

# (Ephesians) Election: Pure and Simple

by Jeff Noblit

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*The sermon emphasizes the sovereignty of God in salvation, highlighting the importance of understanding election and the role of faith in salvation.*

**Duration:** 1:17:54

**Scripture:** Romans 8:4-5, Romans 8:29, Romans 9:20, Ephesians 1:4-5, Ephesians 1:11

**Topics:** "Election"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of not relying solely on the Bible for evangelism. He argues that Christians need to provide creative supporting evidence to win over the current generation. However, he disagrees with the idea of using worldly methods, such as rock music or dramatic presentations, to attract people to the gospel. Instead, he believes that Christians should focus on filling themselves with the word of God and confronting the culture with love and clarity. The preacher also addresses the issue of denial regarding God's sovereign electing choice, emphasizing the biblical truth that God predestines and chooses those whom He foreknows.

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## Transcript

Look at Ephesians chapter 1, verse 4. We're going to find out how he works. We don't understand it all, but we can see something of how he works. As we look at Ephesians chapter 1, let me just read verses 1 through 4 to get the flow of the context.

And then we'll nestle in on the first part of verse 4. And look at a message that I'm entitling, Election Pure and Simple. Ephesians chapter 1, beginning in verse 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him in love. Now in verse 3, the Bible tells us that we are blessed beyond comprehension. He says, we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

One way to view that is, we have all the blessing an infinite heaven can contain. God has bestowed that on us. And of course that includes salvation, coming to God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the question is, how do we get these blessings? But first of all, let's look at his elaboration on these particular blessings. And we see that beginning in verse 4. Let me do something of a quick running overview of verses 4 through 14. And look at how he mentions the various aspects of the blessings we have that come from heaven.

All right, first of all, in verse 4, he says, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him in love. So he says, first of all, you're gonna be holy and blameless before a just God. Now that's a blessing folks.

All right, then he goes to verse 5. He predestined us to adoption as sons. God says, not only that, I'm not just gonna make you right. I'm gonna make you one of my sons who's right with me.

Not just a slave, not a bond slave, not a worker, not an employee, not a demeaning lower person. I'm gonna make you one of my sons. I'm gonna adopt you.

That's a spiritual blessing. Verse 7, in him we have redemption through his blood. Now he begins to elaborate on the process of bringing about our salvation.

That came through Jesus Christ dying on the cross, pouring out his life's blood as he received the judgment of God on our behalf. Now, as he died receiving the judgment of God on our behalf, the Bible says that was a redemption. Now that word redemption comes from the slave market of this day.

When you could go to the slave market and buy one out of slavery, you purchased their redemption. So Jesus Christ through his blood has purchased our redemption, bought us out of the slave market of Satan and sin and made us a child of God. Well, that's another spiritual blessing.

And notice how he words it in verse 8, which he lavished on us. He's talking about grace. He lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.

So we have a lavishing grace that's been put on us. In other words, God didn't just say, I'm gonna just bestow some grace on you. No, he says, if you look at what I have done for you, it's a pouring of the full load of grace on you.

Lavishing grace. Then he goes on and says in verse 8, that in this one of these spiritual blessings is wisdom and insight. When you're saved, you begin to understand the ways of God and the truth of God as other men cannot understand.

For example, as these Gentiles, these non-Jews were coming to Christ, they begin to see that the way to God was not through Judaism and not through the works of the law and not through the ceremonies of religious Judaism, but it was through Christ. That was wisdom. That was insight they did not have before.

And though not many of the Jews came to Christ in this day, those who did come, what did they do? They gained wisdom. It's not through the works of the law and it's not through the ceremonial rites of Judaism. It's through Christ that we come to God.

That's a blessing. And then he says in verse 11, also we have obtained an inheritance. That inheritance, we inherit everything that is Christ.

That's a blessing. Verse 12, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ, we have hope in Christ. Now remember the biblical concept of hope is not, I believe it's gonna happen, I hope it happens

and maybe it'll happen.

No, this hope is a full assurance. We know that we're God's child and we know we're gonna make it all the way. We're gonna make it somehow.

Well, to us it's somehow, to God he knows how. We just can't see it all yet. Verse 13, in him you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise, verse 14, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.

He said, on top of everything else I've mentioned, another blessing is the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Godhead lives in your heart. And that presence and that awareness of God in your life is a seal that God's gonna finish the work and a pledge or a down payment that the rest is coming. So it's all ours and it's all given to us.

But now here's the real question. How do we possess these? How do we know that these are ours? Well, here's some ways. Some others have tried to possess heaven and its blessings.

Perhaps we could try to possess heaven and its blessings by force. I mean, we'll just fight our way there. We'll just war our way into heaven.

We'll demand our way into heaven. Well, that was Satan's way. And by the way, that way doesn't work.

So we're not gain heaven and heaven's blessings by force. Well, maybe we can gain heaven and heaven's blessings by earning them. We'll just work and we'll just stop doing bad and we'll start doing good.

And we'll dot all of our I's religiously and we'll cross all of our T's religiously. And we'll make sure we take the Lord's supper and we'll make sure we get in the Baptistry and we'll make sure we join the church and we will work our way there. Our church of Christ friends and our Roman Catholic friends, their doctrine teaches that very concept.

You have to merit your way in, work your way into heaven. But my friend, the problem is if you're gonna earn your way or work your way into heaven, you have to have heaven's currency. I mean, heaven's blessings have to be purchased with heaven's coin.

And we don't have any of that. Let me just give you a couple of texts right quick. Romans chapter three, would you turn back there with me? Romans chapter three.

And by the way, if I was witnessing to someone like I did this past week, I would start with Romans chapter three and just show them the great truth of sin in the life of all humanity or in the lives of all men so that they understand that and maybe the Holy Spirit will apply that to their understanding. Romans chapter three, beginning in verse nine. Let's see if we can work our way there.

Is there some way we can sort of earn or achieve our way into heaven? Verse nine, what then are we better than they? Not at all for we have already charged that both Jews and the Greeks are all under sin. In other words, they start in a position whereby everything they are and everything they do is tainted by sin. Therefore, none of what they can achieve is acceptable in God's economy.

Verse 10, as it is written, there is none righteous, not even one. What if there's none righteous? Perhaps there's some of them that are trying to understand and trying to get to God. No, look at verse 11.

There is none who understands. There is none who seeks God. All have turned aside.

Together they've become useless. There is none who does good. There's not even one.

Well, wait a minute. What about all of these Jewish Pharisees who live such upright, moral, religiously consistent? They kept all the laws and even added to the laws of Scripture and they kept all of those. Well, the Bible says there's none righteous.

There's not one of them that's doing good. It's a self-righteousness. It's not a true righteousness.

Verse 13, their throat is an open grave. With their tongues they keep deceiving. The poison of asp is under their lips.

He says, listen to what comes out of their mouths and you will see something of the condition of their hearts. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

Destruction and misery are in their paths. Verse 17, and the path of peace they have not known and there's no fear of God before their eyes. Look at verse 19.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be closed and all the world become accountable to God. So that's what man is. Can that kind of man merit his way into heaven? Absolutely not.

But when Jesus was baptized of John the Baptist, Luke 3, 22 tells us, what did heaven say about Jesus? This is my son in whom I'm well pleased. I'm not pleased at all with man's effort and man's works and man's striving and man's religion. I'm only pleased with my son.

And that's why you get into heaven in Christ or you don't get into heaven at all. You go on in one sense on the coattails of his righteousness you'll not get in on your own righteousness. So we're not gonna earn our way into heaven and get all of heaven's blessings.

Well, a third way maybe that a man would try and that's inheriting these. Maybe we can somehow inherit these blessings. Well, that won't work because to inherit something the owner has to die.

And the owner of heaven and all of heaven's blessings is God and he never dies. So you can't inherit them. Well, maybe then you can get into heaven by asking for them as a gift.

God, I have enough good in me that I know that it's wise to ask you for heaven and for the blessings of heaven and relationship with you. So I'm just gonna do that. I'm gonna ask for them as a gift.

Will that work? That alone, will that work? Look at Ephesians chapter two, just a second. Back to our original book, Ephesians chapter two and look at verse one. Ephesians chapter two, verse one.

And you, literally it reads, being dead, you're dead and you remain dead in your trespasses and sins. Now, the question is, how dead are you? Dead people can't ask. So you can't even in and of yourselves get into heaven just by asking for it as a free gift.

Then how are you gonna do that? How is it going to happen? Now that's what Paul addresses here in Ephesians chapter one as you begin in verse four. Because in verse three, he says, we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places given to us, but how do we possess that? Well, here he goes,

verse four telling us how. Just, the word just as there, the phrase just as in the new American standard literally means because, or you could amplify it and say, this is how you obtain them.

This is how you get in on heaven and the spiritual blessings of heaven. Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world. Paul says, that's how you get it.

You get it if he chooses you before the foundation of the world. Now, does that trouble your soul? That makes me rejoice. That gives me peace.

That gives me comfort and assurance. Well, wait a minute. What about poor old God? Looks like God's not fair.

Looks like God's not just. I'll deal with that thoroughly. But listen, I wanna say something to you, Baptist brothers and sisters.

There's no way on earth you can make that text mean anything other than what it says, unless you interpolate and rape the spirit and the proper interpretation of the text. How do you get in on it? You are chosen in him before the foundation of the world. Now, what does that Greek word choose literally mean? That Greek word in this text that says that he chose us literally means to pick out or select.

Means the exact same thing it means for us today in the English. To pick out or select, to choose for oneself. So Paul says the fundamental first cause of all the benefits and all the blessings of salvation is God's electing choice.

You might call it his eternal election. Now the word elect or election is the very same idea of choosing here. God in eternity past elected or chose to save certain ones and that's how they get in on salvation.

That's what Paul is saying. Now you may say, I don't agree with that. You don't have to agree with that, but you can't make Paul say it any other way.

That's what Paul is saying. And by the way, we'll look at this more thoroughly later. The great majority of all Baptist theologians and scholars through the ages taught and believe these doctrines thoroughly.

It's just in the last 70 or 80 years that there's been a drifting away from it and that is very tragic. Hodge said it this way, election is the cause or source of all subsequent blessings. And that's what Paul is emphasizing.

Paul in verse three, we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. How do we know we've got them? If you are chosen in him before the foundation of the world, you get them. They are yours.

Now there's another text that teaches this very thoroughly. Turn there with me if you would. Look at Romans chapter eight.

Would you turn there? Romans chapter eight and begin in verse 29. Romans chapter eight, beginning in verse 29. So this takes as emphasizing the same thing in that it's going to talk about the great blessings that are ours in salvation.

And it's going to also emphasize very clearly how you got in on those great blessings of salvation. You've seen it. Here's what's happening in some of our hearts and minds.

Are you listening to me? That old wicked, wicked root of pride starts rising up in your heart. And you want to say, I had something to do with it. I get some credit.

I did something. I chose Jesus. I was smart.

I was wise. I believed, I, I, I. And God wants to say, nope, God did it all. Even the believing was a grace gift that came from God.

Romans chapter eight, look at verse 29. For those whom he foreknew, and that means more than just knew beforehand what they would do. That foreknow there literally means selection or choice.

It has the idea of election in it. And if that were not true, he makes it clear by the next phrase in verse 29. He also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son.

Now Acts 2 23 gives an insight on foreknowing and predestined and how they go together. Acts 2 23 says, this man delivered over, listen now, by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put him to death. Preaching on the day of Pentecost, Peter says, you guys crucified Jesus.

But let me tell you something. You didn't just do it. God predetermined and foreordained that you would crucify Jesus.

God chose that for his son. His son wasn't helpless to save himself or prevent this tragedy from happening. No, God almighty orchestrated these events.

He used your hands to carry them out. All of a sudden God's getting big, isn't he? Also he says, not only in verse 29, whom he foreknew, he also predestined. The word predestined can't mean anything else other than to mark out or determine beforehand.

To mark out or determine beforehand. Well, he foreknew and he predestined to what end? We'll look at verse 29 as we continue. To become conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren.

Now get this in your mind. To be conformed to the image of his son so that he, the son Jesus, would be the firstborn among many brethren. In other words, God made a covenant with his son, Jesus Christ.

And God says to his son, God, the son Jesus Christ, I'm going to give you a people who will be with you and be like you and bring you glory for all eternity. So God foreknew certain ones and he predestined certain ones that they would belong to Jesus and Jesus would be the first of that type for all eternity. The firstborn among many brethren.

Jesus was the first one to go to heaven and be glorified forever after being on the earth. And all those that are his, those who are foreknown and predestined will also be glorified and spend eternity with him in heaven. They'll be conformed to the image of his son.

Well, now, how does that take place, Paul? Give me some help here. Well, verse 30. And these whom he marked out beforehand, predestined, he also called.

There was a point in time in history when those whom God foreknew and marked out, chose or elected, use your own word, he called them to come to Jesus. Now, calling here means effectual call. It's an

efficacious call, which simply means it accomplishes what it sets out to perform.

When God calls one of his elect to saving faith, it accomplishes what he sets it out to perform. That's what the Lord Jesus meant in John 6, 44, when he said this, no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him. Jesus says, you can't just come if and when you choose.

It's not of man, you can't come to me unless the father who sent me draws you and the father who sent me calls, that's the text in Romans chapter eight, or draws those who are foreknown and predestined. There's no way you can make the text mean anything else. That's what it means.

Now, don't get mixed up between God's effectual call and our universal call. We are commanded in scripture to give the universal call of the gospel to everyone, everywhere, all that we can, amen. We don't go around choosing who the elect are, we urge all men to come to Christ.

But when they come to Christ, then we begin to teach them how glorious their salvation is. Why? Because our God deserves glory from their lives and they need to glorify him according to the knowledge of who he is and what he's really done. And he is the almighty sovereign God who absolutely dictated every element of their conversion, even foreknowing and predestined and calling them to that salvation.

And when they begin to understand that, they come into the song service ready to sing because God's big and wonderful and glorious. This little old pitiful God of the Armenian, this little old anemic, impotent little God that sits in heaven and wrings his hands and hopes somebody might receive him and accept him somehow and make poor little old Jesus feel better about dying on the cross. Hogwash! That's not what God teaches.

God teaches that all of those whom Jesus Christ paid for on the cross who are foreknown and predestined will be called, will be saved, will be glorified and Christ's holy bride will be complete in heaven for all eternity, just as God designed from the foundation of the world. I don't understand all that. Well, you just be glad you got in on it, brother.

I'm telling you, God's a big God. I wouldn't have done it this way. Now you'd say, yeah, I know, I'd let everybody in it.

No, I'd send everybody to hell probably. I mean, if you're a just and holy God, you see, that's the problem. We don't have any understanding of how abhorrent and abominable our sin is before a holy God.

If you were God, you'd probably send them all to hell. Not save an elect few, but send them all to a just condemnation, which they deserve. Well, there's a point in time when God calls you to salvation upon which you believe and trust in Christ.

But notice something else here in verse 30. Those whom he predestined, these he also called. And whom he called, he also justified.

Now the word justified is a legal term of the day. It means a declaration of being just. God declares that one who is called just in his sight, righteous or having a right standing before him in heaven.

And these whom he justified, he also glorified. In other words, God says all the way from eternity past, when I foreknew them and chose and elected them and I predetermined, I marked that beforehand that they belonged to Jesus and they would be with him for all eternity. And then at a point in time, I sent Jesus

to pay for their sins on the cross.

Then another point in time, individually, I drew them, I called them to salvation. And as I called them to salvation, I declared in heaven, another one's justified, another one's justified, another one's justified. And I predetermined and it cannot be altered that those very ones will be glorified with me for all eternity.

So what is the whole summarizing general truth of this? Well, look at verse 31 of Romans chapter eight. What then shall we say to these things? Well, let's just stop right there. Now, what are you gonna say about these things? That's what y'all say, amen and hallelujah.

Some folks were tending to debate with Paul as he taught these things in chapter nine. And he says, well, who are you old man to answer back to God? Who are you to trouble God about the way God did his certain things, such as building his church? What are you gonna say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Who can possibly defeat us? Who can possibly thwart us? Who can possibly bring us to an end? So he says, we're conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. We're gonna be called, we're justified if we're called.

He's gonna glorify us. And then in verse 31, he says, if God's for us, who can be against us? Well, how does all those blessings take place or how do you possess all of those wonderful blessings? One way, you have to be foreknown and predestined. Or back in Ephesians chapter one, you have to be one who is chosen from the foundation of the world.

That's how you get in on, that's how you possess those blessings. And that's the flow of Paul's thinking as he writes this letter to the believers at Ephesus. Now, two things I wanna mention as far as the body of the message.

Number one is some various views of election. We're gonna look at that. And then secondly, some objections to election.

We'll look at that next. But under the various views of election, number one, first of all, there's denial, just flat denial. There are those folks who simply say, I just don't believe that's right.

I just don't believe God did that. In my intellect, I can't put that all together. So I just reject it, I just deny it.

What I believe is, is that God sent his son and his son died on the cross for the sins of the world. That's true. But then they'll tell us, well, he told us to spread the good news.

And then after that, God's sort of out of the way and it just, however good we are at spreading the news and however thorough we are at spreading the news and however good we are at preaching the gospel and winning our friends, that's who gets in and the rest don't get in, that's it. So it's just a denial of God's sovereign electing choice. But when we just looked at Romans 8, 28 through 31, it didn't seem like God just sort of sat back and lets it happen, does it? Those whom he foreknew, he predestined to become conformed to the image of his son and those whom he predestined, these he also called.

Sounds like God's active in this. And those whom he called, he justified and those whom he justified, he glorified. Then Ephesians chapter one, verse four, sounds like God is initiating something here.

Verse four, he chose us in him from the foundation of the world. God didn't just send his son, he did that, but he didn't just do that. He took some initiative, he took some action in working out our salvation.

John 6, 44, Jesus says, no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him. That sounds like God's active in this thing. And just to be honest, it's taken me years of growth in the word to realize that the souls of men are not up to me.

I get to be God's agent in the process of bringing the elect into God's kingdom, but they're not up to me. I wanna ask you something. You really think that God in heaven is gonna leave the souls of men up to us? I mean, think about that for a moment.

We fail and falter and slip and slide and are unfaithful and inconsistent. No, my friend. Well, another view of election is that God just knew beforehand.

God is omniscient soul. He just knew beforehand who would be saved. And since he knew who before the fact would believe, then he went ahead and elected those as his children.

So what they're saying is, is that God foresees a future response of faith. And so he elects those whom he saw would in the future respond in faith. Now this is the Pelagian or the Armenian view.

The Pelagian or the Armenian view simply teaches that man fell in the Garden of Eden. You know, when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, all of mankind fell with them. They fell into spiritual darkness.

They fell out of the family of God. They fell into condemnation and sin. And all the posterity of Adam inherits that fallen nature.

But the Pelagian Armenian says, man fell, but he didn't fall all the way. Right before rock bottom, man sort of stopped. So in one sense, the Armenian or the Pelagian view is that there's a spark of goodness there in man.

There's an element of goodness there. And so man has something in him that is inherently good and that inherit goodness in man enables him to choose Christ, which is a good thing. And so what we've got to do is convince these people to choose Jesus.

And I'll get into this more in more detail, but I think this is what's led to some of the ridiculous extreme shenanigans in the name of evangelism that we see in the world today. Everything from muscle bound men breaking ice over their heads to extreme dramatic presentations to sort of stir the emotions and scare people and all kinds of stuff. Not all of which is evil, but all this extreme stuff.

Why? Because man has a spark of goodness. Man is able to believe on his own. So if we can be creative enough, charismatic enough, dynamic enough, witty enough, we can somehow get these people to decide for Jesus and get them into heaven.

That's the Armenian Pelagian view. And God in his omniscience, they would say, knows who these are going to be. And so those are the ones he elects.

But turn again, if you will, to Ephesians chapter two. And as you're turning to Ephesians chapter two, let me ask yourself, what good could God see in this crowd? What good is there in this group that's being described before us in Ephesians chapter two? And you being dead in trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that's now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them, we too all formerly lived in the lust of

our flesh, indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Now you could stop in verse one with your dead in trespasses and sins. A dead man can't choose. A dead man can't decide.

A dead man can't come. A dead man can't receive anything. Romans chapter three, verse 11.

There is none who understands. And he's talking in the context of the gospel here. He's saying, if you show these people Christ and his salvation in and of themselves without any divine intervention, they won't get it.

They won't choose Christ on their own. They're incapable. There's no good there.

There's none who understands. There is none who seeks God. Again, John 6, 44.

No man can come to me, Jesus says, unless the father who sent me draws him. Why? Because there's no good there. In Genesis chapter six, verse five, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

So I ask you, if you hold to the Armenian Pelagian view that there's some spark of goodness in man, and therefore man with that innate goodness has the capacity to do a good thing, that is, choose Jesus Christ. From those texts of scripture, what good could be there? There's nothing good there. Listen, friend, God didn't save you because of some worth you have.

God saved you in order because of the worth he possesses. Because of the glorious attribute of grace that he and only he possesses in the entire universe. I wanna just read this to you as we close.

I know not why God's wondrous grace to me he hath made known, nor why unworthy Christ in love redeemed me for his own. Now listen, I know not how this saving faith to me he did impart. I didn't just come up with faith, he imparted the capacity to have faith.

Guys, our old songwriters sang it for years. Where you been? Are you with me? It's been there forever, 2000 years anyway. I know not how this saving faith to me he did impart, nor how believing in his word wrought peace within my heart.

I know not how the spirit moves convincing men of sin. Spirit has to move first. Revealing Jesus through the word, creating faith in him.

Faith has to be created. It's not a view, there's no good spark in you that will have faith. It's created by the working of God.

I know not when my Lord may come at night or noontide fair, nor if I'll walk the veil with him or meet him in the air, but I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day. Isn't that a great truth? Pastor, why is it some good, sweet, faithful people just don't get our convictions? Just don't get the truths we stand on? I think many times it's because God hadn't revealed it to them. They can't see it.

Does that make us better? No, it ought to put us on our face weeping in humility. God, we don't deserve to have been enlightened, have faith burst in us and come into your family, but we're grateful to you for it. We

come to the third view of election, and that is what I call election pure and simple.

Election pure and simple, and I want you to hear very clearly this very simple definition. You might even wanna jot this down. God chose those whom he would save and he secured their salvation.

God chose those whom he would save and he secured their salvation. From before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 4 and other texts, God elected, chose, selected those he would save. And then in time and space history, he sent his son to die.

His son paid for the sins of his people on the cross. And then also in time and space history, he called those whom he had chosen whom his son paid their sin debt to come to himself and believe in him and be everlastingly saved. That's election, pure and simple.

Now, let me give you some supporting text here to show you how prominently this is taught throughout the scripture. Matthew 22, verse 14. The Bible simply says, for many are called, but few are chosen.

There's a call that goes out to everyone. And by the way, let me reiterate here that that is our job to call everyone to repentance, to urge everyone to trust Christ. And if I were to ever hear as your pastor that you're sitting on your laurels or you're not passionate or diligent to reach the lost because election's just gonna save those who are gonna get saved, then I'm gonna rebuke you.

We are to be passionate about the gospel, begging and praying and pleading with God to save souls, but also knowing many are called, but few are chosen. John 15, 16, Jesus says, you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain. And we can just give a side note here.

What is a good evidence that one is truly an elect of God? They're truly a believer, they're truly saved. Well, they have fruit that remains. In the parable of the sower, the Lord talks about seed that's cast on the ground and some lands on the hard walkways by the field and that's just gobbled up by birds, doesn't do any good.

And then some soil lands on the rocky places. That means there's a level, a layer rather, a soil and under that bedrock, so it doesn't have any deep root and it sprouts up and it looks great, but it doesn't last. No abiding fruit.

And Jesus was giving that parable to illustrate to us to be ready and prepared for a lot of things that look like conversion, but they don't last. And without any lasting fruit, there is no evidence of true conversion. I'm not talking about perfection, but I'm talking about a lifestyle pattern of fruit bearing.

John 15, 19, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." Acts 9, verse 15, speaking of the conversion and the ministry of the apostle Paul. Acts 9, 15, "But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel." In other words, Paul didn't have a vote in this.

Paul didn't get to discuss this. Paul did not lobby for this position. God says, I chose him and I didn't choose some others for this particular conversion and this particular ministry.

Romans 11, verse 7. Boy, how strong this is. "What then? That which Israel is seeking for, it has not obtained. But those who were chosen obtained it and the rest were hardened." Now, is that a clear teaching of election? Israel thought through keeping the laws of Judaism and Israel thought through the ceremonial rites and rituals that God had given them and then human works and effort, they would somehow find God and find heaven and find spiritual blessing, but they didn't obtain it.

But those who were chosen obtained it. How strong and clear that text is. 1 Corinthians 1, 27 and 28.

"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise." Verse 28, "And the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen the things that are not that he might nullify the things that are." He says, God has a plan whereby it's common for God to pick those to be his that the world might reject and not want if they were about some grand or glorious task. So don't get any arrogance about being chosen of God. He usually chooses the lesser.

So he can show how big and how great and how glorious he is. Because you see, if he can use me, now that means he's big. And if he can use you, that means he's big.

And wonderful. Colossians 3, 12. "And so as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." And here's a strong and clear text in 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 13.

"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you when from the beginning." If the Arminian view was correct, and that is that God chose those whom he knew would believe, it could not say from the beginning. Because at the beginning, there was no one to believe. God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith and the truth.

Because you were chosen, God put into work the regenerating effects of the Holy Spirit upon your life. And you came to the point of believing by faith in Jesus Christ. 2 Timothy 2, verse 10.

"For this reason, I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, and with it, eternal glory." Now, Paul is writing to his young understudy, Timothy. And he says, "Timothy, this keeps me going. This keeps me preaching, though they imprison me.

This keeps me preaching, though they try to stone me. This keeps me preaching, though they defame my name and slander me and question my motives and mock me before men. I keep going." And here's why, Timothy, "For the sake of the elect." Are you hearing me? Because I know in every city I preach in, there's some elect who will respond to God's message.

So I keep on going for that sake. We're, and I'm gonna hit on this later, so I don't wanna spend a whole lot of time here, but we're committed to reach the Haku of Peru with the gospel, an unreached mountainous people group. What should be our motivation for getting in there? This should be our motivation, that God, in His sovereign purposes, has some elect in those mountains.

But in His sovereign purposes, He's designed that they will be saved through the preaching of the gospel. He did not have to do it that way, but He did. And that motivates us to take the gospel to them.

1 Peter 1, verse 1. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who reside as aliens scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, who are chosen." So He didn't say who believed, He said who are chosen. Now, certainly you have to repent and believe. But the emphasis in the biblical text seems to be on the chosen.

Now, I don't know that we should change our terminology. That would really stir the community, wouldn't it? If we quit calling ourselves believers and started calling ourselves the chosen. Be a good biblical definition though.

Actually, it's a very humbling and demeaning thing to say that because you're giving all the credit to God, but the world wouldn't take it that way, you understand. 1 Peter 2, verse 9. "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." He's referring to those who believe and come into the church. He said, you're there because you were chosen.

Revelation 17, 14, "These will wage war against the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them because He is Lord of lords and King of kings and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." So notice he puts all three aspects here. There's a time when God calls you to salvation because you are chosen and those who are called and chosen are those who are faithful. They have lasting fruit.

And then Paul and Barnabas in their preaching in Acts 13, verse 48. Listen to this text. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." Who believed? As many as would know.

As many as were appointed, chosen, elected from the foundation of the world by God, those believed. Now the context here is Paul is talking to the Jews and he tells the Jews, you've hardened your hearts. You won't receive the gospel.

I'm turning away from you and I'm turning to the Gentiles and the Gentiles said, hallelujah, we'll take it. And then Paul qualifies that and all the ones that take it were the ones appointed to receive it. I just want you to know that is election pure and simple.

God chose those whom He would say and He took the initiative to secure their salvation. Now let's talk about some objections to election as our second major point. Some objections to election.

And here's the first one. And you've thought this yourself and you doubtlessly have heard it if you've been saved very long. They'll say, first of all, well, that is beneath the character of a loving God.

That is beneath His character. A loving God would not do that. And what they mean by that is that this is an arbitrary choice, God choosing one and not choosing another and God, a loving God would not do that.

But I want to say to you, it's not an arbitrary choice because it has a purpose. God choosing to save some for His own glory is a purpose. Verse six of Ephesians chapter one, He says very clearly, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

What is God's ultimate purpose? It is so He will be glorified. And as I've said to you before, God has a passion to see Himself glorified. And so He is glorified when we, the ones who are saved, see and experience a part of His attributes, a part of His character that only He possesses and that is grace.

And grace would only be seen, now listen, if He saves somebody as wretched as you and I. So when He does that and it's all Him, that means it's all grace and it's not us, what happens? It's to the praise of the glory of His grace. It's not us. So it's not arbitrary at all.

Now we do not know why God chose one and not another. Certainly it was unmerited favor. There wasn't something special in you that made God choose you and something wicked in another one that made God not choose the other one.

No, it was unmerited favor. It's favor but it's unmerited favor. But we do know what verse four of Ephesians chapter one tells us.

I'm sorry, verse five, the last part of verse five rather, according to the kind intention of His will. Pastor, why would God choose to save one and not save another one? One simple answer. That is the intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace.

So it's not beneath the character of a loving God because it's not just some arbitrary thing. All men are before God as unworthy condemned sinners. And as unworthy condemned sinners, God in His sovereign purposes saves and chooses to save some out of that group and allow the others to go to where they deserve eternal wrath and punishment so that He might demonstrate His great love and forgiveness toward those whom He chose, His elect.

And by the way, God will be glorified in expressing just condemnation on those who reject Christ because they choose to reject Christ and they get what they deserve. Now, listen to me, the elect and the non-elect choose to reject Christ, but the elect are given the capacity by the working of the Holy Spirit to receive Christ. The non-elect are not, but they still choose to reject Christ and still deserve judgment.

Well, the second objection. First of all, we said, it's not beneath the character of a loving God because it's not arbitrary, it does have a purpose. But secondly, they'll say it's not just and God is just.

How can God be just and do this? God choosing to save one, they would say, and not another is not fair because all men deserve an equal choice. You hear a lot about choice in today's culture. God's not necessarily pro-choice.

But you know what? Romans chapter one teaches us that God has been seen through creation itself. And so through the creation itself, God has revealed that He is there and men could see from creation itself that they ought to turn from self and humble themselves and choose to serve the living God, but they do not. They've all chosen.

The Bible says the law of God is written in every man's heart. And so the man has a moral code in his heart and he knows he's lost and he knows he's a sinner and he could turn from that and turn to God, but he does not. He chooses not to do that.

Thirdly, to many folks, God presents the gospel of Jesus Christ and many even reject that. So if the choice notion is what you believe God owes everyone, I wanna say this to you. All men have already made a choice.

I reject God. And God so purposes in His infinite love to sovereignly choose some that He will intervene in their hearts and regenerate them so that they will choose Christ and be saved. But all men have already made a choice.

And secondly, if you wanna follow the choice notion all the way through, I wanna tell you all do not get an equal choice. The child born and raised in Muscle Shoals, Alabama gets far more choices or chances, if you will, than the child raised in New York City. So that doesn't hold up as fair either, does it? So God is just and every man has made his choice to reject God.

The real problem with our culture is a rejection of the total depravity of man. We so want to hold on to something good in man. I wanna tell you how bad man is.

Man is so bad it took the bloody death of the Son of God to remedy the sin problem. Number three, a third objection to election, pure and simple. Well, they say it will lead to unholy living.

If you teach that and you preach that, then people will just decide, well, look, if I'm an elect person, if I'm one of those chosen ones, I'm gonna be saved regardless. So I can just live like I want and it's just all gonna work out anyway. We know the Bible teaches right the opposite.

The Bible teaches us very clearly in Ephesians chapter one, verse four, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we would be holy and blameless before him in love. Now look at this more thoroughly in the coming messages, but what he means there, we'll be holy and blameless before him in love. Now listen, that pilgrimage of desiring and wanting holiness begins at conversion and is completed at glorification.

I'm telling you the person that teaches and pronounces this counterfeit, shallow, unbiblical concept of conversion, whereby you go through a little emotion, you say a little prayer and it doesn't change your heart, there's not a new passion for God, there's not a brokenness over your sin and there's not a zeal and a yearning for God and his holiness, that's not conversion. True conversion stirs something in you that desires a new life of holiness and purity, perfection, absolutely not, but a new pattern and purpose of holiness before God. So actually the Bible teaches those who are God's elect, those who are God's chosen that are called and come for salvation, will model out, will bring forth the fruit of holiness in their lives.

Well, brother Jeff, I know people and they were so genuine and they seem so sincere and they prayed real tears and they seem so broken and they said they trusted Christ, but for months and even years, they lived in open rebellion. I'm here to tell you, they're not saved because lasting fruit will be there and it'll be an increasing fruit of holiness. Now, when it gets to the end of verse four, he says, they'll be holy and blameless before him in love.

And there's a lot of different views on that, but I'm convinced here's the right view. Here's what it means. From the innermost part of our being, we would desire to be holy and blameless as he is.

In other words, there won't be some outward, shallow, superficial surface righteousness, some going through the motions or jumping through the hoops. In the innermost part of the heart, in genuine love for God and for his truth, we wanna be holy as he is holy. And I wanna say something to you, dear church friend and dear church member, if there's not something of that stirring in your heart, I would challenge you to go home and lock your door and get on your face and say, dear God, show me what's missing in my heart.

And it may be Christ. It may be Christ. Brother Jeff, do you want church members to be afraid of their salvation? I'd much rather you be afraid now and seek God and be saved than for somebody to teach you

a shallow unbiblical theory of conversion and you go on in your shallow hoop jumping experience thinking that's gonna get you into heaven.

Read 1 John. 1 John is a book that was written to assure us of our salvation. And what does 1 John tell us? We're assured of our salvation because there's a new love in our hearts, a love for righteousness and a hatred for sin and a love for the brethren and a diminishing desire for the world.

It's all in 1 John. Those are the marks you look for in the heart. It won't lead to unholy living.

Matthew 7, verse 20, Jesus talking about false prophets and those who put on the outward clothing but inwardly don't belong to God. He said, you'll know them by their fruits. You'll know them by their fruits.

You'll know, give it some time, you'll know. You'll know, you'll know by their fruits. It will not lead to unholy living but that's one of the objections.

And another objection that you'll hear is this. Well, it's not Baptist doctrine. That's not what Baptist teach, they'll say.

That's not what Baptist believe, they'll say. I've got two responses. My first response is this, so what? Now don't misunderstand me.

I'm thankful that I'm a Baptist but not a Baptist in the sense of what Baptists are in this contemporary culture, but Baptist in the sense of what Baptists historically are and what foundationally we were as Baptist people. You know, for years and years and years, our former pastor used to talk about it. I have something of a burden about it and that is that this church doesn't fit the image of a first Baptist church.

Have you realized that? We're not a quote, typical first Baptist church in the quote. Well, the reality is we would have been pretty typical 150 years ago, but not the way the church has drifted away from God and His truth in today's culture. So my first one is, so what? Our Baptist forefathers did not start out to fit some particular mode or some contemporary view of what doctrine was.

Our Baptist forefathers literally died because they followed Scripture and by following Scripture, they led one another to Christ and were baptizing adults, which offended Roman Catholicism and the Roman Catholics murdered them by the thousands for it. They didn't put a sign up out front and said, we're Baptist. They say we followed the Bible and their critics and their persecutors said, we hate you Baptizers and just the name stuck, Baptist.

That's all it was. They were called a lot of other things too, but Baptist kind of stuck. I'm telling you, it doesn't matter to God what that thing out front says or on the wall says.

What matters is what you teach and believe and practice in your hearts and in the life of your homes and families and your church. I can say this to you. I believe if some of our Baptist forefathers could rise up out of the grave and look at what we're calling church life in contemporary America today, they would say, please take the name off.

You're defaming our reputation. But second thing I'd like to say is what, well, no, let me add to this, what Spurgeon said about this. Spurgeon, who was the great, I guess the greatest or most well-known Baptist preacher of all time said, down, down, down with the name Baptist and up, up, up with the name of Christ.

Not that he was ashamed to be a Baptist. He was just saying that's not anything to die over or get upset about. But the name of Christ is.

If you don't think election pure and simple is a Baptist doctrine, then read the writings of John Bunyan, the 17th century pastor in Bedford, England, who was literally jailed for much of his life because he preached passionately the gospel of Jesus Christ and the church rejected him and locked him in jail. He said, John, you can get out of here if you'll just stop preaching the gospel. He says, keep me locked up.

As soon as you let me out, I'm preaching some more. You read his writings, he was a strong proponent of the biblical truth of election. If you don't believe that election is a Baptist doctrine, read the writings of the early English pastor and theologian and commentary writer, John Gill.

Gill said, this eternal election of particular persons to salvation is absolute and unconditional. That's, folks, I'm gonna tell you, this is the rock from which we are hewn. This is our foundation.

Read the writings of the great Baptist leader, Andrew Fuller. Read the writings of W.B. Johnson, the first president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Read the writings of R.B.C. Howell, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1851 to 1859.

Read the writings of Richard Fuller, the third president of the Southern Baptist Convention. And to those who had reject election and predestination, he said, quote, it is practical atheism to reject those and it contradicts the express assertions of the Bible. Read the writings of John Dagg, an Alabama man, the first writing systematic theologian among Baptists in America who said, and I quote, God bestows the blessings of his grace, not according to the works of the recipient, but according to his own sovereign pleasure.

John Dagg. Folks, you can't get more Baptist foundational than this. Read the writings of Basil Manley, Sr., a Baptist leader in the early 1800s and a leader and the founder of the Furman University.

By the way, he was president of the University of Alabama from 1838 to 1855. And he's credited with saving the University of Alabama from going under during its difficult years. He was a staunch believer and teacher of unconditional election.

Read the writings of James Pettigrew Boyce, the leader and the founding of the first Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in America, the seminary that's now located in Louisville, Kentucky. A strong proponent of election and predestination. Read the writings of B.H. Carroll, the founder of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

When Carroll founded that seminary, he said this, Southwestern is to be founded on, quote, the rock of predestination, end of quote. To these men, this wasn't a good doctrine to remember. This was foundational and core to what we are as Baptists.

Read the writings of A.H. Strong, one of our great theological professors. Read the New Hampshire Confession of Faith. It is our confession of faith, a strong and clear teaching of the unconditional doctrine of election.

And actually it wasn't until the early 20th century, about 1920, when a couple of good and godly men by the name of E.Y. Mullins and L.R. Scarborough began to teach differently than their forefathers. And I'm just curious in my heart as I've read and studied, why, why when the Bible's so clear, why was such a

long, rich biblical heritage where they begin to veer from this biblical doctrine and put some twist and different interpretations on it? And the only thing I can come up with is this, and if you study church history, you'll see this. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, there was a great push to reach people with the gospel and get immediate results.

Get the results, get the results, get the results. And I think they felt that they must change the emphasis to get as many people to respond as possible. But now we in the 21st century must ask a question, what has been the result of that push? Do we have a large, prosperous, blessed denomination of holiness? Do we have a solid membership in our churches of people who walk in truth and honor God? No, we have just the opposite.

We have large, large membership roles and very, very few people bearing any fruit of righteousness. So my friend, the doctrine of election is very, very, very Baptist. It's just that for whatever reason, it's been greatly de-emphasized or ignored or preached against in the last 50 to 80 years.

E, our next objection to the doctrine of election would be, it will diminish evangelistic fervor. It'll diminish the passion for winning souls. So we've got to stay away from it.

One of our greatest evangelists, I heard him say it and I love him and I think he's a great man, but he said the damnable doctrine of election. Well, should we just cut those texts out? I think I knew what he meant. He meant the hyper-Calvinist, the guy that gets out there and says you shouldn't witness, you should not do missions, you should not try to win anybody.

Folks, I wanna tell you what that is. That's rebellion. That's wickedness.

That's unacceptable. But we shouldn't throw out a sound biblical doctrine just because in our pragmatic conclusions, it's not gonna work as well as we think evangelism ought to work. But you know, I think it's right the opposite.

I don't think election deters evangelism. I think it encourages evangelism. Election actually encourages evangelism.

Why is that? Because we know, now listen, we know that some will be saved. If you believe in the doctrine of election, you know some will be saved. I like the way Jerry Falwell put it.

Jerry Falwell said, the more doors I knock on, the more elect I find. There's a lot of truth there. That's a great way to view it.

It encourages evangelism. Small group enrollment. Why do we enroll folks in our small groups? So that we might pray for them and minister to them and reach out to them and bring them into the gospel.

Because we know God's gonna save some. So not only does it encourage evangelism, another sub point here is that it promotes purity in evangelism. Understanding and teaching the doctrine of election promotes purity in our evangelism.

You see, Paul, the one who was the human author of most of these teachings, Paul used the message and the method that God had ordained to convert the elect. He stayed true and pure with the message because God saves not through our creativity. God saves not through our style.

God saves not through the preacher's charisma or his wit or his humor. God saves through the gospel. And since Paul knew God had those he was going to save and God was gonna save them a certain way, it kept him from veering off track.

And I'm not up here to carte blanche, criticize every evangelistic method out there, but preaching and personal witnessing with an open Bible. But I will tell you, there are some things that are clearly out of line. I see this clamoring after rock music to reach the young people.

These extravagant dramatic presentations in the churches to reach a new culture that will be drawn by that. And all the other things that go on that are questionable, if not out and out wrong. And here's the question that the Bible poses.

And here's the question in the heart of man. Yes, you're getting a lot of response, but are you having lasting fruit? How dare we even pause to consider that question, huh? Lasting fruit. Matter of fact, I just read this this afternoon.

You know, they told us for a while that the church has got to sort of change its ways and the church has got to sort of change its methods because we got to reach the baby boomers and the baby boomers are different. And then they said, oh, by the way, church has got to change its way and the church has got to change its style and we got to clothe the gospel differently because we got to reach the busters. Now they're different from the boomers, you see.

Then they said, now, wait a minute, you got to change again, church. You got to modify, you got to readjust because you got to reach generation X with the gospel. My gosh, we'd have to be a chameleon, wouldn't we? Just changing all the time to reach all these unique centers out there.

Now here, there's one more group. This is in the latest magazine of our North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. And it's dedicated to how the churches have to change and be creative and have a new style and a new approach because now we got to reach the postmoderns.

I don't know who they are, but that's who we got to reach. One church they quote in this article of reaching these postmoderns said this. He says, they don't have a clear concept of sin.

They have a very subjective morality. Well, that's true, isn't it? They'll say, I do drugs and I sleep with my girlfriend but I don't see anything wrong with that. This pastor said in his response to this is to talk to them about an emptiness in life and their void in being.

You know, friend, I don't think the key is to talk to somebody about the emptiness in their life. The key is for them to know they're a sinner before a holy God. Just because they're postmodern doesn't mean they don't hear the message of sin and law breaking and you're a transgressor before a holy God.

He continues on with some other quotes in here. Another church planner in Paradise, California talks about, I'm sorry, this is a church planning strategist. He says, approach postmoderns as a mission group.

Find out their beliefs and behaviors and where there is common ground with scripture and develop a strategy from there. Go slowly, now listen, and develop a model that can self adjust as the culture changes. My friend, the church's job is not to self adjust to the culture.

The church's job is to lovingly confront the culture with truth. The church is not to conform to the culture. The church is to be a reformer of culture.

We have nothing to conform to but Jesus Christ. He says, design an intercultural and multi-generational church. Well friend, it's not my church.

I can't design it. What do you mean design a church? I thought Jesus said, I will build my church. I need to find out what he says about the design and then call sinners to come and repent and join that.

And by the way, if God didn't elect some and if God, the Holy Spirit, doesn't break their hearts and if God, the Holy Spirit, doesn't bring them to faith in Jesus Christ, they won't come. And we don't want them to. He said, ask the questions, what kind of church will your children or your grandkids attend and how do we begin moving toward being that church? So we get the children together and we find out, now what kind of church are you gonna like? And we're gonna design the church so that your generation will like it.

And this next quote is from a seminary professor who's highly admired and respected in the Southern Baptist Convention. And he says this, if you go to someone's house and you knock on their door and you try to share with them the gospel and the only presentation you know is six scriptures from the Bible and they say, I don't believe in the Bible, then what? He says, the days of lazy evangelism, now listen to this, when Christians could present the gospel with the Bible and no supporting evidence are gone. The Bible is not enough, you've gotta have some creative supporting evidence to win this generation, is what he's saying.

My friend, I'm telling you, I respect this man, it's not a personal attack on him, he is dead wrong. That is not what we need to be doing. You know what we need to be doing? We need to be so fulfilling our people with the word of God, they have a fire for God's truth and a burning passion for the glory of God and the truth of God and lovingly and clearly confronting this culture and watch God the Holy Spirit take that 2000 year old gospel and break hearts and birth men and women, boys and girls into the kingdom of God.

Last thing we need is a stinking study session to find out what the culture thinks. Examining Romans chapter one, this professor says, God revealed himself to humanity and that Christians can use three principles drawn from that text to help people find God. And he goes on to say that you need to teach people that they're not gonna receive the Bible, you need to teach them to look at creation around them and realize that there is a God.

Well, Romans chapter one, it talks about man looking at the creation and realizing there's a God, but he's not talking about evangelism. In Romans chapter one, he says, man looks at the creation and he has rejected God and he's condemned already and he can't come to God that way. That's what Romans one teaches because Paul says in Romans 1:16 what? I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ for that is the power of God into salvation.

In that culture that would clamor and lust for everything else, Paul says, criticize me, condemn me, call me irrelevant, call me out of date, I'm staying with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And I wanna tell you something, if God doesn't save them with the truth of the gospel, he's not gonna save them with a lie. They'll be saved that way or not at all.

These things ought to concern us. This is the leading magazine among Baptists in America for evangelism. And I'm not saying there's not any good in it.

Matter of fact, I respect particularly this professor for his great passion for souls and I'm convicted by that. But his conclusions violate scripture. But his conclusions are valid if you're a man-centered Armenian.

Well, what did Paul say in 1 Corinthians 1 21? For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God. God, now listen, God was well pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. Paul says, as you go to this quote postmodern culture, they'll say, we don't want that message, that's foolish.

Paul said, fine, that's my message and God's pleased to save people with it, I'm staying with it, you can reject it or take it. That's the only message I have. Paul said, I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Jesus said this, my sheep hear my voice. Did you hear that? Now, when Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice, what was he talking about? Well, in this day and age, often the shepherds would get their various sheep herds and if you don't call them herds, I'm sorry, but you know what I mean. And all the herds would intermingle out there in the pastures.

But when it was time to put the sheep up for the evening, they tell us that that shepherd could call, his voice would go out and his sheep would separate from all those other sheep and come to him, they knew his voice. They knew his voice. And Jesus said, my sheep will hear my voice.

What is his voice? The voice is the gospel of Jesus Christ. You put out that gospel, you share that gospel, you preach that gospel and God's sheep will start coming to it. One by one, one by one, they'll respond.

They'll come out from their intermingling with the goats and come to Jesus Christ. You know, some view salvation with such a man-centered perspective. They sort of view salvation as you're in your own ship and you're a captain of your own ship and you're driving the ship of your life through the waves of this world and through your lifetime.

And then all of a sudden, a stormy sea comes along. And when the storm comes along, you invite Jesus into your ship. And he's the steadying factor and he helps you go on in your ship across this life.

But that's not what the Bible says. The Bible picture is your ship has already sunk. Your ship lies on the bottom of the sea of God's wrath and judgment.

And you're disintegrating corpses laying beside that ship already decomposed and only maybe a few bones left. And Jesus gets in the old ship of Zion. Here he comes, going over those waves.

He's coming after you. And he has supernatural power. He can call your old dead body from the depths of the sea of the judgment of God and raise you up to new life in him and put you in the old ship of Zion.

And he captains his ship and you're on board and he sails you safely home. That is the biblical picture of salvation. That is grace.

Now the Armenian and the Pelagian who believe that man is somehow got a good streak in him. Man fell, but didn't fall all the way now. Man has the capacity to do good and therefore choose Christ.

Well, basically what they're saying is this. God says the end of salvation is praise and glory. Three times Ephesians chapter one is to the praise of his glory.

The praise of the glory of his grace. The praise of the glory of his grace. So to the Pelagian or the Armenian, perhaps in heaven one day, God's gonna be standing there and he's gonna be getting glory for his wonderful grace.

And beside God's gonna be man. And man's gonna be getting some glory too because he had some good and he was wise enough to make a good and wise choice. Trust Jesus.

So God gets some credit and glory and man gets some credit and glory. I wanna say something to you. We'll have none of that in the pulpit of this church.

There'll be none of that in the teaching of this church. And you can be sure of this. There'll be none of that in heaven.

All praise, all glory, all honor be unto the lamb. That's what Paul is trying to tell us. The preceding message comes from the expository preaching ministry of senior pastor teacher, Dr. Jeff Knoblett.

For more information or other materials that are available, contact Anchored in Truth Ministries at [www.anchoredintruth.org](http://www.anchoredintruth.org) or call us toll free at 1-800-565-PRAY.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22498.mp3>

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