

Salvation: The Plan of Grace

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Preacher: Clay Naylor

[0 : 00] I'm going to throw out the topic that we're talking about tonight. A lot of you will have a lot of questions that come up, and these are just two particularly really good resources, if you want.

This one's called What's So Great About the Doctrines of Grace. It kind of covers a lot of the stuff we'll be talking about this semester, really. This one is called Five Points of Calvinism. It's about three different guys, but there's a lot of Scripture and other references, and this one as well. But in the future, these would just be good resources to pick up. We can talk more about them later.

But let me see. Okay. I just want to pray again just really fast for the Lord just to help me tonight. Father, I just want to confess that this wonderful truth is taught in Your Word as both mind-boggling, heart-boggling.

[1 : 03] And God, I pray that You would just help us to understand Your Word. The Holy Spirit, You are the teacher. And I pray that You would just teach us tonight.

You would stir affections in our hearts for the glory of Christ. So we love You. I just give You praise in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. So a little intro here.

Last week, Kyle talked about how sin was the shattered image of God and how we all were created to originally reflect the glory of God and who we were, and we were supposed to walk with Him, have a relationship with Him, and we were to be His image bearers.

But sin has caused us to forfeit our special standing with God, and we no longer have that anymore. So what was lost in Eden by Adam and Eve, we see that God, even in the garden, began to make special effort, actions, to show that He cared about them.

He put the coverings on them, and He announced that one day that the seed of the woman would crush Satan's head, which is like one of the first pictures of Christ who was to come.

[2 : 20] So since then, since the fall, right, since Eden, man has been a fugitive running from the glorious presence of God.

All of us are. Why do we seek to hide all the nasty stuff that we do? Why? Why do we hate to talk about the holiness of God and about sin? Because it says in John that God is light, but men love darkness, right?

Because their deeds are evil, and they won't come into the light. So ever since Eden, man has been a fugitive running from the holy presence of God. So the original intent was for man to live in the garden and to be the image bearer of God, to multiply and fill the earth.

To take care of his wife, Eve. But we see that all that was destroyed by their disobedience and their rebellion against God. A tragic act.

A tragic act. A heartbreaking act. This affected every one of us in a million different ways. So, this leads to a question we're going to start with tonight.

[3 : 29] It leads to this question. Did God not see the disaster that was coming in Eden? Was he totally caught off guard by our sin?

And then God began to devise a plan of salvation in the garden? Like, was it like, oops, oh my gosh, you didn't see this coming?

Now I have to fix this. Was it like that? Because a lot of people in the church do believe that that's how it was. That God created man and man rebelled and disobeyed against God.

And therefore God began, like at that point, planning, putting forth a strategy to redeem man after the fall. So, apparently it caught God off guard, right?

This way a lot of people would phrase this. And there's a certain theological idea that floats around out there. And a lot of people believe it, whether they know it's called this or not.

[4 : 32] It's called open theism, which basically means that God doesn't sovereignly ordain all things, but rather he leaves, like a lot of things, open to the decisions of creatures, of humans, etc., of Satan.

And he more or less reacts. And one of the top prominent open theists out there named Greg Boyd, he said in his book, the God of the possible always has a plan B and a plan C.

This isn't a testimony due to his exhaustive, definite foreknowledge. In other words, he doesn't know everything. It's a testimony to his unfathomable wisdom.

So, like God doesn't know what's going to happen, so when a disaster strikes, the only way that good things are able to come out of it is because God is so wise, is what he's trying to say. And he says that God has a definite, or he has a plan B and a plan C if things don't go right.

So, in other words, like Eden was plan A, we messed that up, and now he had to come up with a plan B. And he's been doing that ever since. But I just got to tell you, like, because I love you guys, such teaching is absolutely heretical.

[5 : 45] It's not true at all. It's not what the Bible teaches about God at all. And I'm telling you this because bad teaching hurts people, and bad teaching dishonors God. So, like, keep that in mind as we're talking about this.

God is against everything. That goes against everything we know to be true about God himself. If you've listened to some of the previous messages about the living God and about the person of Christ, all this would sound like nonsense anyway.

But it's essential to Christian thinking to know that God is like a planning God. Like, he is part of his nature. It's in his very nature to be a planning God.

And we've talked about different things, about who God is, like his attributes. Like, he's omnipotent. He literally possesses all power. He's omniscient that he has perfect knowledge, that he knows all things, past, present, and future.

We just know this about God because of what the rest of the Scripture says about God. So, he's immutable. He's unchanging. He doesn't change at all. That includes his plans.

[6 : 52] Not just his character, but his plans. And that he's sovereign. He utterly rules over all things, everything. And so, it's within the very nature for God to be a planning God.

Nothing sneaks up on him. There's no such thing as oops in his language. It doesn't happen. And I'm going to just, I have just, I have six places for you to turn tonight.

But keep your hand in that because we're going to go back there. But look at Isaiah 46 real quick. Isaiah 46. Go to verse 9.

And I want you to ask yourself this question. Does this sound like a guy who doesn't know what's going on? He's like lost control as we read this. So, he's speaking here to Israel and trying to comfort them.

And he says in verse 9 of chapter 46, Remember the former things of old. For I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is no one like me.

[7 : 59] Declaring the end from the beginning. And from ancient times things not yet done. Saying, my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

Does that sound like a guy who's making stuff up? He's like, I have declared stuff from ancient times. Things not yet done. And saying, I will accomplish all my purpose.

Another verse. There's tons. But one is just Proverbs 19, 21. You can write that down. But it says this. Many plans are in a man's heart.

But the Lord's. Capital L-O-R-D. Yahweh. His decree. His purpose will prevail. So many of the plans that we have.

We think that we're ruling things. But at the end of the day, the counsel of the Lord. The counsel of Yahweh. His purpose will stand. So think about this though.

[8 : 55] Even in the shadow of the cross. Like in the darkest moments of Jesus' life. He comforted himself by knowing that he was a part of the divine timetable.

Knowing that his God was a planning God. But his father was a planning God. And it comforted him to know that he was playing right into the sovereign plan of what God wanted.

There's phrases throughout the Gospels in John. One's like, my hour has not yet come. He says things like that. And he also says, let's see, at the high priestly prayer in John 17.

He says, Father, now the hour has come. Glorify your Son. The Son may glorify you. So even while Jesus was here, he was acting according to like the time God has set.

There's things that he even told his disciples to shut up about because it wasn't the right time. And so he comforted himself knowing that he was a part of this divine plan that God was bringing about. [9 : 56] So if Jesus found comfort in this, we definitely should. So I have like three main points tonight. And under one of these, there's a lot of sub points.

But the first one is God's sovereign plan to send Christ. Okay? God's sovereign plan to send Christ. That's the first one. And flip back over to Acts again. Acts 4. Acts 4. So this is a testimony of Peter and John after they were tried in front of the Sanhedrin.

And the gathering of like the Jewish religious leaders. And they were told basically like, quit talking about Jesus. Shut your mouth about Jesus. We're tired of you causing all this fuss.

And so, but they were eventually released and just told not to do it anymore. But Peter and John were not discouraged. But they were rather emboldened to keep preaching Christ because of the sovereignty of God.

[11 : 02] That's what we're going to look at. Okay, verse 24. It says, When they heard this, they lifted their voices together to God, saying, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, why do the Gentiles rage in the people's plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. That would be Jesus. It says, For truly in this city, Jerusalem, they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you appointed, both Herod, Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

See that? Not, so, according to this, Christ was ordained, pre-planned, to come before the foundation of the world.

See that? And I'll kind of hit some more on that. So, the fact that these guys, Peter and John, the other disciples, knew that God, or that he was the sovereign Lord over creation.

You see that? He created the heavens and the earth. He was sovereign over history. He was over the redemptive stuff that was going on in the nation of Israel. That comforted them and strengthened them to keep preaching Christ.

[12 : 30] And they quoted David in Psalm 2. That's where this comes from. It's a Messianic psalm about Christ. And they basically were saying that, like, all the powers of the world are going to try to thwart the coming of the Messiah, but they're utterly going to fail.

Like, it actually says in that same psalm that God laughs at them. He laughs at their plan to try to thwart the coming of his anointed, Jesus. So, awesome.

Awesome picture. Christ would succeed. And so, the cross is not plan B. It's plan A. And while you're in Acts, just flip over, flip back two chapters, excuse me, to Acts 2, verse 22.

I'm just going to show you this again. So, after the disaster in Eden, God did not begin devising a plan to save man. This plan happened before the foundation of the world.

God was not like, darn, I messed up. What can I do? Oh, I know what I can do. I can send Jesus to be the Savior. Jesus, are you cool with that? I'm cool with that.

[13 : 39] No. No. Not according to the Scripture. Sending Christ was plan A. And so, we're going to read right here.

Verse 22, sorry. My notes are a little jumbled tonight. I'm having a harder time. It says, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified him and killed him by the hands of lawless men.

And she did it. Like that's saying the same thing. Now, I don't really know why. Maybe John or Kyle might be able to answer this better for you.

But I don't really know why, like, our English translations use the word foreknowledge or foreknowledge or fore... Yeah, it's kind of just a...

[14 : 45] Because really, the word is... You can go and look at it if you want. But the word really is like foreordained. And it doesn't mean that God looked ahead and observed ahead.

And based on that, he decided to do something. It doesn't mean foresight. Right? The word is like a keen awareness of what God is going to do. Like he had a plan. Foreknowledge in biblical terms means that God has planned before, not that he observed before.

And Christ was foreordained or predetermined to come before the foundation of the world to be the sacrifice for our sins. This is what the word means. It's not like God's making this up and he just knew what was going to happen and therefore he planned.

It was... Christ was ordained to come before the foundation of the world. And if you look at this, it's really, really crazy. It says, verse 23, the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

Alright, so there's God's sovereign plan. You see that? Then the next part, you crucified him and killed him by the hands of lawless men. So there's the evil actions of men.

[15 : 54] And what's cool about the sovereignty of God or the providence of God is what we see is that even the evil actions of men and of Satan play right into what God wants.

Every time. It's not... and it's plan A. It's like what God had predetermined would happen. So even these evil actions of men and of Satan played right into what God wanted.

That's how it works. So that's the first one is that God's sovereign plan to send Christ. Okay? Some of you may be on board at this point.

We're going to go a step further and I hope you're able to follow. But secondly, the second point for the night is that God's sovereign plan to graciously choose a people for salvation.

To graciously choose a people for salvation. Okay? So, alright. Now the question marks are popping up. I can see them in your mind. It's like, what is going on? So this is what we call the doctrine of election.

[17 : 07] And not only do we see that Christ was ordained to come, but we also see that our very salvation was ordained, was planned by God himself. And that he chose us for that.

So, it's, the word that's used a lot in the New Testament, the word elect, it basically means electos. It means like to select out of or to choose out of a group. And the elect are chosen simply by God's good pleasure.

And just a definition that I wrote down, it was really good, it says, Election is an act of God, the Father, before creation, in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit or faith, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.

Okay? That's a clear definition. So, it's a doctrine that's meant to kind of give us incredible assurance and joy.

[18 : 12] And so just follow me on this. Okay? Today, like election, I believe, next to maybe one or two other things, is probably one of the biggest misunderstood and mistaught doctrines in the whole church.

So much so that, like a lot of seminaries and a lot of certain Bible colleges, like make it their job to, like, try to attack it. And they don't even talk about anything else but just that.

But it must be explained very carefully. That's why I'm praying for the Holy Spirit just to work. Or it can have a bad effect if it's not taught clearly. I've heard guys totally misrepresent what this was. I'm like, no, that's not. That's not what it is. But just maybe to, like, put your mind to ease a little bit, not to, like, give credit to anything, but, like, this isn't a new idea.

It's not an unbiblical idea. It's not like something that was created in the past 20, 30 years. It's been something that's been taught throughout the centuries of the church from the very beginning.

[19 : 15] Okay? And by the Orthodox, conservative, evangelical church has been taught. And I'm just going to use some alibis, okay? So I'm going to tell you just, like, certain men throughout church history who have believed and taught these things so that you're not, oh, my gosh, you know, we're just making this up.

But St. Augustine in the 4th century, he taught this. Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale, who was the first guy to translate, well, kind of like, one of the first guys to translate the Bible into English and was killed for it.

John Bunyan, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress. You've heard of that. Jonathan Edwards. John Newton, who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace. Charles Spurgeon, who's known as the Prince of Preachers.

He's a big Baptist guy back in the 1800s. And then just some more modern-day guys. John Piper. John MacArthur. C.J. Mahaney.

Matt Chandler. David Platt. And just a few bands that you might listen to their music. Jars of Clay. Cayman's Call. Keith and Christy Getty.

[20 : 32] Derek Webb. Just a few. But they all believe and treasure this doctrine. And I could go on about a lot more. But it was held historically by Presbyterians, Baptists, Anglicans alike.

Lutherans. Like, historically, if you go back, they all believed this and taught this. Because two of the major, in our own denomination, Christ Family is a Baptist church. Two of the major seminaries. Southern, up in Louisville, and also Southwestern, I believe. Both of those were founded on Southeastern. Yeah, that's right. South, south.

Got the south mixed up. But, like, both of them, in their historical documents, teach this as well. So, it really shouldn't be, like, a new scary thing. So, just know that, like, this isn't our new idea.

But, at the end of the day, like, we have to believe it by biblical conviction. Not by, because these guys believed it. So, I'm going to challenge you, like, just to wrestle and pray with these things.

[21 : 33] Some doctrines in the scripture don't come easy. You have to, like, really dig into them. And, most of us in an entertainment-driven society, we don't like to, like, do any heavy thinking about anything.

Any heavy praying about anything, really. And, it doesn't come that way. It has to be cultivated in the heart and in the mind. And, a lot of time in the scripture. So, we don't have time tonight to, like, exhaustively unpack this.

I'm going to do my best. But, just by looking at it, you're not going to, like, fully get it tonight. And, none of us fully get it, by the way. It's just something that's supposed to, like, leave you in awe.

It's not like, ah, check. Got that. So, don't run away tonight. Like, if you're confused or even upset, like, come talk to us, okay?

Like, let's be the family of God here and talk about this. And, we'll recommend some good resources later to kind of read more about this. But, I just have a quote by Charles Spurgeon.

[22 : 36] He's known as a prince of preachers. He was in England in the late 1800s. But, he said, Whatever may be said about the doctrine of election, it is written in the word of God as with an iron pen, and there's no getting rid of it.

To me, listen to this, To me, it is one of the sweetest and most blessed truths in the whole of the revelation of God. And, those who are afraid of it are so only because they do not understand it. If they could but know that the Lord has chosen them, it would make their hearts dance for joy. So, it's all about, like, the perspective in which we're looking at it. But, it's meant to give you incredible joy and incredible peace.

So, under this second thing that God, God's sovereign plan to graciously choose a people for salvation.

So, under that, I have just a couple of points, sub-points. And, we're going to do our best to move through these. Okay.

[23 : 40] So, it has to start with this premise. Okay. The first one is, None are worthy because all are guilty. Okay. None are worthy because all are guilty.

Alright. Because mankind, you and I, we have all, all of us, have trampled, mocked, and spat upon like the infinite worth of God Himself.

We all have. And, we only deserve divine wrath. That's all we deserve. We don't deserve any good thing at all, much less salvation.

So, when we see our sin for how terrible and appalling it really is, the question should be, Why did God save? Not, well, God, why did you just save some? But, God, why did you save any?

Is the point. Like, why did you save any? We only deserve death. We don't have a case to plead. We don't have any cause. This is a clear testimony of Scripture.

[24 : 39] I'm just going to read, you don't have to turn here, but Romans 1, verse 28 says this. It's talking about the sinfulness of man. It says, And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what they ought not to be done.

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetous, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit. It says they are gossips, slanderers, and haters of God.

Alright? Insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil. I mean, don't we do that? Like, I even, I do that. I'll sit in sometimes, and I'll plot, like, how I'm going to commit sin.

Do y'all do that? I mean, this is us. It says foolish, faithless, heartless, and ruthless. Alright? So, that lists us, apart from the saving grace of God, like that is us.

And then it says this. Though we know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die. See that? Like, they deserve to die.

[25 : 44] That's verse 32 of Romans 1. Those who practice such things deserve to die. They not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them. That's just one verse.

In Ezekiel, God says, All souls are mine. The soul of the Son, as well as the soul of the Father. And the soul who sins shall die. I mean, that's... So, none are worthy, because all are guilty.

Alright? So, this flows into the next point, okay? Which is this. It's a little lengthy, so I'll read it twice. It's... Though God is under no obligation to save any sinner, yet He still chose to save some as a demonstration of His mercy, grace, and love.

Alright? Though God is under no obligation to save any sinner, yet He still chose to save some as a demonstration of His mercy, grace, and love.

Alright? So, flip to Romans 9, where Nathan had you earlier. I'm going to just show you this as well. [26 : 55] Romans 9. So, according to what we're talking about here, because all are guilty, God has the sovereign right, if He wants to, to show mercy to certain people.

He has the right. He can do whatever He desires. He's under no obligation whatsoever. And due to the severity of our sin, He will be perfectly justified, okay?

Perfectly justified in annihilating all of us. And He still would remain loving and gracious, even if He had done that. But He didn't. Okay? So, therefore, like, there's no injustice with God, because, if He grants mercy to some, injustice to others.

And I'm going to try to help you wrap your head around this a little bit, because we have grown up, like, in a, a democratic society. In a democracy, everybody has, rights, everybody has, like, equal say, supposedly, right?

And, but, not how it is, like, in this context. The kingdom of God is not a democracy, it's a monarchy, and it's like an absolute monarchy.

[28 : 13] And so, a picture of this, the guys I disciple, like, oh man, here he goes with the, the, the illustrations. But, back in ancient and medieval times, particularly, this would not have been a surprise at all.

Like, in, in kingdoms, and empires, kings or emperors, also served as judges. Did you know that? Like, even the Caesars, served as judges. And that's why Paul said, I hope to go and make my case, before Caesar.

So, they served as judges over their land. And a lot of the time, many times, if they were confronted with a whole band of, like, rebels, guys who were, like, murderers, and, you know, pillage, plunder, and rape kind of guys, whatever.

If they were surrounded by, like, criminals, and they come to the court, and they're under arrest, sometimes, the king, or the emperor, would do this. He would say, okay, the evidence is clear.

All of you deserve to die. All of you are guilty. Every one of you. You deserve the sword. But then he would say something like this, but because I desire to show my people that I also can be merciful and gracious.

[29 : 26] I pardon you and you. But the rest of you, you get the sword. Because at the same time, my people need to know that I'm not a pushover. That I take this stuff very seriously.

And that happened a lot. And it happens a lot in the scripture even. Like, in Mount Sinai, where they built the golden calf. It said the whole nation was worshipping this calf. God, that's after he brought them out of Egypt, took them to the Red Sea, destroyed Pharaoh's army, and they're worshipping a calf.

You know, like, really? But we do the same thing. But in that context, what happened was, 3,000 of them were killed instantly. And the question is asked, would God be just if he had destroyed the whole nation?

Yes, he would have. And, there's an occasion in the Revolutionary War, with George Washington, that a huge group of the ringleaders, who led like a mutiny against the army, against Washington, they were rounded up, they were all put on the galleys, like they were, the galleys, excuse me, like there were seven of them.

And they all had like the nooses around their neck, the graves were dug in front of them, and the drums were rolling, like they were about to be hung. And finally, like one of the officers stands forward, and he like stops it, and he says, reprieve from the commander-in-chief.

[30 : 51] And all of them were let go, except for two guys, I believe, and they were hung. And the historians, they talk about this event, they say, in that same moment, Washington inspired both fear and awe, as well as like the love and respect of his men, in that one act, like that's what happened.

And so, this is kind of a picture of what God does, a little different, because God can't just let sin go, he had to punish sin, and he did that through Christ.

But, but this is what we see, that God has the right to do what he wants to do. Like, imagine if you were a judge, I went to court a couple months ago, imagine if you were a judge, and like, this criminal, child-raping dude came up to you, and he said, this trial is an outrage. I've seen all the evidence, and yeah, I did it, but this trial is an outrage, and I deserve to be let go. You should let me go. What would you say? Like, excuse me?

Like, no, like, I might kill you myself, right here, because I will execute justice for all the people, right here on the spot. But that's what we do, when we say to God, how dare you?

[32 : 07] Why did you choose to do things this way? Like, that's not right. That's not fair. Because fair is, we all die, okay? Do you know that it says in, think, think Clay, this thing is Revelation, oh man, maybe I wrote it here, I'm not sure.

My notes again, sorry. Yeah, like, yeah, there it is, found it. Revelation 12, 4 says that a third of the angels rebelled against God, with Satan.

Okay? Revelation 12, 4 says that. 2 Peter 2 says that God did not spare any of them. He didn't send a single, he did not send a savior for the angels at all.

Like, they all rebelled against him, just like we have, and he didn't send a savior to save them. So he remained just and holy and loving all at the same time after he did that.

So that should blow our minds, like, why did he send us a savior? He did not send the angels one. So in Romans 9, verse 14, we'll start there.

[33 : 21] I'm just going to read you a couple of verses. This is like one of the Mac Daddy chapters about this kind of stuff, but Romans 9, verse 14 says, what shall we say then?

Is there any injustice on God's part? Like, is this God's doing? Nathan just kind of talked about this. Then he quotes from the Old Testament. He says, he says to Moses, God says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Then it says, so then, it does not depend on human will or exertion. Okay, so it doesn't depend, like, your salvation ultimately doesn't rest on your free will.

All right, it rests, or on exertion, or any strength you have, but on God, who has mercy. That's where it rests. Okay, like, we have nothing to initiate with God.

We're totally at his mercy to do with us what he will. Okay, so that's, that's the second point there, is that, though God is under no obligation to save any sinner, he still chose to save some as a demonstration of his grace, love, and mercy.

[34 : 32] So, here's the third point underneath this second big one. All right, before the foundation of the world, God freely chose a people for salvation in Christ.

Before the foundation of the world, God freely chose a people for salvation in Christ. Let's see, one, I have just a few more places for you to turn.

I'm not trying to exhaust you with the whole, but like, it's just important. Ephesians 1, turn there. No clearer can we get than this text here.

So, Ephesians 1. General statements, okay, as well as specific ones. In Scripture, reveal that God has an elect people, from both Jews and Gentiles, and that he predestined them for salvation, before the creation, and their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, before creation.

This is, what we're going to see, it's blatantly clear that God did the choosing, and not man, and it was all according to his purpose, by his will, but for, for the praise of his grace. So, let's just look at a couple verses here.

[35 : 47] Ephesians 1, verse 4. We all love Ephesians 1, but some people just don't know what to do with these verses. They kind of skip over them, or whatever. Verse 4. Even as he chose us in him, so the first, he is God, the second, he is Christ, him is Christ.

Even as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, there it is, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

All right? Is this a loving thing? Yes. It says, In love, he, God, predestined us for adoption as sons, through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

See that? Why? What was the purpose? To the praise of his glorious grace. To the glory of God. That's what it's for. And then, in adoption, I don't know if, some of you may, I know a few people in here may have adopted siblings.

We do a lot of adoption here at Christ's Family. Then adoption, who does the choosing? Who does the, who makes the initiative, really? The parent, right?

[37 : 04] Not the child. And it's the same, it's the same way here. We were predestined for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. Jump down to verse 11 of chapter 1.

It says, verse 11, In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things, according to the counsel of his will, so that we who are first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

Okay? It was after the counsel of his will that he worked this. It's mysterious. We don't fully understand it, but for some reason he chose to do it this way, so that we would be in his family, be saved.

And so that's, and then Revelation 13, 8, you don't got to turn there, just write it down. Revelation 13, 8 says that our names were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world. So, it's not like there's an angel up there with the book, and like, when you got saved, he was like, yeah, it was like, before the foundation of the world, the book's there. All right?

[38 : 13] I mean, that's, that's one place. It says that twice in Revelation. That's Revelation 13, 8. So, this happened before the foundation of the world, which means that our redemption was not plan B.

It happened, this happened before the fall of Eden. You see this? It's like, it's supposed to, it's supposed to just blow your mind, and just leave you in awe and wonder. So, fourthly, underneath this, all right, God's election of sinners to save was completely unconditional.

God's election of sinners to save was completely unconditional. Okay? So, in other words, that there was no foreseen act, or foreseen faith, that God decided who he was going to save.

He didn't look down throughout the centuries and be like, you know what? Chris is a good guy.

Wow, I see that he's going to choose Jesus. That's awesome. So, I'm going to choose him. That would say, that would ultimately, like, Chris is the ultimate determining factor there, and not God.

That goes against what we just read, that God did the choosing. And, and even further doctrine that we will talk about this semester, saving faith doesn't come from you.

[39 : 34] It doesn't come from man. It's not something you conjure up. It also is a free gift of God. Saving faith is. So, God's choice was not based on any foreseen faith, or merit, or any good thing.

Unconditional election. It was because he just decided to do it that way. Not, not behind any other reason. I'm just going to read to you Acts 13, verse 48, and, see how this goes.

It says, they're preaching the gospel, okay, to the Gentiles. It says, when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. Alright, so they're believing the gospel.

And it says, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. See that? To those who were appointed to eternal life, the result was, they had faith, and believed the gospel.

That's just one example. But Ephesians 2, by grace you've been saved, through faith, this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, that no man should boast.

[40 : 35] And he's saying, like grace, and the faith. Right? The faith was a gift from God, so that you couldn't boast. You could boast, if you figured it out. Man, like, how come your really, really smart buddy just doesn't get it, and you get it?

Did you figure it out? No. Like, God showed you. God opened your eyes to see it. If it was based on intellect, like, man, I would be like, no way. Like, I never would figure this out.

Right? You'd be like, man, I figured it out. Good for me. That is boasting. And like, God is not going to allow it. Not of works, that no man should boast. So, Robert Murray McShane, a Scottish pastor back in the 1800s, a young guy, I got a lot in common with him.

He was about my age. He actually died when he was around my age, and he had lung problems, like I do. He wrote, he wrote this, chosen not for good in me, wakened up from wrath to flee, hidden in the Savior's side, by the Spirit sanctified.

Teach me, Lord, on earth to show I love how much I owe. Chosen not for good in me. Like, nothing, nothing, God, led you to make this decision, other than the secret counsel of your will.

[41 : 50] You're on good pleasure. So, election is unconditional. And then, fifthly, and this will be the last part underneath this big point, but, alright, so, just as God freely, graciously, don't miss those words, freely, graciously, decided to save some, he also passed over others.

Okay? This is what's kind of called, in a big fancy word, reprobation. But, it basically means that God has chosen to pass over other people and to not save them.

And, to punish them for their sin and manifest his justice and his glory. And we have this idea in the church, and again, I think it comes from just a lot of bad teaching, but, that God only receives glory when he saves somebody.

No, he receives glory no matter what. And, he also receives glory in demonstrating his justice and his holiness. I mean, imagine like, a kingdom that was just overrun by these cruel, crazy, pagan people who were just ruthlessly pillaging and murdering.

And the true king is away, and he sends word like, hey, this must stop right now. I will be coming back and I'm going to clean house when I do. And they say, yeah, right, you're not going to do that. [43 : 14] We're the man, and you're not. And he's like, okay. And so he comes back and he completely annihilates all of them. And he frees his people. Does not the king like get glory for destroying that evil?

Yes, he does. And in Christ, read the last chapters of Revelation, he's going to return in glory, it says, and he's going to bring out judgment on those who have rebelled against him.

So, he will receive glory one way or another. But, I'm going to show you just one text out of this, okay? Just one. But look at John, Gospel of John, chapter 12.

This stuff is littered all throughout the Gospel of John. John 12, verse 37, says this, Though he had done so many signs before them, they still would not believe.

Alright? See that? Like, man, he's done miracles, he's done all this stuff, and people still won't believe. Okay? They must be fooled. They must not be able to figure it out, right?

[44 : 34] They're just constantly rejecting Jesus. But here's what it says. This is why. So that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. Lord, who has believed what he heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? And it says, Therefore, they could not believe. For again, Isaiah said, He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart in turn that I would heal them.

I should just make a shake. That could be you. That could be me. It says the word right there, it says, like, God hardened their heart.

There can be some very incorrect views on what that means, but it doesn't mean that God, like, zaps them and makes them evil. Okay? Because that would imply, like God, evil itself is coming from God.

But what it does mean is He just lets them be. We're evil and sinful on our own apart from God, right? We don't need any help whatsoever being sinful and evil. It just means that He leaves them to their sin and decides not to change them, decides not to do anything.

[45 : 45] It doesn't mean He plants evil in them. and just chooses not to save them. He just passes it over to them. And, man, that could be us. And y'all not understand that?

Like, man, like, God did not have to save you. He didn't have to save me. This could be us. So, man. Okay, so, the third and final point here, the last big one, and we're going to get more into the heart of election here, and then we'll break out, have some music and stuff, but, the third point is God's sovereign plan to graciously secure and comfort His people.

God's sovereign plan to graciously secure and comfort His people. Alright, so what effect should this have on us? What effect should this awesome teaching have on us?

It shouldn't make us, like we were talking about earlier, oh my gosh, God, how dare you? How could you just do that? Because then we're saying we deserve something from God. But, two major effects that this doctrine should have on you, two of them, is a deeper humility, or one of them, the first one, a deeper humility.

When we truly realize how desperate our condition was, sinfully, and how we had seriously rebelled against God, and that for some reason He freely and graciously chose to bring salvation to us, adopt us for goodness sake.

[47 : 18] So it wasn't like He was just like, okay, I'm not going to punish you, get out of my sight. He adopted us into His family. Like that's, so He went even further than just sparing us.

He made us His own. Like, when you really understand election, pride is impossible. Like, you can't, you'll be the most humble person that walks the earth. Like when you understand that you had nothing to contribute at all to your salvation.

Like, it leaves you nothing to boast about. Like, it leaves you in total humility looking at the cross. And, I'm just going to read this one quote.

This is by a guy named C.D. Mallory. He was a Baptist minister in 1842. Kind of a no-name guy, but like his words are powerful. And, he's talking about the effect of humility that the doctrine election had on him.

He said, Is it not a doctrine that strikes at human pride and brings the creature low at the footstool of great Jehovah?

[48 : 20] Yeah, it does. It strips him of all boasting, nourishes a meek and lowly sense of dependence, while it tills the soul with adorning thoughts of the matchless, sovereign, eternal love of God.

When the believer reflects that he has been blessed with all spiritual blessings, we just read, that's Ephesians 1, right? All spiritual blessings according to God's eternal purpose, what holy joy and profound wonder does he exclaim, melting into tenderness and graceful affection, he dwells upon that particular mercy, that's you and me particularly, which rescued him from death and the grave and gave him a place at the gospel feast where he exclaims, why me?

Right? Why? Why me? So, it destroys boasting. I have met Christians before who are like, man, you just need to choose Jesus because I chose Jesus and I'm doing good in life right now and your life sucks, dude, you get your act together, you just need to choose Jesus.

Really? Like, that's the effect that the gospel has on you? Like, no. Like, election leaves zero ground for boasting. Like, it might not have been you.

The only great cause I have for why God chose me is I'm a pretty good sinner. I'm a great sinner. Right? That's the only, so I think it would bring him a lot of glory to save me. That's the only argument we have.

[49 : 53] And then, secondly, under this, we have a deeper humility and a stronger assurance. A stronger assurance is the second result here. Okay?

A stronger assurance. So, our assurance of salvation does not lie on our own ability just to cowboy up and get it all right. It doesn't have anything to do with that.

Like, our salvation has been completely brought about by God, by the sovereign act of God Himself. and, if you believe that you have the ability and the right to choose God for salvation, guess what? God is not going to take that from you and you can also have the ability and the right to un-choose God. And that's consistent theology. Men throughout history have taught that.

Let's see, John Wesley was one of them. You know, he was a great guy, but I would disagree with him there. And he was like, oh yeah, like you totally have the ability to choose God and to fall away from grace as well.

[50 : 56] But today we've created a new theology that says we choose God but then we can't un-choose Him. Like, no, He's got us. And it's like, uh-uh. Like, no, like God, your salvation is only secure if it was started by God or if it's finished by God.

Okay? That's the truth. So, our eternal security and assurance is huge like in connecting it to election. During the Reformation, Rome was teaching that you can fall away from grace, you can lose your salvation, you better get it all right, you better do all the right works and stuff.

And then along come Luther and Calvin and many other guys saying like, no, no, not so. Like, if God saves us, what's at stake here is not us because we don't really matter that much.

What's at stake is God's glory. You are not, we cannot lose our salvation because the blood of Christ would have been wasted and it all started because God chose us for salvation. So, I guess, just for the heck, I mean, why not?

Just turn here. Romans 8. Everybody loves Romans 8. Man. Everybody loves Romans 8. They don't really know what to do when they get to this part.

[52 : 10] They're kind of like, oh, okay, sure. but, think about this. If God has chosen you for salvation, that you would believe the gospel, then this can be true of us, okay?

Look at verse 31, Romans 8. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Right? Why?

He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

See that? Like, God is the highest court, right? He's the king, he's the sovereign, and at the end of the day, like, it doesn't matter. Satan, other people will come against you and point like, that girl did this, this guy did that.

He's like, you know what? There's no charge to bring because no one can bring a charge against God's elect because their sin has been dealt with by God's son, right? That's like what he's saying. So, I'm going to read you just something from, this is the last thing, by John Newton, the guy wrote Amazing Grace.

[53 : 21] So, a lot of people who sing Amazing Grace, like, who love that hymn, they hate election and they don't really know that hymn is about election, actually. So, but John Newton wrote this, he said, The views I have received from the doctrines of grace are essential to my peace.

I could not live comfortably a day or an hour without them. I likewise believe them to be friendly to holiness and to have a direct influence in producing and maintaining a gospel conversation. And therefore, I must not be ashamed of them. Now, this is something that Newton wrote. It's meant to give us joy, peace, assurance, comfort, and humility.

It's the effect of it. So, like I said, I know that a lot of your minds may be spinning and that's okay. Like, let's just keep, keep the conversation going. Don't run away. You know, deal with this. I'm trying to show you that this is in the Word.

So, I actually think the first, next Monday when I'm in the chow hall from 11 to 1 and John's there for about an hour, we'll talk about some more of this stuff if you want. We're going to be kind of like in the green room, right, by the bathroom.

[54 : 28] It's kind of in the back, back in there, just so you know. But, let's just close in prayer, guys. You can come on up for music.