

Romans 9:6-13

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[0 : 00] Open up your copy of God's Word and go to Romans chapter 9. The book of Romans is Paul's huge dissertation on our salvation, that we have been redeemed and saved wholly in Christ.

By His grace alone and faith in Jesus Christ alone, we can be saved and restored to God. So then we come into Romans 8, and this is an amazing, mountaintop, glorious view of our salvation in Romans chapter 8.

Kind of the huge climax of the book of Romans. And then we fall into chapter 9. And before we read this text today, I just want to say a few things.

One is that as we study Romans 9, there's going to be a lot of questions that just come to your mind.

Objections that may come to your mind. Just real, well, if that's true, then what about this? And I just want to tell you that it's not my goal in this sermon to unpack all those questions.

[1 : 19] There's just not enough time. In the coming weeks, I don't think we have an exact date yet, but we've talked about having a class on these things. We've kind of opened forum to go through some things, ask questions, look at God's Word together.

But my goal in this sermon is to be faithful to the text that we see here in Romans, and not to take an aside to do an unpacking of all the doctrines of grace, or what we would call Calvinism or Reformed theology.

That's not really the goal of this morning. But the goal is to just go through the text and let it fall where it is. But as a really young college student, probably like 19, 20 years old, I was introduced to this by my youth pastor, a youth pastor that actually taught the Bible.

And he was throwing these things out there to me really humbly, really carefully, and I just couldn't stand him because it's like I had never read this chapter in the Bible before.

And I was very much adamantly opposed to what I thought he was saying. And he never felt threatened by it. He would just say, okay, well, what about this?

[2 : 37] And what about that? And look at God's Word here. And eventually settled into the fact that I felt like I was just kicking against what God's Word was saying. And using my own emotions, my own reason, my own worldly logic to say something that clearly God's Word was not saying.

And so the goal, I've kind of struggled with how to do this, how to unpack it. But I think it might be helpful to just read through the text first.

Because what I want you to do is see it there first. I don't want to give you lenses to look at the text. Does that make sense? Like I want you to see it and go, ah, I see that there.

Versus let me give you all these different lenses to read the text itself. But I can tell you that the doctrine of election is particularly highlighted here.

And that's not a made-up word by theologians. It's in our text today and it's elsewhere in the Scripture. And it's really going to test a lot of people's belief in the whole Bible.

[3 : 47] A lot of people will say, hey, yeah, I'm a Christian. I believe the Bible. And there's hard passages that make you step back and say, man, that is difficult. Do I actually believe that?

But just to sort of put your mind at ease. This helped me, okay? So maybe it will help you. I felt like when I first heard this, this was like a new doctrine.

Like it was a new thing that people had made up. And as I began to look at church history and things like that, I saw that it was a doctrine treasured by the orthodox, historical, gospel-believing, Bible-preaching churches throughout the centuries of the church.

And that was a comfort to me. Like, okay, this is not new. Like men that I really respect believed these things and taught these things from God's Word.

So the goal is not like to dogpile and say, hey, all these guys believed it, so you should. It's more of like, be at ease. Take it easy. All right? And they believed these things from the Scripture.

[4 : 55] But just to name some, St. Augustine, who, following the Apostle Paul, has probably the greatest impact on what we would say in the Western church. St. Augustine, Martin Luther, the Reformer, John Calvin, William Tyndale, who translated the Bible to English in the Reformation time, John Bunyan, who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, Jonathan Edwards, John Newton.

Okay? So if you don't know who John Newton is, he wrote the hymn Amazing Grace. And that's what the song is about. So those of us who love the hymn but hate the doctrine, then you have a problem.

Like, that's what he's singing. That's my personal favorite name for all of this is the doctrine of Amazing Grace. William Wilberforce also believed these things, who ended the slave trade in the British Empire.

Charles Spurgeon, Prince of Preachers. Then some modern-day pastors that we respect, R.C. Spurrell, John Piper, John MacArthur, Albert Moeller, David Platt, Mark Dever.

Some musicians that we respect, the Gettys, Keith and Kristen Gettys, and even Christian rappers like Shia Linn and Trip Lee. I'm just saying all this to make you say, okay, this is not a new thing.

[6 : 17] I can take it easy. This is not, I need to actually just look at this. And then historically, the denominations of Presbyterians, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Baptists alike held on to these things.

We just read that from our statement of faith. And Spurgeon wrote this, and then we're going to dive into the text. 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, it is one of the sweetest and most blessed truths in the whole of God's revelation. And those who are afraid of it simply are 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. All right? So let's look at the text.

So we begin in Romans 9. We'll go back over Romans 1 through 5 briefly. But remember, where we've been last week, Paul moves from this apex of joy in Romans 8 to a solemn lamentation in 9, 1 through 5.

[7 : 26] He's brokenhearted and great anguish over his fellow Jews who haven't believed yet. They've rejected Jesus as the Messiah by and large. Verse 1.

I am speaking the truth in Christ. I am not lying. My conscience bears witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen, according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

To them belong the patriarchs. And from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all. Bless forever.

Amen. And so, a question arises, we look at these few verses. If God has not kept his word to Israel, if the promises of God have failed in God keeping his word to Israel, then what hope do we have as New Testament believers?

[8 : 39] What makes Romans 8 true if God has not kept his word, if it's fallen short? And if the promises of God to Israel have failed, then how can we trust the promises that he's made to us in Christ?

Alright, so as we look at the next few verses, let's read on in verse 6. Paul answers the question. He goes, But it is not as though the word of God has failed.

For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. And not all the children of Abraham, not all the children of Abraham because of his offspring. But through Isaac shall your offspring be named.

This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. For this is what the promise said.

About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only so, but also when Rebecca had received children by one man, our father Isaac.

[9 : 48] Through them, though they were not yet born and not done anything either good or bad, in order that God's promise of election might continue.

Not because of works, but because of him who calls. She was told the older will serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

Let me pray. Lord, I ask that you would help us to see things in your word. That we would come to it humbly and submissive. Be willing to let your words fall on our hearts and our souls.

And to have your desired effect. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Okay, so the way that we're going to unpack this is by asking two questions.

And then we're going to give some illustrations for those questions of how Paul is reasoning and how he's arguing here. Or another way to look at it is a verification of his answer.

[10:56] He's saying this is what the answer is. A clarification of that answer. And then an affirmation of that answer from the scripture. But question number one is, has the promises of God failed?

This is answered in verse six. He says it. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

So first he verifies his answer. He says, no, God's promises have not failed. And it's not like my personal experience or what I see changes that.

God's word has not failed. His promises to the Israelites have not failed. And that word fail means to fall over. No longer stand. And he's saying, no, God's word has not done that.

If you think about your early Christian life, what was one of those verses you heard people in the church just throw around all the time? God's word does not return to him void.

[11:59] Right? That's one I grew up hearing a lot. I'm like, I'm sure it's in the Bible somewhere. And how about that? It is. Isaiah 55 verse 11. Where God says, my word, so shall it be with my word that goes forth from my mouth.

It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. So it should be a comfort to our soul that when God speaks, it doesn't just fail.

It doesn't fall flat like his word is always accomplished. And that should be an encouragement to our souls. It doesn't fail. Nothing can stop it. Nothing can stop God from bringing forth what he desires. So he answers the question. He verifies. No, God's word hasn't failed. And secondly, he clarifies his answer in the second part of verse six. He says, for not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

He clarifies. This is, I think, the first time that we see the mention of two types of Israel. That should make us scratch our heads. But what he's saying is there's two types.

[13:09] There's one that's physical, national, ethnic, and there's another one that's spiritual. So he's going to prove that within the chosen nation of Israel, there is a smaller remnant chosen for salvation.

And the point he's making is it's always been that way. And he goes back to the beginning to prove it. So God's word hasn't failed. He brings to bear that reality that not everyone who is a part of physical, ethnic Israel is actually a true part of the spiritual, believing Israel.

And that the promises that God made of salvation and promise and blessing in the Old Testament were not made to all physical Israel. They were made to the spiritual Israel.

Just not all. I mean, just a really simple connection. Right. Not everyone that we see visibly in a church building are all truly saved. Right.

Just because our name is on a church role doesn't mean that it's written in the Lamb's Book of Life. It's not. There's two different things. And so he verifies his answer saying, like, not all who are descended from Israel actually belong to Israel.

[14:26] And that's always been the case. So as a big statement. Right. Back it up. Right.

So question number two is what evidence does Paul give for his answer? All right. So we've had the verification, the clarification, and now let's look for the affirmation.

And I want you to notice something really important. Very. Paul uses scripture itself to prove his answer. All right.

He's not telling you his opinion. He's simply saying that this is what God's word has always said. He, I mean, believe it or not, he cites 15 Old Testament passages in this scripture.

And I'll go through them really quickly. Don't write them down. I'm just like, I'm trying to make a point. Verse 7, Genesis 21, 12. Verse 9, Genesis 18, 10 and 14.

[15 : 30] Verse 12, Genesis 25, verse 23. Verse 13, Malachi 1, 2 through 3. Verse 15, Exodus 33, 19.

Verse 17, Exodus 9, 16. Verse 25, Hosea 2, 23. Verse 26, Hosea 1, 10. In verse 27, Isaiah 10, 22. And Genesis 22, 17. Verse 28, Isaiah 10, 23. Verse 29, Isaiah 1, 9. Verse 33, Isaiah 26, 28, 16 and 8, 14.

Why am I doing that? When it comes to answering really hard questions about life, about spiritual life, about the world, what do you go to?

Do you go to your own reason? Your own logic? Do you look at Christian culture? Do you look at just culture in general?

[16 : 34] Or do you have the Berean spirit that we see in Acts 19 where they say they examined these things to see, and they searched the Scriptures to see if these things were true, to see if these things were so.

The New Testament writers leaned completely into what the Scripture said. They didn't just say, hey, we're the new guys and just listen to us. They stood on the authority of the Bible.

So as we're asking hard questions, lean into the authority of Scripture to prove what you think. And so it's very important. So Paul is doing that.

Like, I'm not just making this up. It's always been this way, guys. Always has been. So next, he gives you two illustrations from the Old Testament to prove or demonstrate the validity of what he is saying.

It has always been this way from the beginning. He begins in verse 7. If you look at verse 7, he first starts with Abraham and his sons, and then he gives you the picture of Isaac and his sons.

[17 : 40] So, verse 7. Not all are children of Abraham, because this means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise that are counted as offspring.

For this is what the promise said. About this time next year, I will return, and Sarah shall have a son. So, if you're arguing anything to the Jewish people, Abraham is always a good place to start. Paul's done that throughout Romans. The father of the nation. The patriarch of patriarchs. And he shows within the larger circle of Abraham's children, physical children, there was a smaller circle of spiritual children.

In the Old Testament account, remember, Abraham had, well, he had eight sons all together, but the first two, he had Isaac through Sarah, and Ishmael through Hagar.

Right? If you remember the story. We actually just read over that in my discipleship group. And it says in verse 7, you see that? Not all are children. And he's referring to spiritual of Abraham, because.

[18 : 54] And in the vernacular, we would just say, just simply because. Because. Not all of Abraham, but just simply because they are his offspring, meaning his physical descendants.

But, rather, through Isaac shall your offspring or your spiritual descendants be named. And then he cites Genesis 21, 12.

He clarifies it was Isaac who God chose to save while passing over Ishmael. God blessed Ishmael in a physical way.

He gave him many, many temporal blessings, but he did not give him eternal salvation. And how can I say that? You see the word named in the text?

The Greek? That's the word called. Named means called. And it means the effectual call of God. This irresistible call of God that goes out by the Holy Spirit.

[19 : 58] It's used two other places, at least in Romans. It's used two other places, at least in Romans.

Ishmael that was named, called, or saved. Right? Then he goes on in verse 8. Right? He clarifies, like any good teacher, he goes, this means, what we're saying is, this means that not all the children of the flesh, meaning physical children, who are children of God, spiritual, but the children of the promise that are accounted as his offspring.

Again, the true Israel, the true spiritual Israel, is not through physical ancestry, but through God's promise.

And remember that both were physical descendants, but significantly Isaac was promised to Sarah. Right?

And Abraham. Abraham. They were, in their old age, unable to bear children. And God miraculously gave them a son by his promise and by his word.

[21 : 31] So his birth was a result of God's promise to miraculously give them a son. That's Genesis 18. So Paul points out that promises that are given to Abraham's children only apply to promised children.

The children of God. That's the same word that's used in chapter 8, verse 16. So because of that, we know he's not just thinking about physical blessings.

He's talking about spiritual blessing that comes through the promise that God gave through Isaac, to continue on through Isaac. Alright?

So then, in verse 9, we see the actual words of that promise. For this is what the promise said.

About this time next year, I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.

So by his grace, God took initiative and made a promise to Sarah, not to Hagar. Right? And despite her old age, God's word came to pass.

[22 : 35] And Isaac was born a son that came miraculously only through God's promise. And that's the foreshadowing that all the children of the promise will have a miraculous birth.

God's promise to have us. Us being born again miraculously. We belong to God's promised people. So I know, okay, right now, many of us are thinking, hold on one minute.

There's got to be an obvious reason why God chose Isaac. There's got to be. There's got to be some sort of condition that he chose Isaac over Ishmael.

Could it be that Ishmael's mother was a slave? Could it be that his mother was an Egyptian? Could it be that his birth was illegitimate?

Could it be that Ishmael mocked Isaac and that's why God did it? That's not a really want to go down, is it? Think about that.

[23 : 42] Are we going to put our works on the scale in hoping that God will respond to us in a favorable manner? Be careful. Does God exclude anyone from his purposes based on what their mother did?

No. Or what they have done or not done? No. Are God's purposes limited to those who are only legitimately born? We know that the whole scripture says otherwise, right?

Thank goodness, right? Or else we would all be in trouble. So don't apply that same thinking to Isaac and Ishmael. And also it says this brings about a universal truth found in the scripture that not everyone that is born to this world is automatically a child of God.

That's John 1, 12 and 13, right? We must be born again by the spirit. Just because we have parents or grandparents that are true believers doesn't make us true believers.

Right? So the point here, summing up this part of it, is it was never the case that all of the physical children of Abraham were truly a part of the people of God.

[24 : 57] Genesis 21, 12 teaches that the spiritual line of covenant, God's saving promise to the nations is traced through Isaac and not Ishmael.

God sovereignly chose Isaac. And that saving, remember the blessing that Abraham, that through you and through your seed, all the nations of the world will be blessed.

This is continuing through Isaac. And it is because God chose it to be so. And then in case we don't go along with it, he gives us another example.

Well, how about the next generation down? Isaac and his sons. Verse 10 through 13. It says, not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our father Isaac, though they were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might stand, not because of works, but because of him who calls, she was told the older will serve the younger.

As it is written, Jacob, I loved, Esau, I hated. So I'll confess to you, this is a hard passage. I never wanted to look at it, you know, back when I was in my early 20s.

[26 : 18] But do we believe what God's word says here? Remember, Abraham had a total of eight sons put together, but only Isaac was specifically promised by God, right?

And even then, all Isaac's descendants belong to the spiritual promise, the blessing of salvation. Look at verse 10. It said, when Rebecca also had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac.

So we know the story. There's a story of two twins from Isaac and Rebecca. And you would think they would just be equal heirs, right?

Both twins, both brothers, they'd be equal heirs of Isaac. But the Lord did not choose it to be so. Again, we'll stop and say, wait a minute.

That doesn't seem fair. There's got to be some reason, some condition that he was chosen over the other.

[27 : 22] What is the purpose of God's election here? Could it be that overall this guy was a better person and that guy messed up more?

He sinned less than the other guy? That God could somehow look down into the future and be like, hey, you know what? He's going to have a rough life at first, but then he's going to pull it together and put his bootstraps on and become a better person and put faith in me.

So therefore, I choose him. No. No. That's where I just wanted to nail that round peg into the square hole for years.

Just no. We see that there was no foreseen condition that God responded to. You see that? Because of what it says in verse 11.

Right? Esau and Jacob were as equal as they could be. They were on the same playing field. Like, unlike Abraham, or excuse me, Ishmael and Isaac had different mothers.

[28 : 34] These two twins had the same mother and the same father. Very, and then to even put it closer, they were twins together in the womb.

And they were, hadn't done anything good or bad. See that? That's astounding to me. Even before either of them had the opportunity to do anything good or bad, right or wrong, holy or unholy.

They were morally on the same playing field at that time. Yet, God chose Jacob over Esau.

Observe also that the law of the firstborn didn't apply to God.

Because by the law of the firstborn, Esau would be first. And God chose the younger over the older. It had no bearing on what God decided to do.

He even revealed his choice, according to verse 12. He revealed that choice to their mother before they were even born. Rebekah was told the older will serve the younger.

[29 : 39] So why all this? Like, why is Paul pressing this point? What is he trying to show us? Alright. Answer.

He gives us the answer. It's in the next part of verse 11. He says, In order. Are so that God's eternal purpose of election might continue.

Not because of works. Because of him who calls. Without any regard for human good work or merit or foreseen faith, God chose, back to our original thing, some for salvation and others not to.

His purpose of election. And you tie purpose into the verse about the word of God failing. God's word has not failed. His eternal purpose continues to stand.

And it is unconditional. So when we speak doctrinally about this, we say this is unconditional election. Meaning that there was nothing that was in us.

[30 : 47] Something that we, God saw or foresaw in us. That had any bearing on his choosing. God overturned all of that. Just to make the point that he pursues his own sovereign purpose in election.

And this is why Paul wrote in Ephesians 1, 11 through 12. In him we have been predestined according to the purpose.

There's the purpose. The purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

So that we who are the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

All right? So in case we're still scratching our heads, he pushes it one more time in verse 11. I want you to, just a little aside, like Paul is not doing this from a, as an ivory tower theologian.

He's not trying to like condescend, you know, be condescending to us. According to the first five verses, he's telling us this with tears in his eyes.

[31 : 57] Understand that? Like, and he understands that this doesn't do anything to quench evangelistic zeal. He's, he's approaching us in a very humble way and just saying like, my heart's in anguish over my fellow Jews, but God's behind us.

It's consistent with his plan. It's consistent with his person. It's consistent with his promises. Right? So he, again, doesn't give us his opinion.

He cites the scripture, again, in case you've missed the point. Verse 11, the last scripture, Malachi 1, 2 through 3, saying, as it is written, Jacob, I love, but Esau, I hated.

So many people want to stop and talk back at Paul now and say, wait a minute, Paul. Doesn't that just mean that he loved Jacob very, very much and a whole lot and he just loved Esau a little less?

No. No. And I can say that because I've actually read Malachi chapter one. And in that, God is saying to the nations of Judah who were descended from Isaac and Edom who are the descendants of Esau.

[33 : 18] Both nations had sinned and been unfaithful. So you get that? Both deserved judgment. Both equal in that regard. But out of God's love for Jacob and the promise he gave to Jacob, he saved Judah and not Edom.

God is setting his saving love on Jacob and rejecting or hating Esau. That's startling, right? Must grasp it.

We can't just turn our heads away. I want you to just let this, okay, I'm going to get into it more next week, but like, has it really hit you that no one, including yourself, deserves salvation?

There's something in us that just says, yeah, I'm sinful. I'm pretty sinful. I've done some bad things in my life. But deep down, we think that there's still, I'm not that bad.

There's still some reason, maybe, why God chose to put his love on me. It's kind of like when you have weeds growing in your garden and you try different things to kill them and they keep coming back and then finally you find that one little whatever that just annihilates them, like takes them all out.

[34 : 38] This is sort of like that. This passage, if you have any of that left in you that says, there's a reason why. There's got to be something. Why God did this and why he saved me, this nukes it.

It goes, nope, nothing. There's nothing in you or me that inclined God to save us. We're all in an equal playing field, undeserving of salvation.

And you know what? God would have remained just if he chose not to save any of us. We're going to look more again next week.

Some of you still may not be satisfied. And there's something Jacob or about him that made God choose them over Esau. And we don't want to go there.

We don't want to disgrace grace. Grace, by our definition, if we think that way, means God's grace plus any good qualities whatsoever that we bring.

[35 : 43] And that leads to God's purpose. Paul is actually saying that the entire matter comes from his own sovereign election, his own sovereign choice.

There's nothing that we can do to qualify us to be recipients of that. Nothing. And we'll talk about it again more next week.

But this just leaves us scratching our head and go, why? Why me then? That's what it should do. And that's the effect. But Paul, he anticipates the questions.

He knows they're coming. He knows that you're going to say, wait a minute. And to where we're going next week, I mean, just sort of in conclusion here, remember, God's promises have not failed to the Jewish people.

Because there was never a promise given by God that he would save every single Jew. He never said that. His promise only applied to the chosen remnant of Israel.

[36 : 42] So he's been faithful to that promise. So therefore, we can trust him to be faithful to us. And then, nextly, looking ahead, for those of you who are saying, that's not fair.

That seems unjust. It seems not fair and almost unloving for God to arbitrarily, for no reason, just to save some over others without any consideration of merit.

Well, the apostle is aware of you. And I think that Paul wrestled with this himself. Okay? So, you're in good company if you're thinking that. Like, Paul himself wrestled with this.

And he anticipates the questions in verses 14 through 18. He answers that question. Well, does this make God unjust? He answers that.

And in verses 19 through 20, he answers another question. If this is true, then how can God personally hold us responsible for our sin?

[37 : 50] How can he hold us to account? Paul addresses that. You'll be shocked at his answer. So, really quickly, I just want to encourage us to stay humble.

Be very careful when we're tempted to call God unjust. Remember, it says about him that righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

In Psalm 97. So, fallen sinful men like me and people like you, we can try to explain away all this with our own logic and reason.

But, by definition, whatever God does always is loving. Always is just. Always is right. It's consistent with his character.

God needs no justification for anything he does. And I just finished reading Job with the men in my group. And that's God's answer to him.

[38 : 53] Who are you, basically? You worship me and say I'm great and raise your hands. And then something happens. You want to put me across the table and say, hey, you owe me an explanation.

He is God. He owes us nothing. And to put us in our place. And so, I don't want you to be afraid of this.

Spurgeon was right. Like, if you're afraid of it, it's only because you haven't quite seen it yet. You haven't quite understood it just yet. It is an act of God the Father.

Know that all our salvation was an act of the Trinity. The Father did something. The Son did something. And the Spirit did something. Right? And I want to make us aware, whether you are aware of it or not, that there was a point in eternity past that God brought our salvation to being by decreeing it so.

Right? Paul wrote earlier in chapter 8. We love chapter 8. He wrote in chapter 8, verse 33. Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?

[40 : 06] See that? It is God who justifies. Peter wrote at the beginning of his first letter, Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to those who are elect.

Exiles. That Greek word, electos, means to select out of, to choose out of a group. There's no way around it. But simply put, if we were in Christ today, it's because God gave us grace.

And He gave us salvation. And that if you are elect, then you are loved, cared for deeply by the Father.

And I want to just end with this. There's a story that I read about a woman who came to her pastor after he preached on this, and she was just distressed.

And she said, Pastor, look, I'm really confused about the doctrine of election. And I'm really nervous about it. But I see it in Scripture. I just don't understand it.

[41 : 09] And her pastor said, Mary, are you saved? And she said, yes, I am. I know I'm saved for sure. Like, I give it all, right?

Yes, I am. I am saved. Then he said, did you save yourself? Or did God save you? And she goes, without any question, like, Pastor, like the Lord saved me.

Like, God saved me. Nothing I contribute at all. He alone saved me. And then he said, well, did He save you on purpose? Or was it an accident?

And she just stopped and paused and said, well, I reckon it was on purpose. And he said, that's election. That's it. It's meant to give us comfort.

Do you really want to cooperate with God for your salvation? I don't. I'll be unsaved this afternoon if that is the case. And if you think that your free will played a part in your salvation, well, your free will can also undo your salvation.

[42 : 10] But if it's all of God, if it started with Him and ends with Him, then nothing can take you out of the Father's hand. That's what Romans 8 is saying.

Who can bring a charge against God's elect? Who can separate us from the love of Christ? And for a people in the first century who were about to be persecuted by the Jews and then persecuted by the empire, they knew this was a comfort that God, for some reason, just known to Him, gave them grace and saved them.

So if you're struggling with this today, it's all right. It's all right. But this is something God wants us to see. This is in His Word. We can't get around it.

And every time I thought I got around it, my youth pastor would just show me another verse. I'm like, dang it! As soon as I think I've got it figured out, he throws another monkey wrench in my thinking. And I'm so glad he did.

And so if you have questions, please come talk. Don't storm out angry and be like, I'm never coming. You know, just come talk to us. And again, in a couple weeks, we will maybe do a class on this.

[43 : 19] We may have some sign-up for it, possibly. Just get it all out. Unpack it at length. But stand in awe of God. We are far from full understanding, but we can confess with Paul that God is faithful by whom you were called into fellowship by His Son.

And just look at Ephesians 1, and we're going to close it out. Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians chapter 1. If you look in God's Word and look at verse 3.

Paul says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

In love. Don't miss that part. In love. He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ. According to the purpose of His will and to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

Pray with me.