Pharaoh, I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he, God, has mercy on whomever he chooses and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses.

[30 : 04] You'll say to me then, why then does he still find fault for who can resist his will? It's the question, isn't it? He answers, but who indeed are you?

Human being to argue with God. Will, what is moulded, say to the one who moulds it, why have you made me like this?

Throughout the Old Testament and now into the New Testament, when the Bible wants to show us the difference between human beings and God, it quite often likens us to a slab of clay or a clay pot and God to the potter.

That's the kind of distance there is between us and God when it comes to wisdom, when it comes to knowledge. And so Paul says, what right have you got to talk back to God?

You're a clay pot and he is the potter. You're a little human being with finite wisdom and a finite brain and God is infinite in wisdom, infinite in love.

[31 : 20] God how dare you talk back to God. Remember the book of Job? Job was a righteous man but he was afflicted in so many ways.

He was really sick and he was in a lot of agony and he didn't know what was going on because he didn't think he had sinned to deserve this. And all throughout he had these really unhelpful friends who tried to tell him that he was suffering because he had done something wrong.

And in the end after 38 chapters I think of faithfully trying to search out God he cracks in the end and he just says to God directly what the hell is going on here?

What are you doing? And God's response is really telling.

He says then the Lord answered Job out of a storm. He said who is this that darkens my counsel without words without knowledge?

[32 : 29] Brace yourself like a man and I will question you and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand.

Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. He proceeds for verse after verse asking Job was he there when he set the depths of the ocean?

Was he there when he designed the eagle and its flight? And the answer to every question is of course not. Job is a man and the same answer to our question.

Even though it's a valid question, Paul says that the answer is you have no right to question God's wisdom in his sovereign electing purpose.

You need to get a sense of who you are and what you are. And it stands to reason that that would be the case. I've got a small brain even for a human and all of us have small brains.

[33 : 33] They're finite. God is infinite. And one day we may know the extent of his purposes in election and in suffering and in history.

One day when we're in heaven he might give us that insight but in the meantime let me encourage you ask questions but don't doubt the goodness of God.

God is a priori before anything else good and loving and wise. God is there are some things that we just won't know but we need to trust in a trustworthy God.

You might also ask what's the point of evangelism if this is true? This is a more practical question isn't it? If God chooses some people to be saved and that they're going to be saved by his grace and he chooses some people or at least passes over the others and they won't be saved what's the point of evangelism?

Why are our people risking their lives maybe or at least their comfort in Myanmar running a short term mission telling people about Jesus? What's the point?

[34 : 55] What's the point of me praying for my brother who's not a Christian dead in sin if God chooses some and not others? The answer there is to look at Jesus and look at Paul in the Bible.

Both of these guys among other biblical figures preached with all integrity the doctrine of election that God chooses his sheep, that God chooses his people and Jesus and Paul were gave commandments for us to go and do evangelism, do mission.

Jesus talked about some being his sheep and some not being his sheep and yet he said to everyone go and make disciples of all nations. Go from house to house telling about me, Jesus.

Paul likewise said that God chose some and hardened others. He said that in Romans chapter 9 and then Romans chapter 10 he said how are they going to know if we don't tell them?

How will they hear about Jesus if it's not preached to them? How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news?

[36 : 12] The point is we are not seen with God's eyes. We don't know who's elect. And so God tells us to go out to all people to preach the gospel.

Charles Spurgeon was a Calvinist. He was one of the greatest preachers who's ever lived. In England had the biggest church in the world at the time. Not that that's that important but he was a great preacher. He said this.

Someone kind of accused him of being lacking integrity. If he believed so strongly in the doctrine of election which he did and if he believed so strongly in evangelism, how did that go together?

He said this, if God would have painted a yellow stripe on the backs of the elect, I would go around lifting shirts. But since he didn't, I must preach to everyone and when someone believes, I will know that he is one of the elect.

That's the call to us. Someone once said, I don't know if this is right or not but it just came to my mind. Someone once said to me, you've got to preach like an Arminian and have the theology of a Calvinist.

[37 : 24] Calvinism has sometimes when it's been misconstrued and sinfully taught to the wrong extreme, has caused some people not to care about evangelism.

That's not a true Calvinist. The greatest missionaries who went and died on the mission field were all Calvinists. They knew that God had elected some.

But they didn't know who it was. So they preached indiscriminately to everyone. I want to leave you finally with an encouraging thought. I know that many people are discouraged by this doctrine.

I don't want to discourage you but I do want to preach the Bible. I know that many of you want to fight and push back against this and I understand that because that's what I did.

But I know that some of you want to fight and kick and push. because you're arrogant, disobedient, disrespectful. You're little boys who read a big book one day and now you want to fight about these big new words that you've got.

[38 : 29] I know that some people I've spoken to in the weeks past and on the internet where it's you know little men grow real big all of a sudden people have said that they're going to come to this church and they're going to come and fight with me.

And if that's you, I just don't care at all. I couldn't care less about you or your arguments.

If you want to fight for the sake of fighting, you can leave really. I've got a really short amount of time to get a lot of work done. I'm not going to waste it on time wasters and theological nitpicks.

So you can shut up and you can pack up and you can leave straight after the service if that's you. That being said, there are some people here for whom this is a really tough doctrine.

There are people here who I've spoken to in the last week and my heart just bleeds for these people. These people are the reason that I'm doing what I'm doing. And these are the people who are despairing because of this doctrine.

[39 : 56] There are people here who believe in the doctrine of election and they're despairing because they believe that they're not part of the elect. And I would say to you that I want you to be encouraged.

First of all, if you're worried about whether you're elect or not, it's probably good evidence to suggest that you are elect. elect. If you're not elect, if God hasn't woken you up spiritually, you're not going to care about whether you're elect or not.

You're not going to care about whether you're going to hell or not. If you're worried about whether you're elect, be encouraged. God is working in you. You might need some assurance, and all of us do at times.

You might be having doubts, all of us do at times. But I want you to be encouraged for this reason. If election is unconditional, then you have great hope.

Because no one can come to you today and look at the last five minutes or five hours, five days, five years, five decades of your life and say that you're not, you're not, that you're disqualified.

[41 : 24] That's what I'm trying to say. No one can look at your life, which is drenched in sin, and say that you're disqualified from salvation. Because it's unconditional.

It's not conditional upon how good you are, or about whether you would return to Christ. It's based on God's own choice and the promises that God makes, he keeps.

So be encouraged by unconditional election. Be encouraged.

and if you're here tonight and you are despairing because of this, or because something I said last week about total depravity, then I want to speak to you after the service.

If you want to fight, go home. Or go back to a church who is stupid enough to take you and do some ministry, do some evangelism, help the poor, put your energy into that.

[42 : 42] If you're here and you're despairing, genuinely, I want to see you afterwards and I'll be sitting in the old church right through the back there in the front pew.

I want to pray for you and talk to you. when I pray for us all now. Let's bow our heads. Father in heaven, I pray right now that you would move in the hearts of all who trust in you.

that you would move in the hearts of all who you've chosen and give them good encouragement to know that what you have started you will finish, to know that you are the author and the perfecter of our faith, to know that you chose us out of love, that you foreknew us, that you foreloved us, that we might spend and will spend eternity with you.

To those who are here who are not Christians, who are not trusting in you, Father, please give them a godly amount of fear for what will happen to them if they don't turn to you and repent and trust in you.

Please awaken them. Please take their spiritually dead heart and make it alive to love you. And Lord, help us always to remember that though we are totally depraved, and because of unconditional election, anyone who confesses with their mouth and believes in their heart that Jesus Christ is Lord, will be saved.

[44 : 51] We praise you for being a strong, sovereign, powerful, mighty, loving, majestic God. Amen.

■■■ Son, God's son, one, God's son, he■, him, come back whatever he's been to you in the world,εις, being a stranger, to the other where we have done.