

Reformed Theology 4—TULIP

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 May 2026

Preacher: Taylor Hollingsworth

[0 : 00] All right, good morning. We're going to go ahead and get started. Welcome to the fourth installment of our class, Amazing Grace.! We've been dipping into the doctrines of grace, trying to lay out some arguments and ideas drawn from Scripture about why we hold to what we call Reformed Theology.

And so hopefully it's been helpful for you so far. I hope this will be a blessing and encouragement to you as you wrestle through these truths yourselves. Again, I want you to lean forward, take notes. This is intended not to be a cul-de-sac for your research.

It's intended to be an on-ramp to get on the interstate of research for yourself, to dig into these things for yourselves. So thank you for coming. I'm going to ask for the Lord's help and then we'll jump in.

Lord, thank you so much for your kindness towards us. Thank you that you are a saving God. You come for sinners. You rescue us by your grace.

So Lord, we cast ourselves on you now. I ask that you make these minutes exponentially useful to those who hear. Would you stir them up to love and to good works and deeper affection for you, their God?

[1 : 14] We ask these things in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. A climber has fallen into a deep canyon. Injured, freezing and unable to get out.

A rescue arrives from above. And one version of this story says the rescuer lowers the rope and calls out, Grab hold. I've made a way for you to be saved.

And the climber, even though he's weak, he still has the ability to reach up and to take hold. The other version of the story says this. The climber is not only trapped, but unconscious.

Unable to respond at all. So the rescuer descends, secures him, and then carries him out. So in both of these cases, the rescuer is absolutely necessary.

Still the rescuer. Without him, there's no hope. But the difference lies in whether the decisive moment of rescue depends on the climber's response or the rescuer's action.

[2 : 23] See the distinction there? The climber's response or the rescuer's action. Question for us is how does God save sinners?

How does God save sinners? Well, this Calvinist-Arminian debate came to a head in the early 17th century Netherlands, where the followers of Jacob Arminius, they raised concerns about certain beliefs from the reformed camp associated with John Calvin.

And after Arminius' death, 1609, his supporters drafted the Remonstrance in 1610. This is a document that's outlining five points of disagreement with the reformers, particularly around election, around grace, and perseverance.

And in response, the reform leaders convened the Synod of Dort. This is 1618, 1619. And they produced these things called the Canons of Dort.

To clarify what they believe, Scripture teaches about salvation. And at its core, that debate was not just merely philosophical, but pastoral and biblical.

[3 : 34] How does God save sinners? So Arminius himself, he sought to preserve both divine grace and human responsibility.

And he wrote, The grace of God is the beginning, continuance and accomplishment of all good. Yet it is possible for man to resist his grace. And his followers, they emphasize that God's saving will extends to all, and that faith is not coerced, but freely exercised.

So the Remonstrance, they argued that election is conditional. It's grounded in God's foreknowledge of those who would believe, seeking to uphold what they saw as genuine offer of the gospel to all people.

So you can see there's good motivations and intentions behind this to clarify God's goodness in salvation and rescuing sinners. The delegates at Dort, on the other hand, they stress the depth of human sin, as we see in the Bible, and that the decisive nature rests in God's grace.

And as the Canons of Dort, they state this, all people are conceived in sin and are incapable of any saving good. They're, in a sense, unconscious, at the bottom of the canyon.

[4 : 53] Apart from the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit, they have no hope to be saved in themselves. So they argue that if salvation ultimately depends on human initiative, grace is no longer fully grace.

Instead, they came to the conclusion that God's sovereign choice, Christ's effective atonement, and the Spirit's renewing work ensure that salvation is entirely from the Lord.

And it leads not to fatalism, but to humility and assurance and worship. So there's five points of disagreement from this historical debate that kind of emerged.

Now, this may sound kind of like nitpicking. It seems like maybe on the surface, like an academic exercise. Why are people so caught up in this? It's just kind of abstractions.

Who really cares? However, these points of disagreement, they're foundational to how we understand who God is, what sin is, the extent of our problem.

[5 : 57] How helpless are we at the bottom of the canyon? And it also points to how radical the solution is. So A.W. Tozer, at the top of your paper, in the Knowledge of the Holy, he says this, what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

Worship is pure or base or impure. As the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God.

That's what we're after is understanding who God is, who we are in relation to God. What happened with this saving work? What comes into our minds when we think about God is that, oh, he saved us.

He saved us when we were dead in our sins. Oh, that should just humble us. It causes us to be humble and overjoyed.

It causes us to be amazed by grace. That's why we named this class Amazing Grace. In fact, many folks have been persuaded these realities we're talking about, and they prefer to talk about these doctrines as the doctrines of grace.

[7 : 10] So we're going to briefly look through an acronym based on these doctrines in the form of the word grace. And it's outlined there on your paper. Grace, God's grace in election, radical corruption, accomplishing grace, complete atonement, enduring preservation.

Now, Walt taught last week on God's grace in election. So we're not going to spend a ton of time there. I encourage you to go back. If you missed that one, go back and listen to that class last week. That's capturing what the reformers, what it was called, unconditional election, but we just call it God's grace in election. And then we're also going to fast pace ourselves, maybe even skip completely, enduring preservation, because we taught that in another class just a couple months ago in a class called Completely Done.

So go to session four of that online, and you'll find more info. And now I included on the outline, but we're not going through this whole outline. Just to allay your fears.

Some of you are already flipping through the papers and starting to sweat. So we're going to fast forward through the first and the last. Okay? But I just put the info in there for your benefit so you have it all in one package.

[8 : 25] So what I'm going to try to do is especially emphasize these middle three. And we're going to look at kind of a side-by-side comparison of the disagreement, the historical disagreement, and then we'll unpack some of the biblical evidence so that you can get on and keep going for yourself in the search and in the questioning.

So we will just briefly hit this God's grace in election. For the Arminians, they come to the conclusion that God elects individuals based on his foreknowledge of their future faith.

Remember, he looks down the corridors of time. He knows who's going to choose him, and that's who he chooses, in a sense. Calvinists, on the other hand, God elects individuals according to his sovereign will.

That's the determining factor is God's will, not the human will, ultimately. And it's not based on his foreseen faith. So God freely chooses sinners for salvation according to his gracious purpose.

And just as a refresher, a couple places to look more deeply, I'd encourage you to go back into Ephesians 1. I have it here for you. Ephesians 1, 3-6, Romans 8, 29-30.

[9 : 33] Remember, this is the golden chain of things, sequences in the believer's life that trace back even before time began. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he also called. And those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified. There wasn't might choose, might come to faith, but they will.

This is the succession, the golden chain of salvation. And then if you want to keep going on that, just as a refresher, Romans 9 is the next stop after this to give this argument more fully.

And Walt traced that out last week. So election is not grounded in foreseen merit or foreseen faith, but in God's mercy. That's the case that we're trying to make.

So secondly, I want to touch on radical corruption or in kind of the historic way it's talked about is this idea of total depravity. Radical corruption.

[10 : 42] So the Arminian side would argue that humans are fallen, but enabled by prevenient grace to respond to God. God, in a sense, presses pause on the corruption in people's hearts because of sin in order that they can make a neutral choice between the gospel to receive it or to reject it.

The Calvinist, on the other hand, would say that humans are spiritually dead and unable to come to God apart from regenerating grace, that he has to actually make you into a new creation first in order to allow you to have the desire to respond towards the gospel.

All right. So radical corruption. So we want to start with this question of what is sin? Because it really, I mean, it matters in this particular point in the discussion. Most fundamentally, sin must be defined as being against God.

Being against God. Our Sovereign Grace Catechism says it this way. This is the question-answer version of this. It says, What is sin? Sin is rebellion against the God who created us, failing to conform to his righteous standards in who we are and what we do.

So this rebellion against God is far deeper and more widespread than we would care to admit. Sin is not just defined by our wrong actions.

[12 : 08] It's not just the bad things that we do. It's actually a wrong posture of heart towards God, towards ourselves, towards others and the world around us.

It's a corrupt posture against all that God has set up in his very heart. So, I like this quote. I think it's pretty helpful.

It says, Evil is the very heart and root of man. It's at the very foundation, at the deepest level of human life. This evil does not corrupt merely one or two kind of avenues of the life of man, but it's pervasive.

It spreads into all aspects of the life of man. It darkens the mind. It corrupts his feelings. It warps his will. It moves his affections in the wrong directions.

It blinds his conscience. It burdens his subconscious. It afflicts his body. So, so the idea here is we can never, we can, we can even do the right things and still be sinful.

[13 : 13] If you think about that for a second, we can, we can actually outwardly do good, right things, but they can actually still be sinful things. How, how is that? Romans 14 clues us in here.

It says this, for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. So, let that sink in for a second.

That's, that's a massive distinction from what we usually hear. Just don't, don't cuss, don't chew, don't go with girls who do. Yeah, that's a southern proverb right there. If I've ever heard one, it's, it's more than that because you can go with the right people.

You cannot chew tobacco and you're still in a posture of rebellion against God. So, just doing the right things doesn't necessarily mean it's righteous in God's eyes.

In this case, it says, whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Listen to this illustration from, from John Piper. He says, suppose you are a father of a teenage son.

[14 : 16] You remind him to wash the car before he uses it, take his friends to the basketball game. He had earlier agreed to do that. He gets angry and he says he doesn't want to. You gently but firmly remind him of his promise and says that that's what you expect, but he resists.

You say, well, if you were going to use the car tonight, that's what you agreed to. He storms out of the room angry. Later, you see him washing the car, but he's doing it not out of love for you or out of love for Christ and to honor him or a desire to honor his father.

He wants to go to the game with his friends, dadgummit. That's what constrains his obedience in this moment. So I, we put obedience in quotes there because it's only external.

His desire is wrong. This, this is what we mean when we say that all human virtue, all of human effort is depraved if it is not from a heart to love the heavenly father, even if the behavior conforms to the biblical norms.

Does that make sense? So, this quote for you here from Piper in his book, Five Points, which is a helpful introduction to these tenets. He says this, outward conformity to the revealed will of God is not righteousness in relation to God.

[15 : 46] It is not done out of reliance on him or for his glory, which is what we were created for. If all men are in total rebellion, everything they do is the product of rebellion and cannot be an honor to God, but only part of their sinful rebellion.

Romans 3 says it this way, none is righteous. No, not one. No matter how well manicured the lawn is, no matter how big the bank account gets and there's good stewardship financially, it is not equivalent to the righteousness that God is looking for.

No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless. No one does good. No, not even one. Ephesians 2 says it very clearly.

You were dead. You were dead. We were dead in the bottom of the canyon in our trespasses and sins in which we once walked.

We happily followed the course of this world. We were the walking dead. We were alive towards sin and dead. Towards the things of God. That's what this is showing us.

[17 : 12] The scripture teaches that dead in trespasses and sins means we are down for the count in the canyon. Theologians use this label total depravity.

The problem is, this is where it kind of gets tricky with folks, is that that word total, it kind of implies that there's no good whatsoever in humans and that we are always as wicked as we might possibly be.

And that's not what this doctrine is really capturing because, as I said, there's people that do kind things, good things, that actually are a benefit to other people. There is kindness and sharing and compassion.

But it's not out of faith. It doesn't please God in the same way. It still ultimately can be pointed inward, pointed towards anything and everything except for God's glory if you're not submitted to Him.

But there is this kind of common grace, this restraining grace. So I actually prefer, and many other theologians prefer this word radical instead of total. Radical, corruption.

[18 : 18] Radical is a better description than total because the argument is that sin touches the root, the radix is the Latin term, the root of our lives.

Sin touches every root. Every part of what we are as humans is affected by our sin. That's what that's getting at. Think about how sin affects our relationship to God.

We were condemned before the judge both for Adam's sin and also for our personal sin. You know, people tell us all the time when they see our kids like, oh, those are definitely Hollingsworth kids.

They have a look to them, don't they? You know, they can tell these little like Scandinavian looking children with blonde hair and blue eyes walking around. Those are Hollingsworth children. They favor their parents.

They look like us. They look especially like Elizabeth. We resemble our parents genetically. And in a similar way, we've received from our parents the sin nature.

[19 : 25] It's been passed down to us from Adam and Eve at the fall, our parents, spiritually. So there's that that's genetically passed to us in a sense, spiritually.

Adam's sin's imputed to us, but then we also have our own personal sin, the trespasses of our own hearts against God. secondly, we're defiled by sin at the core of our nature.

Jesus says he often doesn't point to the externals, but he traces it back and he says it comes from within the heart. Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

From the inside, it manifests outside into action. But he's concerned about the interior, first and foremost, the radix, the core. However, we are unable because of this to obey God.

We're unable. Romans 8 says it this way, for the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. For it does not submit to God's law.

[20 : 30] Indeed, it cannot. It cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So when God commands those who are in the flesh to repent and believe on his son, they cannot do so until their hearts are made new first.

Does this make sense what I'm saying? 1 Corinthians 2, the natural person does not accept the things of the spirit of God for they are folly to him.

And he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. You've got to have a new spirit. You've got to become a new creation before you can receive the things of God. So before the holy judge, because of our sin, we are all condemned, all defiled, we're all unable to obey, we're all deserving of wrath, and we're dead.

Scott Keith, in his introduction to the bondage of the will, he says this, dead, not sick, not limping, not partially able to choose righteousness, dead.

Not in need of a hospital, in need of a resurrection. Salvation begins where self-help ends. This is radical corruption, the doctrine of radical corruption.

[21 : 44] But stay tuned, that's not all. Praise the Lord, it doesn't end there with radical corruption. Next one is accomplishing grace. From the Arminian perspective, God's grace can be resisted by human free will.

And for the Calvinists, on the other side, would argue that God's saving grace effectively brings the elect to faith. So, most Arminians would agree that all humans are born depraved, like I just outlined to some degree, and enslaved to sin, unable to save themselves.

But, they differ by arguing that God graciously and universally neutralizes the debilitating effects of original sin.

It just presses pause on it and restores freedom to the human will for a season, enabling all to believe the gospel if they choose.

Does that make sense? Calvinists, on the other hand, believe that the Bible teaches people are radically depraved and spiritually dead, both unable and unwilling to receive the gospel apart from God's gracious, regenerating word.

[22 : 53] So, this argument that we're looking at here is just a historical reiteration of an earlier debate back in the 5th century.

traces back hundreds and hundreds of years to the 5th century between Augustine and Pelagius. Pelagius denied inherited sin, that we get the sin of our spiritual mother and father.

He denied that. He viewed Adam's fall as a bad example, but not inherited corruption. Augustine taught that humanity inherited a corrupted nature from Adam.

That's what we just discussed. And we see it in Romans 5. Look at Romans 5. It's on their paper there. Verse 19, For as by the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners.

So, by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous. So, who are those representatives they're talking about? Who are these one man's that they're discussing here in Romans?

[23 : 55] In Jesus. Yes. One man's disobedience, we inherit corruption. On the same token, one man's obedience, we inherit his righteousness based on what he did.

Praise the Lord. Exactly. Pelagius believed humans possess the inherent ability to choose good and avoid sin entirely. But Augustine, he argued that while the will exists, the will's there, it exists, but while it exists, it is crippled by sin and cannot choose God without grace.

Take a look at R.C. Sproul's comments on this. He says, the state of original sin leaves us in the wretched condition of being unable to refrain from sinning.

We still are able to choose what we desire. We're doing what we want to do. But our desires remain chained by our evil impulses.

He argued that the freedom that remains in the will always leads to sin. It's hostile to God. That's what we just saw a second ago. Thus, in the flesh, we are free only to sin, a hollow freedom indeed.

[25 : 06] It is a freedom without liberty, a real moral bondage. True liberty can only come from without, from the work of God on the soul. Therefore, we are not only partly dependent upon grace for our conversion, but totally dependent upon grace.

this was the argument that was happening in the 5th century between Augustine and Pelagius.

Now, the church condemned Pelagianism as a heresy, and they adopted Augustine's view on the necessity of grace over the Pelagian reliance on human effort.

So if you want to trace Orthodox Christianity all the way back, the Calvin camp is not just Calvin, it's historic Christianity and interpretation of the scriptures.

We'll trace it out even more here. That Pelagian impulse kept resurfacing, though. It keeps coming up. Because in 1524, we're fast forwarding a few hundred years, Erasmus, he wrote this little pamphlet on the freedom of the will.

It's the same conversation, same topic. Erasmus insisted that there must be some good left in man. Look at all the good that they're doing. There's a renaissance going on.

[26 : 28] There's some amazing things happening. There must be some potential for righteousness. But in response, Martin Luther, he's a predecessor of Calvin, remember?

Martin Luther wrote, on the bondage of the will. The bondage of the will. And he argued in this that the will is not neutral. Instead, he famously describes the human will as a beast of burden, riding between two masters, God or Satan.

Those are the options that the Bible lays out. That's his argument. That's what our wills are bound to something. They're never independent and autonomous and completely free in the sense that God is completely free.

The human will is never truly free is what he argues. It cannot choose its rider, but is instead compelled by whichever power possesses it.

The will of man freely walks toward the desires within the domain of the power that possesses it. You get what I'm saying?

[27 : 38] Does that make sense? That's his argument. So according to Paul, the will is by default enslaved to sin. And the will must be set free in order to become a slave to God.

Those are the options. Romans 6, 22. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves God.

There's only two masters saying you were created for mastership to be under the authority and there's only two masters at all times.

Does that make sense? That's his argument. So this is the second version of this argument that's surfacing here. So instead of just kind of momentarily lifting the effects of sin so that all people might kind of exert like a neutral willing decision for or against the gospel, the Bible teaches that the gospel, that God must set the dead sinners will free from slavery to sin.

That's what we're arguing the scripture teaches. So if you're with us two classes ago, we talked extensively about the order of salvation and one key aspect that we covered is really essential for our understanding here, this distinction between the external general call of the gospel and the internal effective call of the gospel.

[29 : 07] And I'm going to go through all of that. I invite you to go back and listen to that a couple classes ago. But in a nutshell, the gospel is preached. It's the general call, external.

It falls across a room of ears. Some believe. We see it again and again in scripture. Some believe. And we call the ones that respond, they're responding to an effective call.

an internal transformation has occurred and they're able to respond in that moment. The ones who respond are the ones God had chosen in eternity past. That's who's responding.

So the grace by which God irresistibly draws or brings the elect to saving faith is not given to all just indiscriminately, but it is imparted only to those chosen by God before the foundation of the world to inherit eternal life.

This is what Jesus teaches in John 6. All that the Father gives me will come to me. They're already given and that's why they're coming.

[30 : 15] That's the argument that Jesus is making. All that the Father gives me will come to me. And whoever comes to me, I will never cast them out. I will never cast them out. So is there a difference between external and internal call when it comes to the will?

Yes. The external call can be rejected. That's what we're seeing. We're seeing rejection. Acts 7, you stiff necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit as your fathers did, so do you.

All of us. That's what our predisposition is because of the sins that we've inherited in our own personal sin, our heart posture, being depraved before God, we desire not to submit to God.

We were stiff necked people right along with them, rejecting that general call. But the internal call, the internal call, because it comes only to the elect, is designed to secure infallibly and effectively the saving response, which the external call alone could not.

John 6, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is, listen to that language, granted him by the Father. I just think that's so helpful because a lot of times the argument is, man, God's just coercing people into heaven.

[31 : 47] He's irresistibly just dragging you into heaven. No! what child that's been loved, pulled out of an orphanage and been loved, is going to hate that Father.

Who's going to do that? They look back and say, oh, thank you. This is the image. It's granted, not coerced by the Father, but granted graciously by the Father towards his chosen ones.

So, Bruce Wears says it this way. When Calvinists refer to irresistible grace, they mean to say that the Holy Spirit is able, whenever the Spirit chooses, to overcome all human resistance and so cause his gracious work to be utterly effective and ultimately irresistible.

In soteriology, this doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of irresistible grace refers to the Spirit's work to overcome all sin-induced resistance and rebellion, opening blind eyes, enlivening hardened hearts so that sinners understand and embrace the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

That's what happened. That's what happened. Praise the Lord. It's incredible. It's amazing. It's granted. So that is irresistible grace.

[33 : 12] Next, I want to touch on complete atonement. It's been called limited atonement or definite atonement. From the Arminian perspective, they would argue that Christ died for all people, making salvation possible for everyone.

For everyone. Calvinists would argue that Christ died specifically to secure the salvation of the elect. God. R.C.

Sproul, as helpful as I was studying this, he said there are basically two ways in which to understand God's eternal plan. Two ways. One understanding is that from all eternity, God had a desire to save as many people as possible out of the fallen human race, so he conceived a plan of redemption by which he would send his son into the world as the sin bearer for fallen people.

Jesus would go to the cross and die for all who would at some point put their trust in him. So the plan was provisional. God provided atonement for all who would take advantage of it, kind of like a platter.

You stick it out there, you can take or not take. The idea is that Jesus died potentially for everybody, but that is theoretically possible that the whole thing was in vain because every last person in the world might reject the Jesus and his work and choose to remain dead in their trespasses and sins.

[34 : 43] That could have been a possible outcome if this was true. And so God's plan could be frustrated because nobody might take advantage of it. This is the prevailing view in the church today that Jesus died for everybody provisionally.

And the final analysis, whether salvation happens depends on each individual person. The reform view, on the other hand, understands God's plan differently. It says that God from all eternity devised a plan that was not provisional.

It was a plan A with no plan B to follow if it did not work. Under this plan, God decreed that he would save a certain number of people out of fallen humanity, people whom the Bible calls the elect.

In order for that plan of election to work out in history, he sent his son into the world with the specific aim and design to accomplish redemption for the elect. This was accomplished perfectly without a drop of the blood of Jesus being wasted.

Everyone whom the Father chose for salvation will be saved through the atonement. Those are two different views of what the atonement accomplished.

[35 : 55] So how should we understand? We're looking at the Bible. How should we understand some of these seemingly universal words that we see crop up throughout Scripture because we do see God so loved the world?

Well, didn't he die for all of them? Didn't he die for all the world? In what way? How can we understand some of these more broad ranging words like the world or all? So if we look at world, it's used in a number of different ways.

John 1 29, just as an example, it says the next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, this is John the Baptist, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

So doesn't that sound like he's he's the atonement is sufficient to reach every person's sin is taking away the sin barrier for all people in the world.

So it can leave you with these questions. How are we to understand this? And yet there's other texts that seem to imply the opposite or teach the opposite. So we have to look. Is there a range of

meaning? Are these the word world?

[37 : 01] Is it used differently in different places? Well, the world can refer to the created order in opposition to the Lord. We see this in John all over the place. Jesus is the true light.

He came into the world. Darkness did not understand it. Remember this? This is just used as a reference to the world generally in opposition to the Lord. The world can be a sharp distinction between God's people and everyone else.

Do not love the world. What's it saying there? Is it saying don't love people? All the people? Red and yellow, black and white? I thought they were precious in his sight. Is it saying no? Don't love the world.

So it's using it differently there. And then third, another way it can be used is world can refer to Christ's work as encompassing all people without distinction.

All kinds of people without distinction. Not just Jewish people. remember Jesus redeems the Samaritan woman. Many Samaritans believe after Jesus converts her.

[38 : 02] And then the Samaritans, they exclaim that he is the savior of the world. What did he save the whole world in that moment? No, they're baffled that they're Samaritans.

They know they're super different than Jews and typically outcasts from the Jewish community. And in that case, they're using the term world to refer to Christ's work for all kinds of people without distinction.

First John 2.2 says he is the propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. This is John writing, right?

So who is the whole world? John 11 shed some light on this text for us. It's very similar language. He says Jesus would die for the nation and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one, gather different types of people from different backgrounds into one, the children of God who are scattered abroad.

So again, it's reiterating this idea that that world is, and this text is bringing together through Christ's work people of different backgrounds, all kinds of people.

[39 : 18] It's a parallel passage that gives insight into this meaning of world. So the death of Christ is not a potential one for everybody indiscriminately.

It is for all without distinction or the elect without exception. That's what it's talking about. Y'all tracking with me?

It's like, okay, we might have to go back through this one. But there's another word used in more of like, it seems universal. All. This word all. It can refer to everyone without exception.

That's one way that we use it, kind of like world. Everyone without exception. But it can also, in the same way as world, mean all sorts of. All can mean all sorts of people.

So 2 Corinthians, take a look at that. for the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died. And he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[40 : 26] Now, take a look at that word all. What are the all doing at the end of that verse? Any takers?

They're living for Christ, not for themselves. Now, is that all capture all people in all the world? Are all people living for Christ?

No. It's God's people. Exactly. So this all, this all, even though it's the word, all, it's narrowly applied to people who are living for Jesus Christ.

This refers to those who no longer live for themselves. Description of Christians. So the atonement for many is talking about all the elect.

Mark 10, Jesus says this clearly. He says, for even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[41 : 34] many. Many. So one more place we can look at is that even the idea of redemption, it points to the mission accomplished.

That there was a definitive mission for a definitive group of people and it was definitively accomplished. Check out Wayne Grudem's quote here. It says, because we as sinners are in bondage to sin and to Satan, we need someone to provide redemption and thereby redeem us out of that bondage.

A price had to be paid and a price was paid. The death of Christ and the result of that death was that we were redeemed from bondage.

Not maybe or probably or potentially, but definitively. Colossians 1 says it this way, he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

So he's the one who would pay the price to redeem his people out of bondage. What type of redemption, think about this, what type of redemption is it when some of those who are redeemed by Jesus are still in bondage to sin and Satan and are away from Christ?

[42 : 55] Was it really redemption then? No, that's what this is arguing. Redemption by nature demands that there is purchasing power and that it's definitively done once the purchase has been made at the cross.

So what does redemption mean? This is John Murray. It does not mean redeemability that we are placed in a redeemable position. It means that Christ actually purchased and procured redemption. That's what it means. So to summarize, Arminians would interpret the universal text literally, universally. Jesus died in the same way for every human being.

And to protect themselves from becoming universalists, Arminians then assert that the atonement of Jesus was universal but not efficacious. It wasn't effective in itself.

There had to be something else added to it in order to make it effective to bring salvation to people. The rope gets down and then the injured person reaches up even though weak and they have to grab the rope.

[44 : 03] They have to do something to be saved. That's something else is the individual's belief, which then brings the atoning work of Christ into the person's life.

Does that make sense? That's what the argument is. So Arminian theologian Roger Olson, this is an Arminian who wrote a definitive work on Arminianism. He said this, he said, Arminians believe that Christ's death on the cross provided possible salvation for everyone, but it is actualized only when humans accept it through repentance and faith, the grabbing of the rope.

You got to grab all of that thing with repentance and faith. But the New Testament, my friends, the New Testament knows nothing of possible salvation flowing from Christ's death.

Jesus did not make salvation possible for everyone. He actually saves definitively. So we get into a dilemma here. We get into a dilemma.

I'm John Owen. This is an incredible work and I have a quote for you here. This is the dilemma John Owen is bringing out about this. God imposed his wrath due unto and Christ underwent the pains of hell, either all the sins of man, this is category one, who did Jesus die for?

[45 : 19] What is his atonement? What is his atonement do? It either covers all the sins of men or all the sins of some men or some sins of all men. If the first, which is the Arminian position, all the sins of men universally, why then are not all freed from the punishment of all their sins?

you will say, because of their unbelief, they won't receive it, they won't believe it. But isn't unbelief a sin? This is his argument. Unbelief is a sin.

But this unbelief, is it a sin or not? If not, why should they be punished for their unbelief? You see what he's saying?

Get to this place. All sins are forgiven. All of them. Universally. Now choose which one. Do you want to receive the gospel or not receive the gospel?

And they say, I don't believe it. Well, was unbelief forgiven or not? Previously. That's what he's pointing out. That's the dilemma. This unbelief is a sin or not?

[46 : 26] If not, why should they be punished for their unbelief? If it is a sin, then Christ underwent the punishment due to it or not. Did he die for unbelief too or no? So, if so, then why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which he died from partaking of the fruit of his death?

If he did not, then he did not die for all their sins. He's saying this doesn't work. It's either all or nothing. You're making the argument it's for all but unbelief. That exception doesn't work because then you're just going to be a universalist if you say unbelief is a sin that is covered.

Then everybody's in. Whether they believe or not, bring them in. You see where the tension is? It doesn't hold up. Owen is correct. Armenians can't have it both ways.

If Jesus died for the sins of everyone, then everyone must go to heaven. Yet this is unbiblical universalism. If they maintain that he died for all sins but unbelief, then he did not atone for that sin.

And the sinner must do something to merit his or her salvation. This seems to be both works righteousness and a sliding of the fullness of Christ's atonement.

[47 : 39] It diminishes the power and the effect and the realities of the atonement outlined in scripture. So if you think about it this way, Calvinists and Arminians both limit the atonement.

Calvinists do it in terms of its breadth because it's to the elect alone. But Arminians limit it in terms of its depth because it's ineffective to save people who must add something to make it effective. Roger Nicole theologian prefers the word definite over limited because it's not like there's just not enough supply to go around. That's not what this is an indication of because Christ's substitutionary work was not just a blanket substitution.

It was a substitution that was oriented specifically for the purpose for which he came into this world to save and to redeem those whom the Father has given him.

So the atonement in summary is sufficient for all but effective for the elect. Does that make sense? So that's kind of the summary of this point.

[48 : 51] Now, we're not going to have time to get into all the nooks and crannies of perseverance, but like I said, I invite you to go back and listen to that former class.

I think it will be very helpful. But I wanted to conclude with Martin Luther from his work on the bondage of the will. This is from that second installment of the same argument.

And he says this, if I'm ignorant of what, how, far, and how much I can and may do in relation to God, it will be equally uncertain and unknown to me what, how far, and how much God can and may do in me.

Although it is God who works everything and everyone, but when the works and power of God are unknown, I do not know God himself. And when God is unknown, I cannot worship, I cannot praise, I cannot thank, I cannot serve God since I do not know how much I ought to attribute to myself and how much to God.

That, therefore, behooves us to be very certain about the distinction between God's power and our own, God's work and our own, if we want to live a godly life.

[50 : 02] How does God save sinners? How did God save you? I was on the bottom of the canyon floor, dead, and I needed a hospital in need of resurrection.

This is how God brings people to life. And we, next week, are going to look more in depth at what this should evoke in us, the praise, the response, the heart, the Christian life.

So Tim Willems is going to share next week. I hope you'll come back because it should be the capstone on what, this is just not arbitrary doctrine stuff, this is life changing, God exalting stuff. Let's pray. Oh Lord, we give you all the glory. Thank you for your kindness. Lord, we again just marvel. We are amazed by your grace.

Thank you for saving us when we could not save ourselves. Thank you for holding us fast. Lord, we pray that even today we'll be stirred up by your word to respond by your spirit.

[51 : 07] Our desires are changed now, our hearts are changed now. you continue to transform us, continue to help us walk and bring honor to you, our one true saving God.

Pray this in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Thank you.