

August 6th, 2017

# THE PRAYER THAT NO ONE DESERVES

John 17:6-10

Charles Spurgeon, the prince of preachers in England during the 19th century wrote in his autobiography about coming to Christ, and his awakening to the doctrine of unconditional election. He said this:

“When I was coming to Christ, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think the young convert is at first aware of this. I can recall the very day and hour when first I received [the doctrine of election] in my soul...and I can recollect how I felt that I had grown [all the] sudden from a babe into a man...I...having found, once for all, that clue to the truth of God.

One week-night, when I was sitting in the house of God...the thought struck me, *How did you come to be a Christian?* I sought the Lord. *But how did you come to seek the Lord?* The truth flashed across my mind in a moment—I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to make me seek Him. I prayed, thought I, but then I asked myself, *How came I to pray?* I was induced to pray by reading the Scriptures. *How came I to read the Scriptures?* I did read them, but what led me to do so? Then, in a moment, I saw that God was at the bottom of it all, and that He was the Author of my faith, and so the doctrine of grace opened up to me, and from that doctrine I have not departed to this day, and I desire to make this my constant confession, “I ascribe my change wholly to God.”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> quoted in John Piper’s *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Books, Revised Edition 2012), pg. 108

That discovery transformed Spurgeon from a babe into a man.<sup>2</sup> Salvation is not the effect of self-determination. Salvation is the effect of God's sovereign determination. No one has ever willed themselves into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul says "So then it [*salvation*] depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy" (**Romans 9:16**)

If you don't see that, then v.9 in today's passage is knock the spiritual wind out of your lungs. Jesus prays in v. 9 "I am praying for them [*the elect*]. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours." Jesus doesn't pray for the whole world of mankind. Jesus is only praying for the elect of God. Jesus prays only for those whom the Father chose before the foundation of the world (**Ephesians 1:4**). Jesus prays only for those who are written in the book of life (**Revelation 20:15**). Jesus does not pray for those who will be finally lost. He imposes a restriction on whom he prays for. He does not indiscriminately pray for everybody. D.A. Carson says on this point

"The world can be prayed for only to the end that some who now belong to it might abandon it and join with others who have been chosen out of the world. There is nothing intrinsic to the 'world' itself...that could sanction prayers on its behalf. To pray for the world—the created moral order in active rebellion against God—would be blasphemous; **there is no hope for the world.** There is hope only for some who now constitute the world but who will cease to be in the world and will join those of whom Jesus says *for they are yours.*"<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Spurgeon was a Calvinist. He wasn't a divisive, party spirit, myopic type of Calvinist. But a people loving, gospel preaching, orphan rescuing, church discipling, global reaching type of Calvinist. His Calvinism fueled all that he did, because as he read passages like John 17 he was fortified with God's absolutely sovereignty, and therefore He knew that God's plans for the world cannot fail. That's one of the main differences between Arminianism and Calvinism. Arminianism says that salvation is an hypothetical offer. Calvinism says that salvation is an invincible effect.

<sup>3</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company), pg. 561

Carson's words are sobering. "There is no hope for the world...there is hope only for...[God's elect]<sup>4</sup>." And if your reaction to Jesus' prayer is "that's not fair," you don't understand what grace is. This is the prayer that no one deserves. Sinners do not deserve to have the Son of God plead for them before the Father. Sinners do not deserve to have Jesus Christ—the spotless Lamb of God—offer any petitions on their behalf. Sinners deserve one thing: the righteous and everlasting wrath of a Holy God. "The wages of sin is death." Sinners deserve death.

But Jesus prays for some—for those whom the Father had given Him. The elect. Dear congregation, this is what it means to be saved by grace alone. Salvation by grace *just is* salvation by unconditional election. Election is not based on any merit, any work, any attitude, any inward disposition that you possess. The greatest deed you could ever do could not have persuaded God to show you the smallest scrap of favor from His table.<sup>5</sup>

And on the other hand, no sin, great or small, secret or scandalous, neither murder or sexual immorality could have ever prevented God from saving you. God doesn't disqualify great sinners from election based on their sin. He has saved both murderers and rapists.

Nobody deserves election, because all or your righteous deeds before God are disgusting rags (**Isaiah 64:6**) and all your sins—however small or however great—are damning deeds (**James 2:10**). If God were to look for you to meet any condition for electing you, you would go to hell.

And therefore this prayer that Jesus prays in **v.9** is not unfair. No one deserves this prayer. Therefore, it is most precious prayer that we could ever hear. Beloved, Jesus is praying for you. Specifically. He doesn't pray for you in a general way. He targets you. Father "I am praying for *them*. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours."

---

<sup>4</sup> "There is hope only for some who now constitute the world but who will cease to be in the world and will join those of whom Jesus says *for they are yours*."

<sup>5</sup> All of your righteous deeds are disgusting rags (**Isaiah 64:6**)

## *The Big Idea...*

Jesus prays the prayer that no one deserves so the elect would treasure a grace that no one could destroy

- ☆ The People of Electing Love
- ☆ The Product of Electing Love
- ☆ The Prayer of Electing Love

### I. The People of Electing Love

#### **Our good is for Jesus' glory**

In v.1-5, we saw that Jesus prayed for Himself, namely, that He would be *glorified*. He now turns to pray for the disciples specifically in v.6-19. And there is an important connection between these two prayers. His glorification is *bound* to our well-being. That's what Jesus meant in v.4—He accomplished the work the Father gave Him to do—namely, giving eternal life to those the Father had given Him (v.2). So when Jesus is praying for His glorification, He's praying for everything you need to gain eternal life. You can see this connection clearly in v.10 “All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and *I am glorified in them.*”

#### **Election is emphasis in this passage**

There can be no doubt that election is paramount to Jesus' prayer. He mentions election four times in this section.

**v.6a** “I have manifested your name to the people *whom you gave me* out of the world.

**v.6b** “*Yours* they were, *you gave them* to me”

v.9b “I am not praying for the world but *for those whom you have given me, they are yours*”

v.10 “All mine are *yours*, and *yours* are mine.”

### Jesus rejoices over election!

Why does Jesus repeat Himself so frequently over this issue of election? Because He wants us to know it and treasure it as He does. Did you know that Jesus rejoices the doctrine of election? (Please turn to Luke 10:21) There are only two places in the gospels that records Jesus rejoicing—this is not to say that He didn’t rejoice very frequently, but only two places are recorded.<sup>6</sup> One of them is in **Luke 10:21**. This is right after the disciples came back from evangelizing in every town and place. “In that same hour [Jesus] *rejoiced in the Holy Spirit* and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden *these things* from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.” What has the Father hidden from some but revealed to others? Look at v.22 “...no one knows who the Son is except the Father.”

Now that is controversial, but Jesus rejoiced over it. There is a lie in our politically correct evangelical culture that says we should avoid controversial teachings because they promote contention not Christlikeness. But ask yourself: “Are there any significant biblical teachings that have not been controversial?”<sup>7</sup> There is not one. The deity of Jesus Christ; the need for a blood atonement; the Trinity; justification by faith alone—have all been hugely controversial doctrines. There is not one essential doctrine of the faith that is not controversial. And the doctrine of election is no exception. Election is controversial, but Jesus rejoiced over it! He worshipped His Father because God had hidden the gospel from some and revealed it to others. He rejoiced over election.

---

<sup>6</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Books, Revised Edition 2012), pg. 118

<sup>7</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Books, Revised Edition 2012), pg. 105

## Why did Jesus rejoice over election?

So why did Jesus rejoice over election? Because nothing so exhibits the freedom of God's *grace* more than election. The end of **Luke 10:21** says [You have done *these things*] "for such was your *gracious will*." God elects, and Jesus rejoices in that election because it magnifies God's free grace. **Ephesians 1:4** says "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...[v.5] according to the purpose of his will, *to the praise of his glorious grace*,"

I think many of us can sing songs without letting the words hit home. Think of those famous words by John Newton "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear." I'm certain that much of the grace that is preached today would have never caused Newton to fear. God's grace has been perverted to mean the *opposite* of what it actually means. God's grace today means that as long as you choose God then God will show you favor. That's not what grace means. You will never choose God, unless He chooses you first. Jesus said in **John 15:16** "You did not choose me, but I chose you." Newton said that grace taught his heart to fear because He realized that God could have chosen not to save him. Salvation was totally and completely in God's hands.

## Election is an eternal fixed reality

And one of the inescapable truths from this passage is that election is an eternal fixed reality. The number of the elect is fixed. It cannot be increased or decreased. Jesus says at the end of **v.6** "Yours they *were*, and you gave them to me," This is past tense. "Even before their conversion the disciples belonged to God,"<sup>8</sup> God doesn't elect men and women when they come to faith. That's why Jesus could say in **John 10:16** "I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice." That's why God told Paul when he was preaching in Corinth "I have many in this city who are my people", and this was before they had even believed (**Acts 18:10**) Election is an eternal fixed reality. Think about what it would say about God if the number of

---

<sup>8</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: John 12-21* (Chicago, IL.,: Moody Publishers, 2008), pg. 263

elect could increase or decrease. Was He not perfectly holy and perfectly wise from all eternity? Does God have to elect more because He didn't know all things? And what would that say about His immutability? If God is changing, is He getting better or worse? If better, He wasn't God to begin with; if worse, He's not God now. But **Numbers 23:19** says "God is not man...that he should change his mind."

## II. The Product of Electing Love

### **Election creates faith**

This passage really demonstrates the controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism rests. J.I. Packer summarizes the difference:

"Where the Arminian says: "I owe my election to my faith," the Calvinist says: "I owe my faith to my election." Clearly, these two concepts of election are very far apart."<sup>9</sup>

Arminianism says that God elects based on the condition of foreseen faith. But the Calvinistic doctrine of election is unconditional. It says that God chooses some to be saved not on the basis of any foreseen faith or merit but according to His good pleasure alone. The Arminian says, "The decisive cause of my faith in Christ is myself." And the Calvinist says, "The decisive cause of my faith was God"<sup>10</sup>

What does Jesus say is the decisive cause of your faith? Does Jesus say that faith causes your election so that you are the decisive cause of saving faith; or does Jesus says that election causes your faith so that God is the decisive cause of saving faith?

---

<sup>9</sup> J.I. Packer in his introductory essay in John Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2007), pg. 7

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/watershed-differences-between-calvinists-and-arminians> accessed June 30, 2017

Let's listen to Him pray in v.6. "I have *manifested your name*<sup>11</sup> [meaning—"I am making You known"<sup>12</sup>] to the people whom you gave me out of the world." So take that in. On one level Jesus preached to everybody indiscriminately. But on another level, He is revealing the Father *only* to the elect. "I have manifested your name *to the people whom you gave me out of the world.*" Jesus did not make the Father known to all. Here Jesus is speaking speaking about the 11 disciples, that's the context. Jesus revealed who God was to the 11 disciples, those whom the Father gave Him. But we know this is how it works for all of God's elect, because v.20 says "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word."

Jesus is speaking about *effectual calling* here. There is a outward call and an inward or effectual call. The outward call happens whenever the gospel is preached. This outward call can be resisted. After Paul preached in Athens, we read in **Acts 17:32-33** "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." The outward call can be resisted. But the inward, effectual call cannot be. This is what happened to Lydia in **Acts 16:14** "The Lord opened her heart to pay

---

<sup>11</sup> **Exodus 34:6-7** "The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." **John 1:18** "No one has ever seen God; the only God,[a] who is at the Father's side,[b] he has made him known."

<sup>12</sup> Why is this significant? What does it mean to manifest God's name? Herman Witsius answers: "The name of God...does not strictly denote God, as he exists in himself, *but* as he reveals and makes himself known to rational creatures. This is done both in the works of creation and common providence, and in the works of grace and of glory. But, most of all, he reveals himself in the word of his gracious covenant, in which he shows how God may be denominated the Savior of sinful man, with the full display of all his perfections. Thus God, when he proclaims his name before Moses, dwells chiefly on his truth, grace, and justice (Exodus 34:6-7). And our Lord Jesus Christ, after publishing his Gospel and finishing his work, declares, *I have manifested THY NAME unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.* Having conveyed instruction, both by word and deed, he had brought home to the consciences of the elect those just views of the divine character which lead to his praise and glory, and which contain solid reasons why men should call him their God." Herman Witsius, *Sacred Dissertations on the Lord's Prayer*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, Reprint 2010), pg. 188-189

attention to what was said by Paul.”<sup>13</sup> This effectual call is what happened to the Gentiles in **Acts 13:48** “And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”

### What are the effects of this effectual call?

So look again at v.6. Remember we’re asking the question ‘What does Jesus say is the decisive cause of your faith?’ Are *you* the decisive cause of your faith or is *God*? v.6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, *and they have kept your word.*” There it is: saving faith. The disciples kept God’s word. v.7-8 explain what this means: “Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.” Keeping God’s word here is equivalent to believing the gospel.<sup>14</sup> The disciples kept God’s word, *meaning* they believed that Jesus came from God, that Jesus speaks for God, that Jesus is God and the only Savior of the world. They *received* these truths (v.8), not as mere facts like the demons, but as the very words of eternal life. They *received* Jesus as He offered Himself to them: as the bread of life (**John 6:35**);<sup>15</sup> as the light of the

---

<sup>13</sup> This inward effectual calling is the promise of the covenant of grace. Deuteronomy 30:6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. Jeremiah 32:40 I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.

<sup>14</sup> D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing Company), pg. 559

<sup>15</sup> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

world (**John 8:12**);<sup>16</sup> as the good shepherd (**John 10:11**);<sup>17</sup> as the resurrection and the life (**John 11:25**).<sup>18</sup>

Why did the disciples receive Christ? What caused their faith? v.6 tells us: Jesus revealed the Father to them. Why did Jesus reveal the Father to them and not others? Because the Father gave them to Jesus and not others. Election is the cause of saving faith, because nobody can believe unless Jesus reveals the Father. **Matthew 11:27** “No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son *chooses to reveal him*.” It is impossible for God to elect based on foreseen faith, because there is no faith to foresee until Jesus reveals the Father. And this revelation of the Father is what the new birth. There is nobody whom Jesus reveals the Father to who doesn’t believe.

That’s why you see this unbroken progression in v.6-8. As Calvin says step one is “the election by free grace, and the second is, that gift by which we enter into the guardianship of Christ. [And step three is that] we are gathered by faith into the fold.”<sup>19</sup>

Dear believer, your faith is a product of God’s electing you. **Philippians 1:29** “For it has been *granted to you* that for the sake of Christ you should...*believe in him*” **1 Corinthians 1:30** “Because of him you are in Christ Jesus.”

### III. The Prayer of Electing Love

#### Jesus prays only for the elect

v.9 now makes sense in light of all that we have seen. Jesus prays in v.9 “I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you

---

<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

<sup>17</sup> I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

<sup>18</sup> Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[a] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

<sup>19</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries Vol. XVIII* (Grand Rapids, MI.: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 171

have given me, for they are yours.” The world here that Jesus is speaking about is the evil, demonically controlled system of unredeemed men and women that is in rebellion against God.<sup>20</sup> Jesus is not praying for them. As our high priest, He only intercedes for those the Father has given Him. And this pattern was foreshadowed under the old covenant,

“the high priest was set apart from all other men. He wore special garments...with the names of six of the tribes of Israel, lying on each shoulder. He also wore a breastplate holding 12 precious stones, each engraved with the name of one of the tribes of Israel.”<sup>21</sup>

**Exodus 28:29** says “So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment on his heart, when he goes into the Holy Place, to bring them to regular remembrance before the LORD.” Aaron did not bear the names of those outside of the covenant. He did not intercede for them.

In the same way, Jesus intercedes only for the elect of God.

**Romans 8:34** “Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.” Who is the *us*? v.30—those whom He predestined, and justified and glorified.

**Hebrews 9:24** “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” Who is the “our” here? v.15—“those who are called.”

---

<sup>20</sup> 1 John 5:19 “We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/high-priest-700109> accessed August 5th, 2017

### Jesus prays for all those He atones for

v.9 is one of the most controversial verses in the entire Bible because it shows God's *design* in the atonement. The Arminian view of the atonement says that Christ died for every person that ever lived, yet it was not God's decree to save any particular person. "Rather...it was His will to partly save all men, leaving the other part to be performed by their own action."<sup>22</sup> The Calvinist view of the atonement say that Christ died for all of the Father's elect, and His death *actually* secured their salvation.

When I first came to understand the doctrines of grace, I used to think that the Arminian view was a kinder gentler gospel. Because Arminians say that Christ died for every single person. But this is not a kinder gentler gospel. It is a gospel ultimately based on morality.<sup>23</sup> Who believes the gospel message?<sup>24</sup> Only those who are smart enough or humble enough to do so. It is not a definite atonement, it is a hypothetical atonement. It will work for you, so long as you have the right stuff to believe it. Dear congregation, I don't have the right stuff. My autistic son doesn't have the right stuff. Neither do you. When has your faith ever been pure? When has your faith ever been perfectly sincere? When have you ever been able to say "Ok now I have arrived?" That is not a kinder, gentler gospel.

But beyond that, it dishonors the work of our high priest Jesus Christ. As our high priest, Jesus' death on the cross and intercession for sinners should comprise of the same group of people. But in v.9 Jesus says that He doesn't

---

<sup>22</sup> G.I. Williamson, *The Shorter Catechism: For Study Classes Volume 1*, (Phillipsburg, NJ.,: P & R Publishing Co., 1970), pg 97

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 454

<sup>24</sup> No matter how Arminianism answers this question, it is because the Christian is more moral than the non-Christian.

pray for the world. What kind of a Savior would lay down His life for every person and then specifically say that He is not going to pray for many of them?<sup>25</sup>

That is not a kinder gentler gospel. The gospel is not good news if Jesus dies *partly* for sinners. The gospel is not good news if Jesus doesn't pray for all that He dies for.<sup>26</sup>

The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news because all who the Father gave Jesus—Jesus effectually calls. And all Jesus effectually calls, Jesus dies for. And all that Jesus has died for—Jesus prays for. And anyone who is in that group can never fall under condemnation. Anyone in that group can never go to hell. Anyone in that group gains eternal life and receives the full enjoyment of God and Jesus Christ for endless ages.

And lest you think to yourself, “I don't know if I'm God's elect, so how then can I trust that my belief is real?” God doesn't require you to know if you are among His elect to be saved. “But I'm such a wicked sinner, God will never accept me.” Good news—election is unconditional. No sin can disqualify you from believing the gospel. Listen, even these things that Jesus prayed are things that are meant to encourage your belief in the gospel. **John 20:31** says “these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

---

<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Jesus as our prophet and king is supposed to lead God's people to a saving knowledge of Him. But there have been millions who have never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even today, the Joshua Project, still reports that there are nearly 7,000 unreached people groups. <https://joshuaproject.net> accessed August 5, 2017 John Owen in describing the Universalist vies ways that “Christ took no care for the greatest part of them for whom he died, that ever they should hear one word of his death.” John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2007), pg. 302

<sup>26</sup> “Now, since Christ prays for the elect only, it is necessary for us to believe the doctrine of election, if we sigh that he should plead with the Father for our salvation. A grievous injury, therefore, is inflicted on believers by those persons who endeavor to got out the knowledge of election from the hearts of believers, because they deprive them of the pleading and intercession of the Son of God.” John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries Vol. XVIII* (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks, 2009), pg. 173

# Application

Our Doctrine: The goal of election is the elimination of all human pride

Why does Jesus let us hear this prayer? If God's election is the ultimate decisive cause of our faith, then why tell us at all? Because God is aiming at the destruction of all human pride. It is amazing how self-righteous we can be. Over the fourth of July, I met our neighbors, and asked one of them where they were from. He said Jerome, and instantly my flesh rose up and said "Huh, Jerome, what a stupid small town." Where did that come from?

I was in the doctor's office with Justus' specialist the other day. Here this brilliant man was helping us diagnose his issues, and then he starts typing. But he's not typing properly. He's looking down at the keyboard and pecking key by key, and my flesh thought "Huh, he doesn't even know how to type." Where did that come from? But this self-righteousness is not confined to the church alone. Monica was telling me about a gay man who used to cut her hair several years back. He was a drag queen. But he got angry and judgmental over other gay men who dressed like women because they did it poorly making him look bad. Self-righteousness is not just a church problem, it is a human problem.

Jesus teaches us the doctrine of election to destroy all human pride. And that is how Paul used the doctrine. (Please turn with me to 1 Corinthians 1) The church Corinth was plagued with problems. Divisive parties, drunkenness, sexual immorality, court cases. All of them stemmed from self-righteousness. So where does Paul begin? With election. Look with me at v.26, and look specifically at "what is being opposed and what is being promoted."<sup>27</sup>

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. [*Paul is saying, some of you were slow witted, weak trailer babies* —that's good for me cause I'm all those things] 27 But God *chose* [election] what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God *chose* what

---

<sup>27</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Books, Revised Edition 2012), pg. 119

is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God *chose* what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 *so that* no human being might boast in the presence of God.” 30 And because of him [that is, His election of you] you are in Christ Jesus,

God’s great goal in election is to destroy all human pride. He is seeking to destroy all self-salvation projects. Unconditional election is your greatest help against all your hidden self righteousness. That’s the negative goal. The positive goal is so that God would get all the glory for His free grace. As v.31 says so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” Why will you go to heaven dear saint? Not because of anything in you. Even your best deeds will stand up at the judgment and testify against you. You have nothing to offer God. But He chose you to be in Christ. Therefore, let all your boast be in Christ!

**That’s our doctrine:** The goal of election is the elimination of all human pride

**Our Duty:** Consider that election protects both obedience and assurance

Election does not lessen the necessity of holiness in the believer. **Hebrews 12:14** says “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”<sup>28</sup> In our passage, Jesus shows that this was explicitly happening to the disciples. In v.6, Jesus says that the disciples “have kept your

---

<sup>28</sup> Or **James 2:17** “So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”

word.” Their obedience was evidence that their faith was genuine.<sup>29</sup> There are many NT passages that demonstrate that a transformed heart is a necessary fruit in the lives of believers.<sup>30</sup> **1 John 2:4** “Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,” **John 14:15** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

And so how can you have assurance of salvation? If final salvation requires a transformed life as a necessary evidence, how do you know if you will obtain it? Because the election of God guarantees it. God doesn’t command something that He doesn’t Himself provide. **Deuteronomy 30:6** says “And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” And we see the same reality in the NT **Hebrews 13:20-21** “Now may the God of peace...[21] equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight,”

The doctrine of election not only guards us from legalism—because God doesn’t look at any conditions when He shows us grace; but also from liberalism—because it doesn’t teach that holiness is optional. Rather election guarantees our holiness, because “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (**Phil. 1:6**) God’s unconditional election marries together two seemingly opposite truths: “the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life,” (**Matthew 7:14**) and “my yoke is easy, and my burden

---

<sup>29</sup> It is true that Jesus just got done telling them that they would fail Him—John 16:32. But the obedience that I’m speaking about here is not meritorious but evidentiary. Our obedience will never be perfect, and neither was theirs. But there is a qualitative difference between the believer’s disposition to God and the unbeliever’s disposition towards God. Carson says here “When other ‘disciples’ judge that Jesus teaches too many hard things, the Twelve stay with Jesus: “You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God’ (6:68-69). Even where there is risk to life and health, the closest disciples self-consciously choose to remain with Christ (11:16; 13:37), however flawed their courage might have been. At the fundamental level, Jesus’ assessment of his closest followers is entirely realistic, and in no way a contradiction of John 16:31-32.” D.A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company), pg. 559

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/letter-to-a-friend-concerning-the-so-called-lordship-salvation> accessed August 6, 2017

is light” (**Matthew 11:30**). Election produces the fruits of freedom and obedience in the life of every believer.

Our Delight: Election is the good news that salvation is not just offered but effected

Three times in our passage Jesus speaks of our salvation has being accomplished in the past tense.

**v.4** “I glorified you on earth, having *accomplished* the work that you gave me do do.” Jesus’ death for God’s elect was so certain, that He spoke of it in the past tense before it happened—“I...accomplished.”

**v.6a** “I have *manifested* your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.” The effectual call or the new birth was guaranteed by Christ to all whom the Father gave Him. Again past tense—“I...manifested.”

**v.6b** “Yours they were, and you gave them to me.” Past tense—“Yours they were” Believers have always belonged to God. Their names were written in the Lambs book of life before the foundation of the world (**Rev. 13:8**) Election is the fountain of all other blessings, and this passage shows that it is an invincible reality. Not something that God will do, but something that God has done.

Therefore this truth of election makes the good news of Jesus Christ not merely an offer waiting to be received, but a reality that will invincibly be effected. That’s why Jesus was named Jesus. **Matthew 1:21** “You shall call his name Jesus because He shall save His people from their sins.” Not that Jesus would merely offer salvation. Or that He would probably save. No, He was named Jesus because all that the Father gave Him, He will give eternal life to.

# Communion

The reason why v.9 is such a precious gem of the gospel is because I know that Jesus is praying for me personally. “I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.” Dear believer, Jesus is praying for you, personally. It is not your free will that got you saved. Whitefield wrote to Wesley once and said “Man is nothing: he has a free will to go to hell, but none to go to heaven, till God worth in him to will and to do his good pleasure.”<sup>31</sup>

Consider the two possibilities when it comes to what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

1. He either died for all the sins of all men.
2. Or He died for all the sins of some men.

If Jesus died for all the sins of all men, as so much of evangelicalism supposes, than why aren't all men saved?

Because they answer “You must believe.”

Of course.

But then we would ask: Is that unbelief a sin or no?

“Well it must be a sin” they answer.

We ask: “Did Jesus not pay for it?”

You see, if Jesus paid for the sin of unbelief, then there are no sins left to pay for, and everybody is going to heaven. But if Jesus didn't pay for the sin of unbelief—and this is the claim—then how can anybody go to heaven? **James 2:10** says “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.” This is why I said that this type of gospel is not a kinder gentler gospel. It leaves the sinner to pay for his own sin of unbelief.

---

<sup>31</sup> John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God*, (Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Books, Revised Edition 2012), pg. 129

Dear congregation, it is only through this doctrine of particular atonement or limited atonement that we can experience the true joy of assurance. As the apostle Paul said “the Son of God...loved *me* and gave himself for *me*” (Gal. 2:20) Christ did not purchase a chance for me at calvary, He purchased me.

We confess that we are sinners, that we are guilty, that we cannot be saved unless there is a fit substitute who will take on our punishment, and earn the righteousness that we need before God. And that is what Jesus accomplished. He paid for all our sins—including the sin of unbelief—and He earned all the righteousness that we will ever need to stand before a holy God. And He sits in heaven even not praying for us. Not for the world, but for all that the Father has given Him.

### **Instructions**

We are given instructions on communion. Communion is not for those under church discipline or for unbelievers. The apostle says “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Cor. 12:28)

What does examination look like? Because the verse previous to this says that it’s possible to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner. How do you eat it in a worthy manner? By realizing that you are unworthy, but that Jesus is all-worthy. By realizing that you are insufficient, but that Jesus is all-sufficient. By realizing that on your own you are lost, but in Christ you are found. This is what Biblical faith is, falling helplessly into the arms of the Savior.