

Chosen?

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[0 : 00] Good evening, friends. We're going to worship God. We're going to sing to His praise from! Psalm 87. Sing Psalm's version of Psalm 87. You'll find that on page 115 in your psalm books.

! Psalm 87. We're going to be singing the whole of this psalm on the tune of Sussex. Page 115, Psalm 87. On Jerusalem's holy mountain, he has founded his abode. More than all of Jacob's dwellings, Zion's gates are dear to God.

The whole of this psalm, to God's praise. On Jerusalem's holy mountain, he has founded his abode. More than all of Jacob's dwellings, Zion's gates are dear to God.

Glorious things of you are spoken, Zion's city of the Lord.

[1 : 22] Many drawn from all the nations, as your people I record.

I will name as those who know me, Egypt, Zion and Babylon.

Philistine, along with Cushite, I will count as Zion born.

Yes, it will be said of Zion, this and that one here belong.

And on her the highest blessing will descend and make her strong.

[2 : 30] Born in Zion, God will enter in the people's register.

They will sing God's living music. All my fountains are in heart.

So bow our heads as we call on God's name in prayer. Let's pray together. Our Father in heaven, may your name be hallowed. Lord, we come into the presence of the Holy One, aware of our own inadequacies, aware of our own failings, aware that we fall short of what we ought to be.

But we thank you, Lord, that you welcome us. You call us to come. And we can approach you as we come in the name of our Lord and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we pray, Lord, as we endeavor to draw near to you this evening, that you would be pleased to draw near to us. You are involved in the life of your people.

[3 : 47] We sang even in that psalm of your intimate involvement in the life of your people. You have a record of each one. The psalm spoke of a register where our names are recorded.

Maybe that is the Lamb's book of life. But it's a reminder to us, Lord, that you know every one of us. And we pray, Lord, this evening that as we come to worship you, that you would speak to us afresh this evening.

That we would hear your voice, the voice of the shepherd. And that we would respond appropriately to it. Our Lord said, I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

They hear my voice and they will follow me. Lord, may we hear you tonight. And may we be drawn into a closer walk with you. May we desire, Lord, to be made more like Jesus.

So bless us and to be with us and help us, Lord. Help those who are your people this evening.

Those who are Christians. We realize that being a Christian is not a, it's no walk in the park.

[4 : 54] The Bible describes it as a narrow way. Jesus himself said, whoever will come after me must take up his cross daily and follow me. And Lord, while we know there are many burdens that we have to bear.

We thank you, Lord, that we do not face these challenges alone. We thank you that you have promised that you are with your people. And you always will be. You will never leave us.

And you will never forsake us. And yet we want to pray, Lord, for any who may be struggling with some particular difficulty in their own lives. Or their own homes. Or their own families.

Or maybe at their work. Maybe those who are suffering specifically because they're Christians. And in their families do not approve. Or in their workplaces.

Maybe those who have been overlooked for promotion simply because of what they believe. Lord, help us, we pray, to recognize when we are being persecuted for your name's sake.

[5 : 53] And Jesus said that if they persecuted me, they will persecute you as well. But, Lord, what we might experience in that way is so small compared to what some of your people, our brothers and sisters around the world experience.

And we pray this evening, Lord, for those who are being persecuted for their faith. Those who tonight are in prison. Those who tonight, Lord, may be facing death.

Those who've lost loved ones. And the pain that comes with that. Lord, be with your persecuted people. Give them a boldness, we pray. Even as they witness to their persecutors and pray for them.

May you hear their prayers. And may they know your nearness in the midst of their trial. Lord, we have to thank you for how, for the freedoms that we enjoy. Even the freedom to come and worship you this evening.

Help us to never take these things for granted, we pray. But help each one of us. Be with those who are grieving, Lord. Lord, we commit them to you. That you would be close to them, Lord.

[6 : 56] That you would help them. When they maybe feel that they cannot go on, Lord. That you would encourage them. And you would reassure them, Lord. That you will be with them.

We pray for those laid aside, Lord, with illness. Whether that is at home or in hospital. Or maybe still struggling to go about their daily lives.

Those who live with pain every day. Lord, give them grace for that situation, we pray. And those who may be cast down, Lord, in their minds. We ask that you would be close to them.

And, Lord, we are aware that there will be others who have good news. Who are rejoicing.

Rejoicing in the birth of a child. Or in an engagement. Or a marriage. Or whatever it may be. Lord, as we weep with those who weep.

We also rejoice with those who rejoice. Bless the young people in the congregation, Lord. We thank you for seeing so many here this morning. Going out to Sunday school and Tweenies and Crest, Lord.

[7 : 53] We pray for those who are with us this evening as well. That you would bless their young lives, we pray. And protect them, Lord. From everything that would threaten to take them away from you.

And to draw them away from your word and from Jesus. Watch over them, we pray. Instead, Lord, we ask that they would be drawn closer to you.

And we pray, Lord, for those not so young as well. For those who may be elderly. And with that come different challenges and different struggles, Lord. Those whose mobility is not what it used to be.

Those, Lord, whose memory is not like it used to be. Those who maybe have become dependent on others, Lord. For so much of what they used to do themselves. Who are losing their independence.

Lord, we pray that you would be gracious to them. And help them, Lord. As they struggle to adjust with these changes. That can come with advancing years.

[8 : 51] So be with our elderly, we pray. Help us to be a people who look out for them. And to remember them. And to pray for them. And to seek to help them in any way that we can. And Lord, bless our nation.

And those in authority over us. Lord, give them wisdom, we pray. We can quickly find fault with them. But not be so quick to do as your word instructs us.

And to pray for those in authority over us. So we commit them to you, Lord. Our prime minister, our first minister, our MPs and our MSPs. Give them wisdom, we pray.

And be with those of them who are Christians, Lord. As they face so much opposition. Help them, Lord, to choose their battles well. And to be ready, Lord, to take a stand when that is necessary.

And appropriate to do so. And give them grace, Lord, as they speak. And as they take a stand, Lord, for the truths of your word. Bless our world leaders, we pray as well, Lord.

[9 : 52] And even today, as we see further unrest in Syria. As we see one, maybe an evil leader being taken out. Possibly to be replaced by something worse.

Lord, we commit the Middle East to you. And all the unrest going on there. Lord, you are the God who is enthroned on high. And so all we can do, Lord, is bring these situations to you.

And ask that you be with those who are suffering. With those caught up in conflict. With those, Lord, who have lost loved ones. And property. And everything else, Lord.

In the midst of war. Lord, make us thankful for the peace that we enjoy. And make us thankful this evening as we turn to your word. That we have that ability to meet as we do.

So presence yourself among us, we pray. Take from us, Lord, all that is offensive to you. Cleanse us from our sin, we pray. Anything that would grieve your Holy Spirit and cause him to withdraw from us.

[10:54] Take that away from us, we pray. Take away all our distractions. And may we be drawn to you. May we be still this evening. And know that you are God.

All these things we ask with a cleansing and forgiveness of all our sins. In Jesus' name. Amen. Let's continue singing praise to God. This time from Psalm 37 in the Scottish Psalter.

You'll find this on page 254. Page 254.

Psalm 37 and at verse 23. I'm going to sing from 23 down to 28. The tune is Argyle.

Psalm 37 at verse 23. A good man's footsteps by the Lord are ordered aright. And in the way wherein he walks, he greatly doth delight.

[11:54] From verse 23 down to verse 28. To God's praise. A good man's footsteps by the Lord are ordered aright.

And in the way wherein he walks, he greatly doth delight.

Although he fall, yet shall he not be cast out.

And in the way wherein he walks, he will be cast out. Because the Lord with his own hand apposed him mightily.

I have been young and now am old. Yet have I never seen.

[13:27] The just man left, nor had his scene, for great a beggar's king.

He's ever merciful and blest, this sin is blest therefore.

Depart from evil and do good and will forevermore.

For God loves judgment and his face, please not in any case.

The ark of the chamber, but God all, shall be the sinner's praise.

[15:01] I'm going to read from God's Word now in the New Testament and Paul's letter to the Romans. And in chapter 9, Romans chapter 9, we're going to read the whole of this chapter together.

And if you're using an ESV, you'll see that there's a heading that's been added before chapter 9, which says God's sovereign choice. And that's going to be our subject this evening, what we call election.

But let's read the whole of the chapter together. Romans chapter 9, reading from the beginning.

Let's hear God's Word. I am speaking the truth in Christ. I'm not lying.

My conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs.

[16:11] And from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed.

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. And not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring. But through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

This means that it's not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said.

About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son. And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing, either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of his call.

She was told the older will serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part?

[17:27] By no means. For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy.

For the scripture says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. So then he has mercy on

whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

You will say to me then, Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will? But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, Why have you made me like this?

Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use, and another for dishonorable use? What of God, deciding to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory, for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom he has called?

Not from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles. As indeed he says in Hosea, Those who were not my people, I will call my people. And her who was not beloved, I will call beloved.

[19 : 00] And in the very place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God. And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved.

For the Lord will carry out his sentence upon the earth fully and without delay. And as Isaiah predicted, If the Lord of hosts had not left us offspring, we would have been like Sodom and become like Gomorrah.

What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue a righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith. But that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, as it is written, Behold, I am laying in Zion, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. Amen. This is the word of God, and we trust and we pray that he will follow it with his blessing.

[20 : 20] I'm going to sing again now, this time from the Scottish Psalter, from Psalm 40. You'll find this on page 259. Psalm 40 on page 259.

And we're going to sing from the beginning of that psalm down to the end of the double verse marked five. The tune is Balerma. Psalm 40, page 259.

I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear at length to me. He did incline my voice and cry to hear.

Verses 1 to 5 of Psalm 40. To God's praise. I waited for the Lord my God, and patiently did bear at length to me.

He did incline my voice and cry to hear.

[21 : 46] He took me from the fearful pain, and from the mighty clay, And on the road he set my feet, establishing my way.

He put a new song in my mouth, Our God to magnify.

Many shall see it and shall fear, And on the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord rely. O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord rely.

O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord rely.

[23 : 30] to lie. O Lord, my God, full many are the wonders Thou hast done.

Thy gracious thought to us ward far above all thoughts are gone.

In order none can record them, to thee if them declare, and speak of them I would say more than can be numbered are.

Well, as we seek God's help, can we turn back in our Bibles to the passage that we read together there in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 9.

And we can read again a couple of verses, verse 10 and 11. Romans 9, at verse 10, and not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, her forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing, either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of his call.

[25 : 39] She was told the older will serve the younger. In order that God's purpose of election might continue. It's that time of year where we're choosing presence for other people, and sometimes people will ask you, well, what do you want?

What would you like for yourself? And in choosing, I guess we all have our own criteria. You would choose something because it was attractive, or appealing, or appetizing.

But tonight we're looking at God's choice, and it had nothing to do with anything of these considerations whatsoever. When I talk about God's choice, I mean God's choice of who would be saved, what is referred to as election.

And it has nothing to do with how good or how bad you might be. It is simply God's sovereign choice.

Nobody else had a say in it. Nobody influenced his decision, and never will God regret it. God has chosen everyone who would be saved before the world began.

[27 : 01] Let me repeat that in case you didn't get it. God has chosen everyone who would be saved before the world began.

Now, that is a statement that people get tied in knots about, and it raises all kinds of objections and questions, such as, so if a person's not saved, that's not their fault, but God's?

Or if a person is saved, does that mean they can live as they please, because they can never be lost? They'll be saved anyway. People also ask, well, if this is the case, if God's chosen, who will be saved?

And they will be saved, and nobody else will. What's the point in preaching? What is the point in appealing to people to come to trust the Lord, if those who are chosen will come anyway, and those who are not will never come?

Well, these are all reasonable questions, reasonable objections. And the Apostle Paul, who wrote this letter to the Romans, he expected that people would have objections to what he's saying.

[28 : 16] He expected that there would be that kind of reaction. Look at what he says in verse 19. You need to have your Bible open for this evening, if you're going to be able to follow it.

Verse 19 of chapter 9, Paul says, You will then say to me, why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will? In other words, God can't blame us, because it's his choice.

So he was expecting these kind of objections. So that's what I want to study with you this evening. God's choice of who will be saved. We call it unconditional election.

The unconditional meaning, his choosing of who would be saved, was not conditional on anything about them at all, or anything in us at all.

This teaching, doctrine if you want to call it that, it may be something that you've been familiar with most of your life, or it may be something that you're not familiar with at all.

[29 : 26] And maybe what you know of it, or even what you've just heard of it this evening, you might love it, you might loathe it, or you might be completely baffled by it.

So I want to try my best this evening to explain it to you as simply as I possibly can. And I'd like to do that under three headings this evening. First of all, clarity.

Secondly, confusion. And thirdly, comfort. These three words, clarity, confusion, and comfort. So let's start with clarity.

And what I mean by that is that this teaching is clearly taught in the Bible. It is crystal clear from Scripture that God had chosen those who will be saved.

That's what the Apostle Paul is telling us here in verses 10 to 12. He talks about Jacob and Esau. They were two brothers. They were twin brothers, actually. The sons of Isaac, grandsons of Abraham.

[30 : 31] And Paul says very, very clearly to us in verse 10 that before these boys were born, before they had done anything good or bad, God had chosen one of them.

God had chosen Jacob. And while Paul probably states it more clearly and more starkly than others, it is a teaching that you'll find in many places in Scripture.

So, for instance, in the letter to the Ephesians, we read this, He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world.

God chose those who'd be saved before He ever made the world. Or going to the letter to the Thessalonians, it says, From the beginning God chose you to be saved.

This is what I mean by clarity. This teaching is clearly there in the Scriptures from beginning to end. Now, if you're on the ball, you might say, Well, that's only Paul you've quoted.

[31 : 34] It was Paul that wrote to the Romans. It was Paul that wrote to the Ephesians. It was Paul that wrote to the Thessalonians. But Jesus was clearly aware of this as well.

Jesus speaks of His own people as, Those whom the Father has given to me. They were already given to Him. And in John 6, He says, All that the Father has given to me will come to me. Those who had already been chosen. Jesus says they're going to come. So if you study the Scripture with an open mind, there can be absolutely no doubt that God has a chosen people, what we call the elect, and that they alone will be saved.

They alone will be saved. And you'll find that clearly in passages such as in Acts 13. We read this. Listen carefully to this. All who were appointed for eternal life believed.

All who were appointed for eternal life believed. You've got to note what this is not saying. It's not saying that they believed.

[32 : 58] It's not saying they were appointed because they believed. Sorry. It's saying they believed because they'd already been appointed. They had already been chosen.

All who were appointed for eternal life believed. And Jesus says virtually the same thing, although He's talking about the opposite group. He's talking about those who didn't believe.

In John 10, verse 26, Jesus says, You do not believe because you are not my sheep. Again, you have to think about what He's not saying.

He's not saying you're not my sheep because you haven't believed. What He said was, You don't believe because you're not my sheep.

You're not my chosen ones. If you're a Christian tonight, the very reason you believed is that God appointed you to believe, that God chose you to be saved.

[34 : 00] Now that much, and I know you will already have questions and objections, but that much is clear, crystal clear from Scripture. You cannot argue with it, that God has His elect people.

And it's not because they're better than others. It's not because there's anything good in them whatsoever. The Shorter Catechism captures that when it says this, that God, having out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life.

It chose them out of His mere good pleasure. That's His prerogative. Not because they were better than others. Let's deal with some of the objections that you might be having to this at this stage.

You may be saying, Well, that's not fair. That is not fair that God chose some and leaves others.

Well, if you really wanted fairness, there would be no hope for any of us.

If we really wanted fairness and justice, we would all be heading for a lost eternity. Maybe you say, Okay, fair enough, but it's still unfair, surely.

[35 : 19] It's still unfair that those who are not chosen will go to a lost eternity through no fault of their own. Well, that statement's just not true.

Nobody will go to a lost eternity through no fault of their own. Nobody will be lost or judged eternally who didn't deserve that.

Everybody is condemned by their own sin. Coming back to the passage. We've not done much in the passage, but I intend to. But verse 13. Look at verse 13. Now, before I read this, this sounds harsh.

This is hard to hear. Verse 13. As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated. I don't believe that God hated Esau before he was born.

The verses before that are speaking about what happened before birth, that God had chosen Jacob before he was born. But I don't believe God hated Esau before he was born.

[36 : 27] God came to hate Esau because of Esau's sin. That's what the Bible tells us. The Bible tells us that God hates sin and he hates a person who continues in sin rejecting God and determined to go on in that path and that was Esau.

Esau was condemned because of his own ungodly behavior, his own attitude and his own actions. So if you read about Esau, go back to Genesis.

Genesis 25. I think it's the last verse of the chapter. It says this about Esau. Esau despised his birthright. That was his spiritual heritage.

It doesn't just say he couldn't care about it. He despised it. And then you read about Esau in Hebrews chapter 12. It says this. Esau was sexually immoral and godless.

These are the things that condemned Esau. not the fact that he wasn't chosen. And that's why in the very next verse, verse 14, Paul then says, so having says, Jacob I loved, Esau I hated.

[37 : 34] Verse 14, what shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means. He says, you can't accuse God of being unjust.

Esau got what he deserved. But I want to push this a bit further.

Hoping you're still with me. I want to suggest to you this evening that God's choosing of some to eternal life and consigning of others to eternal judgment, that these two are not symmetrical. By that I mean that God is not equally involved in both. He's very involved in the choosing of those who will be saved.

But he passes by the rest. He passes by the rest. He's not equally involved in both. So I want to draw your attention to verse 22.

[38 : 41] And when you read this, it sounds like I've blown my own argument. Verse 22. Let's read it together. What if God, deciding to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction or objects of wrath prepared for destruction?

So you read that at first reading at least. And it sounds like God created people just to destroy them. That's what it sounds like, which would clearly blow my argument.

But that verse, you'll agree with me, it's speaking about what God does. God is active in verse 22.

This is him. This is what he's doing. He's active until you come to the word prepared.

Now this is not as clear in your English translation, but remember your New Testament was written in Greek. And in Greek, that word prepared is passive. It's a passive.

In other words, God is not involved in that bit. It's not God who prepares people for destruction.

Who does it then? They do it themselves.

[39 : 57] They do it themselves. God is passive in that part. Now, if you're not convinced, let me take you to the next verse that speaks of his involvement in those who will be saved.

And you're going to notice a very subtle difference. Verse 23. In order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

That prepared word is there again. God's preparing people for glory. But in this verse, in Greek, it's active. It's God that does it.

Now, you will see the difference in your English translations because in verse 23, it includes the word he, which he, God, prepared for glory.

In verse 22, there is no he. Vessels of wrath prepared for destruction. God is passive in the first preparation.

[41 : 04] Those who will be lost, he's active in the second. So, if you haven't followed me, let me just state that as plainly as I can. Where these verses are speaking about people being prepared for glory, it is God that does that.

Where it speaks about people being prepared for destruction, they do that themselves. Hence my argument, God is not equally involved in both.

It's not symmetrical. He is very involved in the choosing of those who will be saved. He passes by the rest. Now, if you're on the ball, you might have noticed verse 18, which again seems to go against my argument because it talks about God hardening a heart.

Let's read verse 18. So, then he has mercy on whomever he wills and he hardens whomever he wills.

So, if God hardens hearts, then surely that's him preparing people for destruction. But you've got to ask, what's the context here? The context here is the verse that comes before it that mentions a specific person, verse 17.

[42 : 21] for scripture says to Pharaoh. This is talking about what God did in Pharaoh's heart. You can read about that in Exodus 8 and Exodus 9.

And in Exodus 9 you will read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. But you've got to read Exodus 8 where you will see that, read that, Pharaoh hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart, Pharaoh hardened his heart.

And in chapter 9, Exodus 9, God gave him what he wanted. God gave Pharaoh what he'd already chosen, a heart that was hard against God. So, that was our first point, longer than the other, clarity.

And if you're thinking, well, if that was clear, I'm not looking forward to point 2, confusion. But confusion, I think, is simpler and easier to follow than the clarity was. What I mean by clarity is that this teaching that God has chosen those who will be saved is crystal clear in the Bible.

Absolute clarity on it. We can't deny it. But then let's come to confusion. So, what I mean by confusion is that once you maybe get over any objections you have or once you accept that this is the teaching of the Bible, you will come up with lots of questions, lots of objections, lots of confusing

issues, such as, if I'm not in the elect, I'll never be saved.

[43 : 57] So, why bother doing anything? Or, closely related to that, if God's already chosen everyone who will be saved, what's the point of preaching? Why would we appeal to anyone?

If they're going to be saved, they're going to be saved. And then there's this third confusion. confusion. If God has chosen those who will be saved and they'll be saved and never be lost, are they not liable to live carelessly as Christians?

These are all good points to raise. They're real objections, confusions that we have to process as we think about this. So, I want to address each of these three one at a time just now.

So, first of all, this objection that leads to confusion. If I'm not in the elect, I'll never be saved. So, what's the point in doing anything?

Well, people who reel out that argument usually do so because they don't want to trust the Lord. They don't want to come under his authority.

[45 : 04] They don't want to be answerable to him. And they're looking for an excuse to justify their position. And let me tell you, God will not allow you to hold on to that excuse.

God will not allow you to hold on to that excuse. Because God has commanded us to seek the Lord. That's your duty, to seek the Lord.

And he's promised if you do, you will find him. Listen to Acts 17. God commands all people everywhere to repent.

No loophole. all people everywhere are commanded to repent. That's your duty. And there's a promise that goes with it.

If you do repent, you turn from your sin and you seek the Lord. Matthew 7, ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.

[46 : 02] If you go into the next chapter, Romans chapter 10, and verse 9, we read this.

Here's another promise, a clear promise. Romans 10, verse 9, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

You will be saved. That's God's promise. So friends, the ball is firmly in your court. No excuses.

No hiding place. God tells you to seek him. And if you do, you will find him. And you'll find then that you were chosen by God to be saved.

Whoever comes to me, he says, I'll never turn away. I'll never turn away. There's no room for excuses. There's no room for a hiding place. So that's the first objection that causes confusion.

[47 : 07] If I'm not in the elect, I'll never be saved. The second is this. Why preach? Why preach? If all who are going to be saved are going to be saved anyway? And if they're not in the elect, they're never going to be saved.

Well, we preach because God's choice is his business, not ours. We don't know who are in the elect. So we appeal to all to come to Christ for salvation.

That's the instruction that the Bible gives us, and that's the example that the Bible gives us. Jesus called us to go and make disciples of all nations.

He didn't tell us to be selective. Paul to the church at Corinth said, we plead with you on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God.

And then there's Jesus' own example. Remember that wonderful invitation that Jesus gave?

Matthew 11, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

[48 : 18] All you. Well, just before he gave that invitation, Jesus said this in Matthew 11, he said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you've hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.

Jesus knew that not everyone would believe. He knew that not everyone would believe, and yet he still appeals to them all to come.

That's his example. That's what we follow. then there's a third confusion or objection that causes confusion, and that is that if those whom God has chosen will be saved and cannot be lost, might they get careless?

Might they live recklessly as Christians? Well, there's always that danger that a Christian could live carelessly. But God will not allow any believer to continue on that route indefinitely.

he will bring his own people back one way or another. He'll either draw them back with his love, or he'll bring them back through his justicement, maybe through some difficult, painful trial that he brings into that experience.

[49 : 37] But the person who is convinced that God chose them when there was nothing worth choosing within them whatsoever, rather than cause you to be careless and reckless in the way you live.

That instead causes us to want to please him in any way we can. And that was God's purpose in choosing his own.

Scripture says this, Ephesians 1, he chose us in Christ so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. that was why he chose us, to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Or Romans 8, for those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.

He chose you to make you like Jesus. So while there's always the danger that any believer will stray, God will bring his people back to himself.

[50 : 47] So that's our second point this evening. There's confusion. People have all these questions and objections to the doctrine of election. So we talked about clarity, we talked about confusion, thirdly and finally, comfort.

Comfort. This doctrine is one of the believers' greatest comforts. things. And if the God who doesn't change, the God who cannot change, chose you to be saved, and his choice was not conditional on anything whatsoever about you, then that's never going to change.

Because God doesn't change. So even at your worst, God never chose you because you were good. And he's not going to change because you're bad.

Your salvation is not dependent on you, but on him, and on him alone. Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher of yesteryear, once said, I'm glad God chose me before I was born, because he'd see nothing worth choosing after that.

And if you're a Christian who knows your own heart tonight, you know that's true of you too. He'd see nothing worth choosing after that. If God has chosen you, nothing you do will ever affect his choice.

[52 : 12] Jacob, this verse, they're talking about Jacob and Esau. Jacob wasn't saved because he was good. He was saved despite the fact that he was bad.

If you know anything of Jacob, he was a liar, he was a deceiver, he was a schemer. And yet God chose him. As verse 15 puts it, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.

I remember hearing about someone who went to see their minister because this verse troubled them. And they said, I really struggle with this verse, verse 13. Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated.

How can God hate someone? And the preacher's reply was, well, I struggle with this verse as well. But not that bit, but the other bit. Jacob have I loved.

Jacob was a deceiver. There was nothing lovable about Jacob. And yet God loved him because God chose him.

[53 : 19] And God loves still unlovable people like you and like me this evening. the doctrine of election.

And it's a great reassurance to the believer. When Jesus said in John 6, I think I quoted this already, when he said, all that the father has given me will come to me, he also said this, and I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but shall raise them up of the last day.

I shall lose none of them, Jesus said. Once saved, always saved. God's elect cannot be lost. And surely that is a comfort to God's people this evening.

But what have you not saved? What have you not saved? And tonight you're wondering, well, am I one of God's chosen people? Well, there's one sure way that you can find out.

Look again at the next chapter, Romans chapter 10, and this time verse 13. Romans 10 and verse 13 says this, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[54 : 36] Again, no loopholes. Everyone. That includes you. You call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. That is God's promise.

and then you'll know. You'll know that you are one of God's chosen people. You know, the Bible tells us that God doesn't want any to perish, but that all should come to repentance.

We saw it with Jesus. Jesus wept outside of Jerusalem, looking over Jerusalem, and he said, how often I would have gathered you as a hen gathered her chicks under her wing, but you wouldn't come.

You wouldn't come. And is that what he's saying of you this evening? I long to save you, but you wouldn't come.

Tonight, the only thing preventing you from being saved is yourself. The only reason why anyone would be unsaved here this evening is that you've never genuinely asked God to do so.

[55 : 58] You can change that tonight if you want to. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, there are so many parts of the Bible that we struggle with, we wrestle with, we find difficult, and yet there are passages that are crystal clear.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. no ifs, no buts. Lord, if we've never believed before, help us to do so this evening.

And if we have trusted in you, may we leave this place humbled, knowing that we're saved not because of any good in us, but simply because of your sovereign choice.

Draw us closer to yourself, we pray. Give us thankful hearts. We ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to finish singing from Psalm 130, the Scottish Psalter version of Psalm 130. You'll find it on page 421. Psalm 130, we're going to sing the whole of this psalm.

[57 : 27] The tune is Martyrdom. We're on page 421. Lord, from the depths, to thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear, and to my supplication's voice, give an attentive ear, and down to the last verse, and plenteous redemption is ever found with him, and from all his iniquities he, Israel, shall redeem.

Psalm 130, to God's praise. Lord, from the depths, to thee I cry, my voice, Lord, do thou hear, hear, until I saw, make ancient's voice, give an attempt tear, to me.

Lord, who shall stand heaven, O Lord, just part in equity, but yet with thee forgiveness is that fear the layest be.

I wait for God, my soul not wait, my hope is in his work more than thee, thou, for morning watch my soul wait for the Lord.

I say more than they that to watch the morning light to see.

[60 : 08] Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with mercy mercy be!

! God and plenteous redemption is ever found within!

And from all his in in in Thank you.