

Doctrines of Grace - Part 2

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[0 : 00] Okay, team, we continue our series in the doctrines of grace. If we were to pose to Scripture the question, take me to the very beginning of my salvation, the very dawn of its unfolding, the very fountainhead of its first springs, where would Scripture lead us? Its answer is a beginning before our beginning. It would trace the fountainhead of our salvation to an ancient choice. What do we mean by ancient? If our thoughts could strain to make the journey, back to the beginning of time, back when the morning stars were begotten and the galaxies sprang forth and the sun and the moon were launched into their orbs by the word of God's mouth, back farther still when our created world slept in the mind of the

Creator. There, we, the elect people, before we even had a created existence, were the objects of God's loving purpose. But here, inevitably, words fail. For how could we designate a time before time? The Apostle's phrase is simple, yet majestic. Before the foundations of the world.

Ephesians 1.4. It was then the triune God set their loving choice upon their beloved, a people who would become the everlasting bride of the Son who would take on flesh. There is the fountainhead of our salvation, an ancient choice and purpose of God, an ancient compact of Father, Son, and Spirit to unite everlastingly with the people of their sovereign, gracious love. Across the pages of Scripture, the objects of this ancient choice are called God's elect. The Apostle expresses to the Thessalonian believers, we are bound to give thanks always for you, brothers and sisters, beloved of the Lord, because God has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation. 1 Thessalonians 2.13 and 14.

Spurgeon once said of this verse, If there were no other text in the sacred word except this one, I think we should all be bound to receive and acknowledge the truthfulness of the great and glorious doctrine of God's ancient choice of God's life. True enough, it would suffice, but it need not, for such assertions crowd the sacred text. From Abram chosen out of all the multitude of nations and their brimming population, through the patriarchs and through Israel, as the psalmist exclaims in wonder, blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his inheritance. Psalm 33.12. At the coming of Christ, we have his choosing of a new Israel in union with himself, the twelve.

[4 : 02] You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, John 15.16. A new people of his choice, elect from every tongue, tribe, and nation, described as, quote, chosen and destined by God the Father. 1 Peter 1.12.

Some of those elect now gathered around the heavenly throne. Others in the midst of their earthly pilgrimage of faith. Others still chosen, but yet to be gathered by the proclamation of the gospel. As the apostle Paul wrote momentarily in prison as he sought to reach the ends of the earth with his gospel proclamation, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 2.10.

So God chooses his elect. The expression is really redundant, for that's precisely what elect means. Chosen.

As to the basis of this ancient choice, we are not told what inspired or revoked it, other than God's good pleasure expressed in the language of love.

[5 : 23] He simply declares of Christ's bride to be, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 33.3.

Or as Moses told the Israelites, Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all that is in it. Yet the Lord has set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all the peoples.

Deuteronomy 10.14 and 15. Though beyond his own distinguishing love, we are not told what his choice is based upon, it is clearly disclosed to us what it is not based upon.

It is not based upon our worthiness. As if the choice were somehow predictable and evident by virtue of some distinguishing quality in us, the beloved.

As if the choice were elicited and found its source and origin in some attractiveness or excellency or comparatively surpassing virtue of our own.

[6 : 44] No. The testimony of Scripture is uniform and forceful in shutting the door on that supposition. As Moses assured Israel concerning God's choice of them, The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who were on the face of the earth.

It was not because you were more in number than the other peoples that the Lord set his love on you and chose you. For you were the fewest of all the peoples.

Note bene, don't flatter yourself. No, it was because the Lord loves you. Deuteronomy 7.6 and 7.

It is as if Scripture knew such a supposition would naturally occur to us.

The recipients of his loving choice. Imagining that something native to us caught the divine eye and ensorcelled his heart and so elicited his choice.

[7 : 58] We flatter ourselves to imagine his choice of us as somehow explicable in virtue of our superiority, whether number or character or some endearing attractiveness relative to others.

That the ground of God's selection of us is our blue ribbon qualities. Bigger, better, faster, stronger, wiser, more virtuous, more faithful, more pious.

And so more worthy than the competition. Such a notion the Scriptures soundly dispel. Such self-congratulatory fancy is snuffed out.

Taking the very categories we naturally think might commend us to God's choice of us.

Eye-catching wisdom, power, nobility, strength.

The apostle writes to the believers in Corinth. For consider your calling, brothers and sisters. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful.

[9 : 09] Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

1 Corinthians 1, 27-29. Spurgeon observes of this passage getting to the heart of the matter as he always does. We select those who are best because they are most deserving.

He, God, selects those who are worst because they are least deserving. That so his choice may be more clearly seen to be an act of grace and not of merit.

Spurgeon goes on to observe how very gracious God's choice is. For he writes, what a fabulous thought this is.

[10 : 23] God's choice is gracious even in its exclusion. It does not say, Spurgeon writes, not any wise man.

It only says not many. So that the great ones are not altogether shut out. Isn't that marvelous? Even gracious in his exclusion.

At least one is appreciated at this point. The Countess of Huntington of English nobility upon reading these verses exclaimed, Thank God for the M.

Thankfully, it does not say not any of noble birth, but not many of noble birth. Thank God for the M. Clearly, Scripture inscribes false over the notion that it is anything in us, whether nobility or ignobility, or any virtue or excellency or religious or moral exertions or attainments that elicit God's choice.

As the Apostle insists concerning God's election, it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. Romans 9, 16.

[11 : 38] One vivid way Scripture rather forcefully makes this point, excluding our imagined superior profile or fancied worthiness and underscoring its sheer graciousness, is by asserting that God's choice of his own was before they had any possible worthiness at all, for it was a choice of them before they were born.

Thus, before they could have assembled some supposedly impressive, morally majestic, or religiously resplendent CV. As the Apostle presses, taking the example of the twins, Jacob and Esau, I mean twins, I mean about as close as you can get, He writes, 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 him who calls, she, the mother, was told the older will serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob I have loved, but Esau, I hate it. Romans 9, 11 through 13. To clarify the matter, we might frame the question this way.

What is cause, and what effect? Does God's choice flow from our goodness, good works as scripture often terms it, or do our good works flow from God's choice?

which is the cause, which the effect? Here again, the scripture is crystal clear. As the Apostle writes to the Ephesians, even as God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

[13:41] 1-4. That, we should be holy, expresses purpose. We are chosen not from our good works, but for good works.

Why is this so seemingly important for scripture to clarify? Because there is a vital principle and purpose at stake.

The insistent principle is what we have abundantly seen, that God's choice of his elect is gracious. It is all of grace. God's choice is according to his own free favor, utterly unconstrained or influenced by anything that arises from the objects of his choice.

There is no cause or trigger of God's choice in the elect. The ground and cause has its source and sustenance entirely and exclusively in the heart of God and his heart purposes.

[14:57] There is in the gospel an illuminating phrase Jesus said of those full of animosity toward him they hated me without a cause.

John 15 25 That is, they hated me without there being any cause in me to elicit their hatred.

It arose entirely from their own heart stance. And so it is with God's loving election where we might equally say God lovingly elected me without a cause.

That is, without a cause in me. Literally in the Greek gratuitously or gift wise. One might even translate that graciously. They hated me graciously.

And why is this of crucial significance? That God's election of his beloved is a gracious choice. grace. Ah, because it is his grace that God seeks marvelously to display.

[16:08] It is his grace that is so praiseworthy. As the apostle writes to the Ephesians, God chose us according to the purpose of his will to the praise of his glorious grace.

Ephesians 1.6 That is, the unfathomable graciousness of his electing choice of his people will be the ceaseless theme of God's eternal praise.

The great non-perial display of his glory. And because his electing love is all of grace, without a moat of credit going to us, so shall no speck of praise be transferred from the creator to the creature.

All of grace means none of us. Not to us. Not to us, O Lord. But to thy name be glory.

Psalms 115.1 Thus, there is not a dry morsel of credit to energize a breath of self-congratulation.

[17:30] So, as the apostle expresses it, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 1 Corinthians 1.29 This is what is at stake and the ultimate purpose behind the principle, God's exclusive and unrivaled glory with which he will share with none.

For as Jehovah declares, I am the Lord. That is my name. My glory I will give to no other.

Isaiah 42.8 Now, if, or rather since, this is indeed the testimony of Scripture that God elects to salvation those he will passing over others according to his sovereign unconstrained choice, perhaps one may feel what we might call splinters in our sensibilities.

Let us acknowledge and interrogate some of these splinters. Here's one which has been voiced and perhaps we may feel, we ourselves may feel it, maybe even forcefully.

if God chooses some to life and not others based alone on his sovereign choice, that doesn't seem fair.

[19:19] A distinguishing love? A choice of some and not others? Jacob, have I loved?

Esau, have I hated? This is a hard saying. Who can hear it? It certainly cuts against our contemporary notion that none should get favored treatment.

It rubs us the wrong way, that anyone should get anything not given to all. Indeed, in our times, this is a sensibility on steroids.

John Rawls, the political theorist, asserts that our liberal democracy here in America is based on this notion of fairness. But the scriptures challenge this sensibility and reframe the relevant issue.

they recognize the objection but pose a counter question. As the apostle states in Romans 9, 14, what shall we say then?

[20 : 41] Is there injustice on God's part? By no means. For God says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.

and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. That is the scriptures response to our dis-ease with an assertion of God's sovereign prerogative.

He has mercy on whomever he wills. Verse 18. This is the decisive answer. But the apostle recognizes that for some this dis-ease may not be entirely set to rest by this.

Puzzles persist. So he continues. Will you say to me then, why does God still find fault for who can resist his will? Ah, but this persistent question fails to recognize whose will it is we are speaking of. It is the will of the creator who as creator has sovereign rights over his creatures. So as the apostle insists, who are you, O man, to answer back to God?

[22 : 13] Will what is molded say to the molder? Why have you made me like this? Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of some, out of the same lump, one vessel for honorable use, and another for dishonorable use?

Verse 20 and 21. Notice the apostles reframing the issue from one of fairness, whatever shape-shifting sense that term has, to justice.

Is there injustice on God's part by no means? Verse 14. Jesus takes up the same question and answers it in the same key as the apostle.

In his parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Matthew 20, at day's end, the master pays some a day's wage for a day's work.

Good to his pledge to give whatever is right. Verse 4. He acts in regard to some according to strict justice.

[23 : 33] To others, astonishingly, he gives with extravagant generosity a whole day's pay for a mere hour's work. He acts according to grace.

When those dealt with according to strict justice grumbled and protested, the master replies, Friend, I am doing you no wrong.

Did you not agree with me for a denarius, a day's wage for a day's work? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker graciously.

Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity? Verse 13 through 15. Again, as with the apostle, Jesus frames the issue in terms of God's sovereign prerogative.

[24 : 40] Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? And neither will his choice ever fall foul of justice.

We need not worry here. He will never give less than we are due. Friend, I am doing you no wrong. God will never, neither can he, fall short of whatever is right. Though in his sovereign freedom, he may act with extraordinary generosity of grace.

Would we, from our fairness, sensibility, begrudge and deny him such free generosity to some of his choosing?

I don't think so. Another worry has arisen for some. Some have felt such a choice of God's as the decisive determination in salvation can't be right.

[25 : 53] For such would be to show partiality. And scripture assures us God shows no partiality or favoritism. Or as the old King James version put it, God is no respecter of persons.

Romans 2, 11. Wouldn't electing some and not others make him so? While it might appear choosing some and not others could be an instance of favoritism, the way God chooses is actually the very opposite.

It does not violate the no favoritism principle, it rather fulfills it. God in his choosing, we have noticed, does not show favoritism to the noble over the ignoble, the Jew over the Gentile, the morally presentable over the manifestly dissolute.

He does not even show favoritism to the ignoble over the noble, the poor over the wealthy, for he chooses his elect from all of those categories, excluding none.

None of these are conditions for God's choice. In fact, they are all non-conditions. His election is non-conditional or unconditional and so shows no partiality, none.

[27 : 32] As Thomas Goodwin tersely answers the objection, as God respects no persons, so he respects no condition upon which he gives salvation to us.

Or as we might update the language, as God shows no favoritism, so he favors no condition upon which he gives salvation to us. Now, some have attempted to draw out the splinter by proposing that perhaps God's choice of us is actually based on our choice of him.

God looks down the corridors of time and sees, foresees, that we are ones who respond with faith to the good news declared.

We believe and accordingly we choose Christ and so, in response, he chooses us. He doesn't discriminate. He chooses any and all who choose him.

His choice of us is based on our choice of him. He chose us because we first chose him. Well, that is a way to frame and to describe it.

[29 : 01] It is, in fact, not an uncommon way, but it is certainly not the Bible's way to do so. The Bible, unambiguously, affirms the opposite.

No, he chose us, sorry, not he chose us because we first chose him. Rather, we choose him because he first chose us.

Or, as the Apostle John expresses it, we love him because he first loved us. 1 John 4, 19. his ancient choice of love was the wellspring from before the beginning.

Our love and choice of God follows. It does not precede God's loving choice of us. Our loving choice of God is the effect of God's loving choice of us, not the reverse.

But the ultimate defeater is that this formulation falls upon the wrong side of the great watershed.

[30 : 18] Whose is the glory and the right of boasting? Is the pivotal decision on which our salvation hangs triggered in us or in God?

It's clear where the Bible comes down on this and this proposal falls fatally elsewhere. If, as this proposed scheme would have us believe, election and with it salvation is triggered by our faith, then salvation is ultimately determined by human will and exertion of faith, not on God who shows mercy. And quite apart from Scripture asserting the opposite, it depends, quote, not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy, Romans 9.16. Quite apart from that, this construal would furnish the elect with grounds for boasting.

For the reason that they are heaven-bound and their twin in every respect is not is because they, unlike their neighbor, her twin, had the good sense to believe that he, in contrast to his unsaved neighbor, had the moral virtue to repent.

Well done, that man. And while you might not think to boast of your spiritual prowess in relation to God, you certainly would have grounds for such a boast relative to your less spiritually perceptive neighbor, who lacked these salvation-securing sagacities and sensibilities.

[32 : 18] Again, well done, that man. Go with the smiling satisfaction in the knowledge of your moral and spiritual superiority through the gates of glory.

But, of course, this whole way of thinking conspicuously fails the litmus test of the gospel of grace. God chose, writes the apostle, that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 1 Corinthians 1.29.

And, that faith and repentance that you propose as your salvation-triggering contribution, well, actually, they're gifts of God flowing from election, not securing election.

As the scripture says, Philippians 1.29, it was granted to you to believe. Acts 11.18, to you, God has granted repentance that leads to life.

[33 : 37] As the apostle explains, any difference in the elect? Well, what do you have that you did not receive? If you received it, if then you received it, why would you boast as if you didn't receive it?

1 Corinthians 4.7. Oh, sisters and brothers, do you not feel this to be so deep in your bones that when it comes to our salvation, God's grace is all, and we contribute nothing?

But, let's close with one further heart-rousing truth concerning God's electing love. His ancient choice of his beloved is immutable.

God's calling is irrevocable, writes the apostle, Romans 11.29. Election having once pitched upon a person, writes John Aerosmith, it will find him out and call him home, wherever he be.

In whatsoever dunghills God's elector hid, election will find them out and bring them home. Isn't that great?

[35 : 07] I should read that one more time. Election, having once pitched upon a person, it will find him out and call him home, wherever he be.

In whatsoever dunghills God's elector hid, election will find them out and bring them home. Well, as to the dunghill in which all God's elector found, the woeful and wrathful condition of our lost estate, and what God's electing love must do to draw them, to draw us out, and to bring us home.

Those are the subjects of our scriptural attention next week, Lord willing. Well, we have some time for any questions or comments or observations or praises.

Yes, Richard. I would ask you to do me a favor, please. I'm not as good a student as some yet.

Could you tell me the scripture in 1 Corinthians where he says it is granted to you to do it?

Well, that was in Philippians 129. Yeah, Philippians 129. I told you I wasn't that good as you. Yeah, no, no, that's all right. And then Acts 11, 18, God has granted repentance that leads to life.

[36 : 37] I see. Yeah. And at the very beginning, the scripture from 1 Thessalonians that you mentioned. Yes, that is, that's the one that we opened up with.

15. Yeah, thank you, Elizabeth. 2.15. I thought it was 1 Thessalonians 2, maybe 13 and 14. I think it's a little before 15. Yeah, yeah.

problem. Yeah, it's funny how we assign blame to God regarding election and redemption and all that, and justification, and we say he's biased and he's unfair, that it leads to cynicism, but not many say, how do I get elected?

How do I get to God? It's blaming God. Immediately we put God in the dock. He's unfair. He's not a good God. He's biased.

Instead of, where can I find him? How can I get a hold of this God? It's because we're dead in our sins and trespasses. It's like we can't come to God.

[37 : 59] It's like a ship and you're dead in the water and they throw you a lifeline but you can't grab that lifesaver because you're dead. Somebody has to make you alive so you can grab that lifesaver and that's salary.

I'm going to start taking notes Raul because that's going to be my lecture next week. Just one quick comment on that and then I'll get the other. Yes, and that's so good. We don't look for our salvation to our election.

because that is hidden with God. We look for our salvation to the Savior that is offered to all. We look to Christ and live.

So don't try to find out your salvation in election. That's not visible. but the Savior of the world has been set forth and we can look to him all the ends of the earth and live.

So that's where we look. Yeah. Yeah. In any of your subsequent sessions are you going to be delving more on the assurance of grace?

[39 : 11] You know, just not Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Our good brother Tyler is going to be taking up one of the glorious truths of the security of the true believer.

And in that context per adventure he might distinguish between the absolute Gibraltar truth of scripture that the one that is in union with Christ is in union with him forever.

He has eternal life for it to be eternal life means that it can't suddenly cease in some sort of crisis.

So there is absolutely eternal security for the one who is in union with Christ, for everyone who has an interest in Christ.

There is a distinction between that being the case and knowing and drawing deep personal existential comfort that it is so.

Okay, so there's it's a metaphysical absolute truth, it's an epistemological what we can know blessing, but it is a blessing that God intends for us as believers to enjoy.

[40 : 41] 1 John 5, and these things I write to you who have eternal life that you might know that you have. These things I have written to you that have Christ that you might know that you have eternal life.

So that's something that he, that's a blessing that he wants us to enjoy. And that we would call assurance. And the grounds of assurance are going to differ and thus need to be pastorally applied with skill because the grounds of doubt differ. So depending upon your grounds of doubt about your interest in Christ, then we would need to address what, what those, what your assurance should be. I could make it a little bit more explicit maybe for if, for example, you think, well, you know, I don't know if I am, I don't know if I am indeed Christ's.

Oh, why do you say that? Well, because I just so persistently live and quite delightfully and delectably live for the world, the flesh, and the devil. Well, that might be good grounds for having doubt.

[41 : 59] So I wouldn't just say, well, no, ignore those. Here's just a promise of salvation. That would be a pastoral abuse. No, it would be, hey, the gospel involves repentance.

Look to Christ. So if, if rather, like some Scottish Presbyterian saint in the Outer Hebrides hasn't taken the Lord's Supper for six years because he just doesn't know if he's worthy enough to receive it, you know, I might say, whoa, friend, brother, don't look to yourself and your relative degree of holiness or unholiness, look to Christ and his righteousness.

It's his record, not yours, that gives you access. So you deal with it in a completely, in a different way, but it should be, it should be the privilege of every believer.

It is the privilege of every believer to have that assurance. Yeah. I was going to say, I'm going to this issue, predestination would be one that really reveals the human heart is like, I don't know, I don't know if deceitfulness is the right word, but certainly a resistance to believing, I think, what scripture is clearly saying, particularly because I feel like on this particular issue, there are two common, I feel like, what seems like heart motives behind not wanting to believe in election, and it seems like one of them is you don't want to believe that you are that bad, that you would never believe in Christ or anything.

But I feel like the second one tends to be more common, which is I think the idea of believing in a God who chooses might appear to so many as something that's totally unfair and unjust, that's the temptation of evangelism and people ask, people ask about predestination, we don't want to say the thing that might seem unpopular or might seem like it's tempting God to be in a certain way.

[44 : 04] And I'm just curious, why is it that it's so important that in those moments you sort of listen to what scripture has to say instead of going with the thing that we sort of believe society wants us to think?

Because I don't know, I just feel like in a lot of it feels like the human part is going to believe what it wants to. It happens in this predestination topic. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, thanks Alex.

Yeah, this is important. We always are going to have that dual dynamic of the world conforming us to its image and that is always proceeding apace just by being in the world and seeking to be not of it.

And yet it squeezes us into its mold. So yes, a lot of how we think about things and how we feel about things and how we wish things will be conforming to the world.

And in contrast to that, we rather need to renew our minds through the word, through the scriptures. So we come to think aright, orthodoxy, and also importantly, we don't often think about this as often, that we act aright, orthopraxy, but also that we feel aright, orthopathy.

[45 : 30] We ought to, good things ought to exhilarate us. We ought to rejoice in good things. and we ought to feel praise for things that are worthy of praise.

So yes, we do need to have scripture continue to train us such that our affections, what our heart begins to be trained to incline itself toward with our hearty amen and praise the Lord and hallelujah and God be praised.

That is something that we do need to work on. Absolutely, Alex, and it's often a challenge. It's always a challenge. Yeah. Yeah, go ahead. Sure.

So the scriptural idea of God receiving all glory and salvation, I think that's obviously true, but how do we reconcile that with language and parable talents, well done, that would be true.

Does it seem like they would need attention? How do you find the tension there? That a commendation, if, well, could it not be resolved this way?

[46 : 46] When God commends us with well done, if we actually are orthodox and orthopathic, we will realize, aha, why, thank you, but as you and I both know, what do I have that I haven't received?

So this just reverberates back to your glory, God, because if I were left to my own, why, that talent would be buried in the napkin still, you know, six feet under, just like my nature.

So, you know, the echo back is with a combination, not to us, O Lord, but to thy name be glory. So, it's just, that's just how it works if we recognize, and when we see things as they truly are, that will be perfectly understood when we are in his presence.

Really, any sort of inclination to boast really can't occur to a glorified saint in the presence of God.

So I think that that's, we are, what he, we, when he gives us crowns, he's simply crowning his gifts.

[48 : 10] So maybe think about it like that. Yeah? Yeah. You talk about, like, the, he doesn't choose everybody, and it's like, no, the world wants to make it to where it's like, everybody has this

option to go after God.

And so it made me think about the scripture, many are called, few are chosen. So what's the difference between being called and being chosen? Excellent, yeah. So many are called, few are chosen.

What's the difference between being called and being chosen? What was the question? Well, he's just asking, what it says certain ones are chosen and others are not, but it says the calling seems to be broader than the choice.

What's the difference between being called and being chosen? So, a great question. The scriptural difference is that the call of God goes out to every human creature.

and it is both an invitation, look to the Lord, all the ends of the earth and be saved.

[49 : 26] So the gospel, the announcement that God has provided a savior for the world, look to him and live, that call goes out to all. It is a universal call.

And that is something that we are invited to respond to and indeed we have an obligation to respond to morally. As Paul writes to the Athenians, said to the Athenians, God is, in Acts 17, God is commanding all people everywhere to repent and to believe.

So the gospel call is both an invitation and a command. There's an obligation. But not all answer that call. In fact, we are so self-centered and curved in upon ourselves that we're like teflonized against that.

So God has to actually go in and like do an intervention, shake us from our spiritual stupor, open our closed eyes, make our hard heart malleable, and our stiff neck able to actually turn and look to the serpent on the rod, on the pole, because we would never do that.

It's not that we could never do that. It's not that our will, like a weather vane, is soldered so it can't turn. It's just that the prevailing wind from our hearts are always blowing in the same direction.

[51 : 05] We prefer the delectable doings of darkness. God comes in as light, but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. So God has to actually choose certain people and change their hearts, regenerate them so they do respond to that gospel.

So that's the difference. So that, what some theologians call an inward call. So the outer call, we all hear with our ears, whatever, I'm busy, I'm doing things, versus an inward call that he makes effectual where, oh, this is life.

This is a savor of life to those who are appointed to life, he says in Corinthians. So, does that make some sense? Okay, good. Yes, back. Go ahead, back.

many of us, if not all of us, have had people near to us who have seemed to show genuine faith and belief and then fallen away.

And it's upsetting. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

[52 : 25] about that? you reconcile them? How do you counsel them as friends or family? Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, How do you think about that? How do you reconcile that? How do you counsel that as friends or family? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Great question. And that's, that topic is going to fall to, to, to, to Tyler soon. So you're going to get, you're going to get a much fuller, you're going to get a deeper, a broader, an all around better answer from Tyler.

But, but. I'm going to start taking notes. Yeah, yeah. But I'll just say a few words because we're at, at, at time here.

Yes, it is heart rending. I would bet it might even be so heart rending back that, that, that we're stirred to cry out to God and his mercy, to sovereign hearts, to pray.

Maybe even to lovingly confront, to plead. To, to, to examine ourselves to see if, if we in any way are putting a stumbling block before these people that are so close to us physically and, and affect in, in, in, in kinship of affection.

[53 : 39] So we find ourselves very much animated to plead to God. And, and, and that is a good, good sign.

Because God does not simply ordain the ends. And the ends are accomplished. And the ends are accomplished. Most, many of which, most of which are these very things that maybe you are beginning to feel evidence for in your heart.

rather than feeling indifference to the fate of your friend, you actually feel deep solicitude and a passion. And you find yourself praying and calling on God to open eyes.

And that's a good sign. You're beginning to see some of the very means that God ordains to use to achieve these ends activated in your heart. That seems to me to be great grace at work, which would be just the sort of thing that we would notice if God actually had saving a tent for that person. So that tends to make us more hopeful and hopefully not then more complacent. Oh, it looks like God's going to do it. Great. Well, I'll go back to my comic book, but more eager. So my sense is that the fact that you have a deep concern and a deep care, that's a good sign that God is at work and should be an added motivation to you to persist at it, to persist at that good work of exhortation and warning and appeal and that.

[55 : 21] So that's what I begin with. Yeah, yeah. Team, we're probably at time and we better go. And Lord willing, we'll see you next week where we are going to take up the question of what does God's electing love need to overcome in order to bring us from that dunghill back home.

So we will be looking at our condition, Lord willing. Thank you. I'd just like to tell you one thing. Yeah. This teaching is not new for me, but it comes as a reminder at an interesting time in my 51-year walk with the Lord.

Wow. Say more, Richard. And that's because I'm reading a book by M. David Litwa right now called Marcion, The Gospel of a Holy Good God.

Ah. And Marcion would have a much different reply from either some of the skeptical pronouncements that you voiced this morning, as Devils, huh?

[56 : 38] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Or anything else modern, really. Yeah. So he would say that, look to me, I've loved you with an everlasting love, from Jeremiah, for example.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. He would say, well, that's the Creator God. Yeah, yeah. And we would say, yeah, that's right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. But then you would go on to say, but it's not the Father of our Lord Jesus.

Yes, yes, yes, yes. Who's saying this. Yes, yes. And so the love he proffers in Jeremiah there is a tainted love. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, Marcionism, that early heresy, was, it seemed to not be able to integrate and hold together the witness of the Old Testament and the New Testament and failed to see that actually Jesus is the place where we understand the Father best.

So rather than thinking that there is a contrast, we need to integrate them because God has supremely, God, Jehovah, has supremely revealed himself in his son, Hebrews 1, 3.

And that's, I think, where Marcion's approach is just mistaken. Luther says, to look for God outside the face of Christ is the devil. So, you know, so we ought to say, no, no, no, the best revelation of the nature of God, the Father, is the Son, rather than thinking that they could be contrasted.

[58 : 21] They need to be integrated. I think that's where Marcion goes wrong. Well, do you know of this scholar? I've heard the name, but I haven't read that book. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I haven't read that book.

His earlier book was called, The Evil Creator. Ah, well, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. All right, all right.

Thank you, Richard.