

# Tulip - Part 1 (Introduction)

by John Piper

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*John Piper introduces the TULIP seminar, emphasizing the importance of understanding Calvinism and the role of the Holy Spirit in grasping biblical truth.*

**Duration:** 44:52

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 30:7, Isaiah 40:28-31

**Topics:** "Calvinism", "Soteriology"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by addressing the audience's questions and encourages them to save their inquiries for later. He then moves on to discuss the historical background of the Five Points and Tulip, mentioning influential figures like Jonathan Edwards and Dan Fuller. The speaker acknowledges that the topic can be complex and frustrating, but emphasizes the importance of understanding the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism. He concludes by affirming the Bible as the Word of God and the ultimate authority in matters of faith and conduct.

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## Transcript

Let me begin tonight with a passage of Scripture, and then pray with you before we move into our topic. I'm going to read some verses from the end of Isaiah 40, which many of you are reading these days, because it's part of our through-the-year plan. Verse 28.

Have you not known, have you not heard, the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth? He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength.

Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted. But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. Father, we join You and Isaiah in affirming that Your understanding is unsearchable.

Your ways are higher than our ways, and Your thoughts are higher than our thoughts. And so as we undertake in these next ten weeks together to tackle some of the weightier matters of the Scriptures, I pray that the Holy Spirit would come and enable us to grasp and measure Your mind. That which You have revealed and intend for us to know, may we be able to know.

And may it not only grip our minds, but ravish our hearts so that we become a people of authentic worship and utterly devoted obedience and great allegiance to Jesus Christ the King. Lord, let none of our labor be in vain, I pray. I pray for every person in the room right now that there would be a heartfelt longing to know You, to love You, to follow You, to delight in You, to rest in You, to hope in You, to treasure You.

And may that longing be satisfied week by week as we study together. Guard us, I pray now, from the tempter and the deceiver who is a great confuser of minds who does not want these things to be known or understood. Would like to keep Your people in the dark, unable to delight in who You are.

So I pray that You would frustrate His designs tonight and that You would fill us with all the fullness of Yourself. In Jesus' name I ask it. Amen.

This class is called TULIP - The Pursuit of God's Glory and Salvation. It's one of the several component seminars of a class in practical theology which the Track 2 guys are taking for seminary credit. So I'll read the aim and scope of this course here.

Who initiates faith? Who sustains faith through the afflictions of this life? Who gets all the glory and salvation? This seminar is designed to communicate in a sensitive and pastoral way the essence of the Calvinistic view of the doctrine of salvation and to show how the Reformed understanding of this precious doctrine is rooted in the careful study of Scripture and is valuable in the life and ministry of the church. Our interest is not so much in what John Calvin thought about predestination, but first and foremost what Jesus and Paul and Moses and Isaiah and Peter and Luke and the rest of the biblical writers taught in Scripture. No difficult texts will be avoided, at least not intentionally.

The Arminian side... Those are strange words to you, Arminian Calvinists. Okay, we'll talk about that in a minute. The Arminian side of the argument stressing free will of man will be fairly represented.

The seminar will include a presentation time as well as time for questions and answers. Then come some required texts, a good literal version of the Bible for all the Track One folks, everybody I hope would bring one. The one in the pew there is a good one, we think, the New American Standard.

I hope that all of you will get and read this booklet called Tulip. This was written... I did the first draft of it back in 1985, and the staff that was here in those days worked hard with me to refine it, and we called it What We Believe. The we there is the staff.

What we believe about the five points of Calvinism. We don't require that everybody at Bethlehem either understand or believe this. However, we carry out our ministry in such a way as to try to persuade you to believe it and to convince you that it's biblical.

And so a lot of people, hundreds of people, are in process about these things and what this course is as part of that process. We believe it's true. We believe it's beautiful.

We believe it's helpful. We believe it helps you live and helps you die. And we would like you to understand it and embrace it not because we think it or Calvin thought it, but because the Bible teaches it.

Then my book, The Pleasures of God, has two chapters in it which I think are very pointedly relevant for this class, chapters two and five. I'd like to begin the substantive part of this seminar with some assumptions. Everybody has assumptions, presuppositions, and you need to know mine.

Number one is a quote from our affirmation of faith. The Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. I should have taken out the word that.

I dropped a phrase at the beginning. It has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. Now, if that assumption feels like a far out leap into the dark to you and you don't see any warrant for it, you're here visiting tonight, you're not part of this commitment that we have at Bethlehem, there is going to be a seminar, you'll notice, number four under the top page three, Why We Believe the Bible.

That'll be in the spring. I taught that two years ago here, and so it's not something we just dangle out there and leap into without thought and reflection and prayer and honesty, but it's not something I'm going to defend here. It's something I'm going to assume.

Number two, right thinking about what the Bible teaches about God and man and salvation really matters. The TBI exists because we believe that. Right thinking really matters.

Bad theology, and you don't need to stumble over that word, you are all theologians in the making. A theologian is simply a person who starts thinking about God and either does so well or badly, and we want to do it well. So there are professional theologians and then there are lay theologians, and everybody who is a Christian is a theologian either doing it badly or doing it well, and this course is designed to help you do it better.

Bad theology dishonors God and hurts people. Churches that sever the root of truth may flourish for a season. We transplanted a tree when we did this parking lot over.

You'll notice we transplanted two trees. We had to pull up the roots. Big trees.

Been there for about eight years. And moved the other one down there. One is still green.

The other one is all brown. And I'm wondering, is it going to survive? And there are churches like that. It looked for weeks like it was going to make it.

The leaves are still green. And that's what happens in a church. If you wreck the connection with the source, it will stay green for a while.

A lot of churches around the country flourishing for a while. Maybe a decade. Maybe 20 years.

And then they'll either die or they'll cease being evangelical churches and become very liberal, nominally Christian churches. So I'm assuming right thinking is very important. Number three.

The work of the Holy Spirit and the pursuit of His work in prayer, that is His help, is essential for grasping the truth of Scripture. So this is to help balance point number two. It is not mere thinking that enables us to grasp the Bible.

It is the work of the Spirit. And even though I'm calling this an assumption, I want to give you a text to support it. We impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, Paul says, but taught by the Spirit.

So when Paul writes, he says, he's imparting words that are taught by the Spirit. Interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. The unspiritual man, that's the person who doesn't have the Holy Spirit helping him, does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not

able, not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has so as to instruct Him, I quote Romans, so as to instruct Him, but we have the mind of Christ. So the key phrases here are, he is not able to understand the things that God gives us in the Word, that Paul teaches, because they are spiritually discerned.

We saw a lot of the reason for that last Sunday, as we said, if there is unrighteousness in our heart, if we have a love affair with independence, if we have a love affair with some sin, if we have a love affair with our own self-determination, and we want to stand on our own two feet, and do what we think is right, and think what we think is true, without submission to the authority of God, what will happen when the Bible arrives in our lives, is that it will be folly to us. We will either reject it outright, and say the Bible is not true, or if for some social reason, or some religious reason, we feel like we can't do that, we will twist it to fit what we already believe, and feel comfortable with. In either case, in either case, we will not understand, and we will be left without light.

To overcome that, we need the Holy Spirit. We must be not unspiritual people, but spiritual people. So, pray.

Pray before you come in here. I love worshipping before this class. I love worshipping.

And I don't know, when I sing, more love, more power. I have some things in mind. More love, more power.

Those are not throw away words for me. I need more of the love of God. I need to love people more.

I need to be a more loving person, because if I'm not a loving person, that is, if I don't have the fruits of the Holy Spirit, at work in my life, I will wreck the Bible when I try to interpret it. Because it has so much to say about love, that if I'm not in sync with it at my own heart, I will manipulate it to get it in sync with me. And so, when we worship, think of all the crying out that we're doing for help, for this class, as well as for your lives in general, thus giving God the credit for everything He's going to do.

Number four, thinking is essential for grasping biblical truth. I said at the beginning, maybe I need to distinguish what I have between two and four here, when I said right thinking is important, I meant getting your doctrine right is important. Here I mean the exercise of the hard work of reflecting on the meaning of words and sentences is important.

1 Corinthians 14 20 Brethren, do not be children in your thinking, yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. In your thinking be mature. So be babes in evil, but don't be babes when it comes to thinking.

Put away childish things when you become a man. When I was a child, I thought like a child. When I became a man, I thought like a man.

There is a mature way to think, and we need to do it. 2 Timothy 2 7 Think over what I say, Timothy, for the Lord will grant you understanding in everything. If you split this up, and like this one, or like this one, you will fail.

There are a lot of people who just think, and there are a lot of people who say it's just a gift. Understanding is just a gift of God, and others say it's just a fruit of thinking. And look how Paul thought.

Think because it's a gift to thinkers. Think because it's a gift to thinkers. This is right at the heart of how you understand Calvinism.

Calvinism is a way of thinking that sees God behind everything. God is sovereign over everything from Him, through Him, and to Him are everything to which people who will not submit to that respond usually, so we'll just do nothing, right? That's the mockery that comes out of many mouths when they say God is over everything, God is in everything, God is doing everything, God enables everything, God is sovereign over everything, God governs everything. But if you're willing to think biblically, you make these kinds of connections.

Think over what I say. This is called means. Means of grace.

Means of grace. This is grace. The Lord will give it.

He will give it. There's no amount of thinking in the world that will get you what you need. And no grace that will give it to you if you're not doing the means.

And the means themselves are gifts of grace. That's Calvinism. One more assumption.

God ordains that there be teachers in the church to help the body grasp and apply the truth of Scripture, to help the body, that is the church. He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the service, for the upbuilding of the body of Christ. You might just take point number four and say, OK, I'm supposed to think over my Bible and the Holy Spirit is supposed to graciously and freely give me understanding as I do the means of grace thinking.

So you're not needed, John Piper. Thank you. I will just work with my Bible.

And God is gracious to us. But that would be unbiblical. It might be logical at one level, but it's not biblical.

And we're always going to be trying to take our heads and press them through the sieve of Scripture so that we sift out all the wrong conclusions drawn from right premises. So many people draw wrong conclusions from scattered premises. I have in mind when I say teachers here, both living teachers and dead teachers.

Hebrews 13.7 Remember those who led you, remember your leaders, who spoke, this is past tense, they're gone now, they're dead some of them, who spoke the Word of God to you and consider the result of their conduct and imitate their faith. That's people like Calvin or Edwards or any number of other hundreds of saints. Your parents maybe who are dead.

Therefore, we read books and we listen to teaching and we interact and we help each other. Those are my five assumptions. Any questions about those? I am tempted, in fact I'm going to yield to the temptation I think, to ask you to turn with me to 2 Chronicles 30.

I'm going to illustrate for you the means of grace being a gift. I'm going to throw out a lot of sentences like that because you've got to start somewhere in a class, right? Unsupported sentences. And if you press me, I will probably support them at the moment, but I hope I don't get pressed every time because we'll never ever get through this class if I don't do something in sequence, but that's okay.

I'm going to trust the Lord to govern these questions that come and we'll just go with the flow. Now, in 2 Chronicles, the Lord is telling the people, oh, let's start at verse 7. Do not be like your fathers and your brethren who were faithless to the Lord, God of their fathers, so that He made them a desolation, as you see. Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the Lord and come to His sanctuary which He has sanctified forever and serve the Lord your God that His fierce anger may turn away from you.

So notice the conditions being laid down. If you want the fierce anger of God to be turned away from you, you better serve the Lord. You better yield yourselves to the Lord.

Verse 9, For if... Big if. Big condition. Big means.

Means. If you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will find compassion. So compassion is contingent upon the means of returning to the Lord.

You. You do that and God will do this with their captors and return to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away His face from you if... You see these means, these conditions.

If you return to Me. Okay, now if you stopped there, stopped reading, you would say, that's the way I understand the Bible. God gives humans conditions.

God tells them what they have to do. When they do what they're supposed to do, He does what He does in response. That's human religion.

That makes sense to everybody. You don't need a Holy Spirit to understand that. That's the way everybody functions in the world.

That's what the Bible says. So means are held out. You must do this.

And then God responds. And that's true. I believe what I just read.

I'm not going to contradict it. I'm going to add just one thing. Verse 12.

Ooh, I love the way your heads go down. Whomp! Let's read 10 through 12, unless we jump over anything. So the couriers took this message.

They went from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn. So some people did not do the means. They did not fulfill those conditions.

They laughed them to scorn, mocked them. Only a few men of Asher and of Manasseh and of Zebulun did what they were told to do, namely humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Now, verse 12.

The hand of God was also... Now, let me just tell you what that also means. That also refers to these wonderful folks in verse 11. The folks from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun, they humbled themselves.

So those and also some others experienced verse 12. The hand of God was also upon Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the Lord. The means is given.

God told them what they had to do. Repent. Humble themselves.

Yield to the Lord. And God will be compassionate to you. And then God gave them the heart to do it.

Now, we're way ahead of ourselves here. Okay? Stop. Pause parenthesis.

Store your questions up. Come back for ten weeks. And we'll be seeing more and more of these things.

I will give you the opportunity to say, Whoa, whoa, whoa. There's another way to understand this. But right now, I've got a lesson planned tonight.

And I want to get at least partway through it. So, we're coming back together. You're writing down your questions.

You can hand them to me afterwards if you want or I'll give you a chance to ask them next time. But let's go to my next purpose tonight. That is to show you the historical background of the issue of the five points in TULIP and so on.

Historical background for the five points. Let's try to walk through this quickly. This is not hugely important, but I think it helps to not just sling words around and not know where they came from.

John Calvin, the great reformer of Geneva and author of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, died in 1564. He and Luther were the two big names. Zwingli could be added in there.

The three big names of what we call the Reformation, where the Catholic Church was begun to be reformed until the Catholic Church excommunicated these men and the Protestant Church was born. The Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius was born in 1560 and died in 1609. See, just a little overlap there.

He was four years old when Calvin died. He came to disagree stronger and stronger with the key tenets, beliefs of Calvinist doctrine. His name is going to produce Arminianism and his name is going to produce Calvinism.

In the early 1600s, a controversy arose, especially in Holland, the Dutch Reformed Church, between the Arminians and the Calvinists, the groups who bore the name of the person who most powerfully expressed their understanding of Scripture. What was the controversy? In 1610, the Arminians presented, the followers of Arminius, presented five doctrinal positions called the Remonstrants to the state authorities. It was a state church.

The Dutch Reformed Church was a state church. These expressed the key areas where they disagreed with the Calvinists. Then, eight years later, from November 13, 1618 to May 9, 1619, Calvinists, the Dutch Reformed Church, met at the Synod of Dort.

Anybody graduate from Dort College here? It's named after this, the Reformed Church School, over down in... Is this the center? I'm thinking of Northwestern, aren't I? Yeah, same. Okay. Same denomination, I think, or at least same theology.

They met in the Synod of Dort to answer these five disputed points. Their answers came to be called the Canons of Dort. Now, the Canons of Dort... Canons just simply means principles or rules, beliefs.

The Canons of Dort, the Belgic Confession, and the Heidelberg Catechism are the three Dutch Reformed statements of faith that govern today the Christian Reformed Church, Reformed Church in America, Calvin Christian School, where dozens of kids from Bethlehem go to school, and so on. So this is the origin of these canons. These are the original expression of the five points of Calvinism.

Thus, the five points were not asserted by Calvinists as a summary of their doctrine. Calvinists didn't one day say, let's put forward our system in five points. They didn't do that.

They were the Calvinists' response to the Arminian remonstrance who chose these five points with which to disagree. So out of the total system that was being taught as Calvinism in the Dutch Reformed Church in those days, they spotted five things that they really didn't like and believe were biblical. And they labeled them, and they asserted an alternative, and then the response to those five disagreements came to be the five points of Calvinism.

Nevertheless, these five points are at the very heart of how we understand God, and sin, and grace, and atonement, and salvation, and all the things that are touched, namely everything, by these great realities. In short, the five points are vital to understand and have a bearing on all of life and ministry. I'm not teaching this course because I think it's a curiosity, that the five points are a curiosity.

I'm teaching it because I think to what you believe about these five issues, wherever you come down, is unbelievably vital for your faith, your family, how you raise your kids. I tell you, if you've got kids in this church and you don't like this, you better leave, because the curriculum that is being developed here is massively God-centered, massively weighted towards the sovereignty of God, and your children are going to be taught a theology that is awesome in its wonderful centrality of God. Number eight, somewhere along the way, and I don't know the history of this, and if any of you knows, I would like you to tell me, or knows where I can find out.

I've looked and don't know where to find it. Somewhere along the way, the Calvinistic view, the five points, came to be summarized under the acronym TULIP. I mean, it is such an incredible providential accident that TULIP is Dutch, and in English, in English it works.

This is really strange that T-U-L-I-P works, and it works in theological order. I mean, this is really strange. I wouldn't begin to argue that that's the reason to believe it, though it's strange.

TULIP is just a helpful way to remember the five points they deal with. T, total depravity, our condition. U, unconditional election.

L, limited atonement. We could do better than that phrase. I wish it were TUDIP, for definite atonement, but more on that later.

TUDIP's not a word and wouldn't help anybody. I, irresistible grace. P, the perseverance of the saints.

Now note, a person may embrace these five points because they think they're biblical, while not embracing other things that Calvin and the Dutch Reformed Church endorsed. For example, one may embrace believer's baptism, as I do. We're a Baptist church, and I'm glad.

And one may renounce the idea of a state church, which I do. I think that's unbiblical and unhelpful. And there are other things that John Calvin believed and did that I would find wrong.

So, should we call ourselves Calvinists? Should we even use terminology like that? Well, we do not belabor it. When you read my books, you will not find the word Calvinist in any chapter title at all, anywhere. It's a rare word to be found anywhere in the books because, I think, it just is neither here nor there with regard to the labels.

It just doesn't matter. What matters is, is it biblical? Does the Bible teach it? And so a lot of people stumble over the words Arminian and Calvinist and say, why do you want to have an allegiance to a man? Well, we don't. And so, we don't make a lot out of that.

However, if you were to ask me, are you a Calvinist or an Arminian? I would not hesitate to say I am a Calvinist. So, depending on the group you're in and the people you want to communicate with, you need to be careful and you need to qualify. Let's always stress, at least if you buy my assumption number one, we want to be a biblical people more than we want to be a Calvinistic people.

Question on the history. I don't know much about history. I just study enough to feel my way around and get my bearings and know where my roots are.

But if you press me on details, I'll probably be ignorant. The truth in that, namely, that the Reformation was fought over election or the sovereignty of God, that's a pretty bold statement in view of the fact that indulgences, the issue of indulgences, the issue of the worship of saints, the issue of the authority of the Pope, the issue of the mass and what happens to the body of Christ at the Lord's table. Those were massive issues of dispute, plus others.

For Sproul to say that, which I think I agree with, is a massive claim to say that beneath all of those other disputes was the issue of the sovereign grace of God. He doesn't leap into the dark when he says that. Luther says that.

Calvin says that. When Luther died, he affirmed that of all the 53 volumes of Luther's works that he had written, the *Bondage of the Will* was the most important book. So go back and look at the *Bondage of the Will* and you'll see what he thought the issue in the Reformation was.

David? I was wondering if you wanted to make any comments about modern efforts to discredit Calvin. Kendall argues that way, namely that Calvin was not a Calvinist. That is, Theodore Biza, who took up the chair and taught and formulated and systematized, went beyond Calvin in some of the five points, especially point number three, limited atonement, the L. Now, I doubt that, but it doesn't exercise me and I don't spend a lot of time trying to figure that out because if it were so, it wouldn't affect anything in my system at all since I'm trying to find it in the Bible and not in Calvin.

If Calvin didn't believe it and the Bible teaches it, then so much the worse for Calvin. Or if Biza says he didn't and he did, then poor Biza. But just know that that dispute exists, that Calvin, some people think, is getting a bum rap by being called a Calvinist, which just shows you why we mustn't put too much in our system or our heroes.

I have heroes like Jonathan Edwards and Dan Fuller and others, and I don't presume to think they're infallible. Okay. We only have a few more minutes and I'm almost afraid to begin this, but it might be helpful to read it through.

This will be very frustrating for you, but some of you might need this just to tantalize you to come back. My last three overheads are a summary of the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism on each of the five points, a sentence for each one. So I'll read them to you.

It will raise huge questions. Some of them will not make sense to you because they're complicated, but in other words, this is what the ten weeks are about. So if you feel frustrated after I do this, please, I'll try to help you with that frustration in the weeks to come.

But it might be helpful just to get the overview. So let's take them and I'll read you a Calvinism. This is my effort.

I didn't quote this from anybody else. These are out of my own head. As I understand Calvinism and Arminianism and the first sentence will always be what I believe is true.

And the other one, I hope to be a fair statement so that if there are minions here, you would say that's exactly what I believe and you wouldn't feel like I've put it in a bad light. Depravity. Calvinism.

People are so depraved and rebellious that they are unable to trust God without his special work of grace to change their hearts so that they necessarily and willingly believe. Arminianism. People are depraved and corrupt but are able to trust God with the general divine assistance that he gives to all people.

In other words, the help is not decisive. Election. Calvinism.

God has chosen unconditionally whom he will bring to faith and salvation out of their sin and depravity. Arminianism. God has chosen to bring to salvation all whose faith he foresaw.

Atonement. Calvinism. In the death of Christ, God provided a sufficient atonement for all but designed that it be efficient for the elect, meaning that it purchased for them the new covenant promise that God would work in his people the grace of faith and perseverance.

That's probably the most complicated sentence you'll hear in this. And we'll take... This is the one where most people stumble. Limited atonement is the one... And I'm carrying on a dialogue with a professor over at Bethel these days on email and trying to work through what it means.

Arminianism with regard to the atonement. In the death of Christ, God provided a sufficient atonement for all. Same up to this point.

And designed that it become efficient by virtue of faith, meaning that the faith itself is not a purchased gift, but the human means of obtaining the gift of purchased forgiveness. Also complicated. Needing explanation and defense.

So we will spend time with those. The last two and then we'll be done for tonight. Grace or new birth.

Calvinism. New birth is God's work of renewal in our hearts which necessarily brings about the act of saving faith. Just a word about irresistible.

It's an irresistible grace. I mean, you could whip out immediately Acts 7 where Peter says to the stubborn Sanhedrin, you always resist the work of the Holy Spirit. There it is.

See, you're obviously wrong. And go home. So much for Calvinism.

I have a long article at home by Jimmy Swagger on the heresy of Calvinism. And that's the way he treats it. Just, you know, text here, text there.

Well, it's obviously wrong because it says right here they resist it. Well, irresistible grace does not mean that God cannot be resisted. It means if God chooses, He can in any given person overcome the resistance that He has suffered for many years.

That's what it means. So of course you can resist God. And if He wills, He can let you resist Him right into hell.

But He can also overcome the resistance. That's why any of you is saved. He overcame your resistance.

He helped you stop resisting. New birth is God's work. This is Arminianism now.

New birth is God's work of renewal in our hearts in response to our act of saving faith. So in Calvinism, new birth precedes faith. And in Arminianism, faith precedes the new birth.

Number five. Perseverance. Calvinism.

God works infallibly to preserve in faith all who are truly born again so that no one is ever lost. That is, none of those is ever lost. Arminianism.

God works to preserve His people, but does not always prevent some who were born again from falling away to destruction. In other words, there is no eternal security in the Arminian system for those who are born again. You can be born again and then be finally destroyed.

Father in heaven, we begin together knowing that these are huge and awesome things. They have caused many of your people to go separate ways on issues. And we don't want, Lord, to highlight differences.

We want to win agreement in the Holy Spirit and learn how to live together in the truth. And so I pray that you help us to that end. So everything that we've presented tonight, that's true.

Confirm it, I pray, in people's minds and hearts. And if anything's been amiss, correct it and enhance the truth for them. And bring us back together, Lord, on the Lord's Day and next Wednesday in such a way that we would be filled, overflowing with worship and readiness to grow.

And Lord, I ask that You not let this become the kind of exercise that inhibits our witness during the week. I pray that as I'm walking home tonight in an hour or two and there's somebody on the street that You would let me know and give me the burden for their salvation. And I pray that everybody in this room would feel that way as they get up tomorrow morning on Thursday and go to work or go to school or hang out in the neighborhood, that they would be praying, Oh God, evangelism is the means by which people are saved sovereignly by the Spirit.

Use me. Use me in these means, I pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thank you for being here. Dismissed.

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