

Election and Reprobation

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[0:00] Welcome to Built on God's Word, the preaching and teaching ministry of Highland Park Baptist Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Pastor Mike Scrivani teaches on election and reprobation.

! Heavenly Father, thank you for this time that we have to gather, to think deeply about you, about salvation. And so, Lord, I pray that you would bless this time, that you would just sharpen our understanding of what you've done to save us, how and why that's the case.

That, Lord, ultimately the result would be our praise of you, our gratitude for you, and just basking in how gracious and good you are to save sinners like us.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. When I was in college, a student once came to a class wearing a shirt that read on the front, Arminianism, colon, I chose this shirt.

And on the back, it said Calvinism, colon, this shirt chose me. And I remember thinking, of course a shirt doesn't choose to be worn.

[1:24] A shirt can't jump off a hanger onto your body. It can't spring out of a drawer and, you know, stuff you in it. Or materialize onto your body.

That was my first experience with what I learned later in seminary. It's called the doctrine of election. So tonight we're going to look to the Bible, not a shirt, to inform our understanding of salvation as it pertains to election and reprobation.

And before I continue, one of the resources that I use a lot, I just wanted to share with you, it's another very big, thick book. It's Biblical Doctrine by John MacArthur and Richard Mayhew.

So you can tell I have a lot of bookmarks in there. This is the one that I go to first, typically, with some of my theological or doctrinal questions or just for clarity on some certain things.

It's a good one I recommend to you. But, again, there's a lot of ground to cover tonight and not enough time to cover it. I want to leave some time at the end for questions. So my plan is to go through Grudem's outline for the chapter, answering what the Bible teaches about election, how it presents the teaching of election, and correcting any misunderstandings that there are, or some of the misunderstandings that there are.

[2:49] We won't have time to go through all of them, about the doctrine of election. I'll briefly address the doctrine of reprobation at the end. And it's important that I do that tonight, though it could honestly be a lesson in itself, because the doctrine of election could lead some down a path that ventures outside of orthodoxy and ends with beliefs about God that are false and could lead us to think things that just aren't true, that aren't biblically supported.

I'll have more to say about that when we get there, but for now, I'll start with a definition of election. First, we're going to look at Grudem's definition. He says, I'll read that one again.

Richard Mayhew's definition is a little bit longer.

He says, So I'll read that one again.

So I'll read that one again. We know from Scripture that some people will be saved, but not all people will be saved.

[5:04] In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made this clear in Matthew 7, 13 through 14. He said, That's the scary part.

Many. And then Jesus concludes his sermon on the Mount, talking about a future day of judgment. He says, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven. On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do mighty works in your name?

And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Matthew 25, 46, Jesus teaches that there will be sheep as well as goats.

Those who inherit eternal life and others who go away to eternal punishment. In Matthew 22, 1 through 14, Jesus gives the parable of the wedding feast.

[6:12] Many were called to attend the feast, but most rejected that invitation. And Jesus ends that parable with these words in Matthew 22, 14.

For many are called, but few are chosen. The Bible clearly teaches that God chooses to save some people, that's election, but not all people, that's reprobation.

Now, the term predestination includes the doctrine of election and reprobation. Several New Testament passages affirm that God ordained in eternity past those whom he would save.

For example, when Paul and Barnabas preached to the Gentiles in Antioch and Pisidia, Luke writes 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. Luke mentions election here as if this was just a normal occurrence when the gospel was preached.

[7:20] It's like somebody asks Luke, well, how many believed in Antioch and Pisidia? And his reply is, well, as many as were predestined, appointed to eternal life believed.

Romans 8, 28 through 30 is a passage sometimes referred to the golden chain of salvation because it outlines five unbreakable steps of God's saving works that began in eternity past and culminate in eternity future.

Let's look at that passage, Romans 8, 28 through 30. And we know that, and I'm going to be, we're going to look at some of these scriptures, we're going to move on, and then we're going to come back and look at some of these scriptures, just so you know.

And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And those whom he predestined, he also called. Here's the golden chain of salvation, these steps. Those whom he predestined, he also called. Those whom he called, he also justified. And those whom he justified, he also glorified.

[8:40] Nobody gets left out. Nobody falls through the cracks. Regarding the fact that some of the people of Israel were saved, but others were not, Paul says in Romans 11, 7, What then?

Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened. Paul talks explicitly about God's choice of believers before the foundation of the world in Ephesians 1, 4-6.

That passage says, He says, For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you, not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, 13, Paul states the fact that the Thessalonian Christians believed the gospel when he preached it, and this is the reason he knows that God chose them.

As soon as they came to faith in Christ, Paul's conclusion is that long ago, God chose them, and therefore they believed the gospel that he preached.

[10:19] 2 Thessalonians 2, 13 says, I'm going to stop here for a moment because it's at this point that most Christians agree.

God elects or predestines people to salvation. Those words are in the Bible. We've got to do something with them if we believe that the Bible is God's word.

But there's been and still is much debate over the reason or basis why God elects or chooses to save some.

Some say that his election is based on foreknowledge in the sense that in eternity past, God looked forward down the quarters of time and saw who would respond positively to the gospel, and these, they say, are God's elect.

I don't believe that for at least a couple of reasons. First, and primarily because that's not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that God's choice of certain individuals is made not on the basis of anything in those individuals themselves, but solely on the sovereign and good pleasure of God's will.

[11:45] This is to say that election is unconditional. God's choice of individuals for salvation is not predicated on any virtue, worthiness, or decision.

God foresees individuals making in the future to choose him. As Moses said to the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 7.7, It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

In other words, there was nothing in Israel that commended them to God as a reason for his choosing them. Rather, as Deuteronomy 7.8 says, But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. God set his love on his people in election because he chose to love them. When the question is asked, Why does God choose one person over another?

The answer can't be because that person did this, but rather because God acted according to the sovereign freedom of his will. As again, Ephesians 1.5 says, God predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

[13:16] In Romans 9.11-13, Paul talks about God's choosing Jacob over Esau. You remember Jacob and Esau?

They're twin brothers. And says his choice was not because of anything Jacob or Esau had done, but simply in order that God's purpose of election might continue.

Romans 9.11-13 say, of Jacob and Esau, Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose 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 have loved, but Esau I hated.

The Bible says that God, before the foundation of the world, chose to make certain individuals the objects of his unmerited favor or his special grace, and or his special grace.

I've quoted again Ephesians 1.3-5 a couple of times, but this passage really, I think, seals the basis upon which God elects some for salvation, and it isn't because of a choice that he foresaw them making in eternity past.

[14:36] In verses 3-4 of Ephesians 1, Paul identifies the beneficiaries of election. They are those who are blessed by the Father in their Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, the Ephesian believers, and all other individual believers are the beneficiaries of election. And the sphere in which they are elected is their union in Christ.

In verse 4, Paul comments on the timing of election. He says this was before the foundation of the world, before anything was created.

The Father's election was an eternal decree predating creation and history. Just as the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world, John 17.24, and foreknew the Son before the foundation of the world, 1 Peter 1.20, so were the elect loved and foreknown before the foundation of the world by virtue of God's choosing them.

Commenting on Ephesians 1.5, Richard Mayhew says, Thus, Paul says that predestination is carried out according to the standard or the basis of the good pleasure of God's will.

[16:01] Though either ediokea, good pleasure, or thelemma, will, would by themselves have adequately expressed Paul's intent, he employs both terms, Mayhew says, in synonymous repetition in order to emphasize God's absolute freedom of election.

This delivers a fatal blow to the supposition that election was conditioned on faith or anything else the sinner might think or do. If the basis of God's choice was foreseen, faith or actions of those he chose, Paul would have had to write that God predestined us according to his foreknowledge of our faith.

Yet he explicitly asserts that it was the good pleasure of God's will, not man's will, that was the ground of his choice. There are many other verses in the Old Testament and New Testament that speak of election, and when you look at all the Bible and what it teaches about election and predestination, it becomes obvious that God's choice was not based on any foreseen act or response, but was based solely on his own good pleasure and sovereign will.

The Bible says that all those who are predestined will be saved. John 6, 37, Jesus says, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

Jesus came to accomplish the Father's saving of all those predestined by him for salvation. In John 6, 38-39, Jesus continues, For I have come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of

him who sent me, and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

[17:54] They are Jesus' sheep who hear his voice. As he says in John 10, 27-28, My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me, I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

When you examine what the Bible teaches about election and predestination, it becomes clear that God's election of individuals for salvation is, again, not based on their merits, but his grace.

How, the question now becomes, how does the New Testament present the teaching of election?

What does this doctrine mean for us? So how should we understand it according to the Bible?

Well, first of all, it should comfort us. The New Testament authors present the doctrine of election as a comfort for believers. When Paul assures the believers in Rome, in Romans 8, 28, that all things work together for the good of those who are called according to his purpose, he gives God's work of predestination as a reason why we can be assured of this truth.

He explains in the next verse, for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Paul is making the point that God has always acted for the good of those whom he called to himself.

[19:16] When Paul looks into eternity past, he sees that God foreknew and predestined his people to be conformed into the image of his Son. When he looks at the recent past, he finds that God called and justified his people whom he predestined.

When he looks to the future, when Jesus returns, he sees that God determined to give perfect, glorified bodies to those who believe in Jesus. From eternity to eternity, God has acted with the good of his people in mind.

Since God has always acted for our good and will in the future act for our good, Paul reasons then that will not God always in our present circumstances work every circumstance together for the good as well.

In this way, predestination is seen as a comfort for believers in the everyday events of their life. The New Testament presents the teaching of unconditional election as a reason also to praise God.

Again, Ephesians 1, 5-6 says, God predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, and here it is, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

[20:39] Similarly, he says in verse 12, Ephesians 1, 12, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. Paul likewise tells the Thessalonians, We give thanks to God always for you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

For we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you. That's 1 Thessalonians 1, 2-4. The reason why Paul thanks God for the Thessalonian believers is that he knows God ultimately is responsible for their salvation and has chosen them to be saved.

He reiterates this again in 2 Thessalonians 2, 13. There he says, But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Paul gives praise to God for his grace in choosing them. He doesn't give praise to the Thessalonians for choosing God.

Ever notice that? We don't read that in the Bible. The New Testament presents unconditional election to encourage evangelism. Now, hear me say that again. This truth, this doctrine, should encourage our evangelism.

[22:05] 2 Timothy 2, 10 says, Therefore, Paul writing, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Paul knows that God has chosen some people to be saved, and he sees this as an encouragement for him to preach the gospel, even if it means intense suffering for himself.

Election is Paul's guarantee that there will be some success in his evangelism because he knows that some of the people that he shares the gospel with will be elect and will believe the gospel, and they will be saved.

In Acts chapter 18, Paul was opposed by the Jews who reviled him as he shared the gospel with them. This is in Corinth. He tells them that from now on he's going to go to the Gentiles, but while all of this is happening, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed the Lord as did the rest of his

household and many other Corinthians were being saved as well.

And that night, Acts 18, 9 through 11, we read that Jesus appeared to Paul in a vision. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, Do not be afraid, but go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people. [23 : 34] Talking about those who are not yet saved, and Jesus is referring to them as his people. And from that vision, from that message, verse 11 says, And Paul stayed a year and six months longer teaching the word of God among them.

Paul did not conclude from this vision that many more would be saved. Rather or not, he continued to preach the gospel to them.

In fact, again, he stayed a long time, a year and six months. This is one of his longest stays in any of the cities that he went to. He stayed to preach the gospel in Corinth in order that those elect people would hear the gospel, maybe many times, and be saved.

In that vision, Jesus didn't give the names and addresses to Paul of who these people were. You know, hey, John Smith is one of my people, and his address is, I don't know, they didn't have addresses back then, but you know, his around the corner by the temple and over there by the vendor of fruit, you'll find him.

Paul didn't know who exactly Jesus was going to save in that city, but that he would save more in that city. And that encouraged his evangelism. Paul is explicit in Romans 10 that unless people preach the gospel, others will not be saved.

[24 : 59] Romans 10, 14 says, how then, speaking of the unbeliever, how then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And then in verse 17, he adds, Romans 10, 17, so faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

Again, Paul didn't know who was elected by God for salvation when he entered the city. This is something only God knew, but once people heard the gospel and were saved, Paul's conclusion, as we've already seen, is that God chose them and he gives the praise to God for that, not for himself. We don't ever hear Paul say, you know, hey, I was really on fire in Rome. I wasn't as hot over in wherever, Laodicea or Lystra.

He never takes the praise for himself. It wasn't about Paul. It wasn't about his preaching style or anything special in himself. Always the praise when someone is saved goes to God.

[26 : 10] He gets all the credit. That's what we see throughout the New Testament. Paul endured a life of incredible hardship in order to bring the gospel to those whom God chose.

And near the end of his life, in 2 Timothy 2.10, he says, therefore I endure again everything for the sake of the elect that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

So, election should comfort us, it should cause us to praise God, and it should encourage our evangelism. However, many misunderstandings of this doctrine have resulted in some objections. I don't have time, again, to answer them all, but I want to address a couple of the bigger ones that I've often heard and you probably have as well. The first is something called fatalism.

Human choices and decisions, they would say, if this is the case, don't really make a difference. No matter what we do, things are going to turn out as they were previously ordained to turn out.

[27 : 18] Therefore, it is futile to attempt to influence the outcomes of events or the outcome of our lives. Our decisions and choices mean nothing. We are like machines or robots simply functioning in accordance to predetermined plans.

That's the objection. Well, the Bible teaches that we are genuine persons created by a personal God whose act of election was neither impersonal nor mechanical.

The personal care of God for His creatures, even those who rebel against Him, is clearly seen.

Ezekiel 33, 11 says, Say to them, as I live, declares the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather, but that the wicked would turn from His way and live, turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for you will die, O house of Israel.

As it pertains to a response to the gospel, the Bible says people make willing choices to accept or reject it. Jesus said in Matthew 11, 28, which I shared from this morning, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Revelation 22, 17 has this invitation. The Spirit and the Bride say come, and let the one who hears say come, and let the one who is thirsty come, let the one who desires take the water of life without

price.

[28:45] These invitations are issued to genuine people who are capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it. Jesus did not excuse those who rejected them because they weren't elect.

He indicted them for the genuine refusal on their part to believe in Him. Jesus never says, well, you're just a robot, of course, you weren't going to believe in me or anything like that.

John 5, 39 through 40. We see this indictment of our Lord towards those who reject Him. You search, and to the Pharisees, you search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

Jesus expressed His sorrow for the whole city of Jerusalem and the rejection of Him in Matthew 23, 37. He says, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it.

How often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you were not willing. Second objection.

[29:57] So we know we're not robots. This isn't mechanical because the Bible says that we are genuine persons. Second, election, people will say, is unfair. This is their objection.

Basically, a lot of it just boils down to this. Sometimes people regard the doctrine of election as just not being fair. If God chooses some for salvation and passes over others deciding not to save them, they say, that's not fair.

A couple of responses to that. First, you don't want God to be fair. You really don't want God to be fair because it would be perfectly fair for God not to save anyone because we've all sinned.

Just as He did with the angels who fell with Satan. 2 Peter 2.4. God could have chosen not to save anyone and His decision would have been perfectly fair as a righteous judge.

All have sinned. All have fallen short of God's righteous standard. God owes no one anything. So you don't want God to be fair. You want God to be merciful.

[31:15] At a deeper level, this objection says that it's not fair for God to create some people who He knew would sin and be eternally condemned.

Paul raises this objection in Romans 9.18-19. So then He has mercy on whomever He wills and He hardens whomever He wills. You will say to me then, why does He still find fault?

For who can resist His will? Paul's response is to simply call on God's rights as omnipotent Creator in what follows in Romans 9.20-24.

But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, why have you made me like this? Has the potter no right over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?

What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy which He has prepared beforehand for glory?

[32:27] Even us whom He has called not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles. So there's a point when we must acknowledge that God, He doesn't answer to us.

And we need to trust in who He's revealed Himself to be in the Bible. That He is perfectly just and righteous in everything that He does.

God has chosen to save some but not all. Why? I don't know. And nobody else knows besides God. And what I've taken solace in is in Romans 11, 33 through 36. Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been His counselor? Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?

[33:28] For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. I came kicking and screaming to this doctrine in seminary.

I'd never heard about election or predestination before growing up. Though it was in my Bible which says one thing about me and the church that I grew up in.

Ultimately, God's Word has given me peace in all of this. And in becoming more aware of how God has saved me by His grace in election, it's caused me not to feel special.

So I'll have sometimes, I'll have often had conversations with people who are those who object to election as I've shared it with you tonight from the Bible.

And sometimes it'll come down to this and say, well you must feel special that God chose you. And I say, actually, it's the opposite. when I first realized how God saved me, well, and not that I didn't realize it before, but when I came to know the deeper level, the deeper things of God about salvation and His saving me, it didn't make me feel special at all, but unworthy.

[34 : 47] You know, I remember the first time it hit me like a ton of bricks and I was like, my goodness, I should not be saved. And I would not be saved if it were not for the goodness and the graciousness of God to be compassionate and to save a sinner like me.

And so it's deepened my gratitude and my praise for Him. Now let's look at reprobation. This is Mayhew's definition. I gave you Grudem's. He said, Reprobation is the free and sovereign choice of God made in eternity past to pass over certain individuals choosing not to set His saving love on them but instead determined to punish them for their sins unto the magnification of His justice. Now this is a hard teaching to accept. It is unpleasant to contemplate the eternal suffering of people in hell let alone to consider that God who is love and by His nature is a Savior has sovereignly determined to pass over some sinners.

But this is really important. Reprobation is not something called double predestination or some people call it equal ultimacy which teaches that God's action and election and reprobation are perfectly symmetrical so that God is just as active in working unbelief in the heart of the reprobate as He is working faith in the elect.

That's not what the Bible says and that is not what we believe. Scripture teaches Scripture does not teach that the elect receive mercy the non-elect receive justice.

[36 : 40] On neither ground can God be accused because He is righteous and because He's without sin He could have passed over all of us. I want to share a quote from Jonathan Edwards about reprobation and in God's character what it reveals about our Creator.

He said it's kind of a long quote it's a proper and excellent thing for infinite glory to shine forth and for the same reason it is proper that the shining forth of God's glory should be complete that is that all parts of His glory should shine forth that every beauty should be proportionally effulgent that the beholder might have a proper notion of God.

It was not proper that one glory should be exceedingly manifested and another not at all. He's talking about God's justice His wrath. Thus it's necessary that God's awful majesty His authority and dreadful greatness and justice and holiness should be manifested and this could not be except sin and punishment were decreed or at least might be decreed so that the glory shining forth would be very imperfect both because these parts of divine glory would not shine forth as the others do and because then the glory of His goodness and love and holiness would be faint without them.

Nay, they would scarcely shine forth at all. If it were right that God should decree and permit and punish sin there could be no such thing as any manifestation of God's holiness and hatred of sin or in showing any preference in His providence to godliness before us.

Our knowledge of God would be imperfect if we did not see the full expression of His attributes. Grace, mercy, forgiveness, justice, righteousness, and the rest of His perfections.

[38 : 41] And yet none of those attributes would be expressed fully if there was not sin for Him to punish and to forgive sinners of to whom He has been gracious to save.

Okay, I'm going to draw you a picture here. I'll let that all just kind of sink in. This picture may not be the best and if you've had conversations with me about this you probably know what I'm going to draw and this is what helps me and again I'm going to do my best and for those of you who are listening and who aren't here I am drawing a very beautiful picture that if you saw you'd be like man Pastor Mike shouldn't be a pastor he should be an artist.

Just kidding. We'll put man's responsibility and God's sovereignty.

So I tell people imagine this is a this is a road actually we don't want two lanes we're just going one lane here and you know this is one lane we're going this way and we've got lines here on the side of the road right just try to say hey be careful if you go any farther over here this is say that we're just like it's nothing but hazards out here right water shark infested waters whatever hot lava if you go outside of this you're in big trouble so we have these lines here maybe yellow lines just say hey warning you're getting close to driving off the path and then you have like rumble strips you know what I'm talking about the ones that wake you up when you're asleep when you're driving why are you guys laughing you shouldn't know what those are nobody's ever had that happen before right I haven't I don't know what you guys are talking about then you have the rumble strips okay wake up you're getting real close to being outside of the boundaries and these hazards and then maybe

you have these guardrails here that are your last defense before you plunge into a place you don't want to be okay just imagine they're over here too okay so what I tell people and what I see in scripture is that the bible clearly teaches that man has a responsibility to hear and believe the gospel okay we see that you know again we heard Jesus come to me all who are weary and heavily laden I will give you rest man has a responsibility people who spend their eternity in hell are going to do so because they chose to reject Jesus

[41:59] Christ as their Lord and Savior man has a responsibility to hear the gospel and to believe however as we've seen tonight God is sovereign in salvation who gets the praise we don't ever tell somebody we shouldn't tell somebody whenever or you shouldn't think for yourself you know hey I man I I'm just smarter I'm just wiser I'm able to reason better than other people and so that's why God has saved me you know we always give God the credit because we see that God is sovereign in salvation there is no salvation without God's grace and as we've seen election predestination God's choosing for me once the Lord was gracious to help me understand it clicking in my mind I was like I just see it everywhere in the Bible now so we have these truths man has a responsibility God is sovereign in salvation here's the danger if we go too far outside of this area then we're getting into something that maybe you've heard of we call it different things hyper-Calvinism which would say things like double predestination well yes God works salvation in some and then he pushes other people down so that they can't be saved that's not the God we know in scripture that's not there's no real basis for this and so where you end up here is well we don't need to go share the gospel because

God already has determined who is going to be saved and so it doesn't make a bit of difference what we do let's just get in our little circles and you know beat up on all the other whoever people out there who aren't like us and and they become very harsh that's more of a hyper-Calvinism we don't need to go share like why and be involved in missions well because Jesus commanded us to you know go into the world make disciples share the gospel so we have a responsibility to obey that command so this is dangerous right here when we're out here we are outside the bounds of biblical doctrine this is wrong the other part would be to say that well it's all man's responsibility right forget about God's sovereignty it's up to us so there's a couple ways where this can go bad I think one we've seen in the church's history that well I'll just be honest here altar calls do we see altar calls in the Bible no did

Jesus ever say you know hey let's come down to the altar if you've if you've been touched by my words today or anything like that I'm not totally bashing altar calls here don't get the wrong idea from what I'm saying but part of that goes back to a guy named Charles Finney and they would call it the hot bench and basically you'd have him and some other guys who would think that I can save people and man I'm going to look at those people and I'm going to I am going to make them uncomfortable until they come forward and so there can be this thought that even for you as a Christian if you're sharing the gospel with somebody it's really this is my responsibility if they reject Jesus it's because I didn't do my job and you can bear that burden that you shouldn't I think as a pastor that's really was has been really helpful for me is just to realize my job is to preach God's word and he will get the results the Holy Spirit will get the results he doesn't need me to do it my job is to be clear this is what

God's word says this is how you should apply it and the results are ultimately up to his so one of the hazards is that you can think that it's really up to me and if somebody rejects it you can bear a burden that you shouldn't have to this takes the weight this staying inside the bounds takes the weight off of evangelism for me because it's not up to me my job is to communicate the gospel clearly and compassionately and truthfully and beseeching them ambassadors for Christ we are beseeching you we are imploring you be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ but ultimately it's the Holy Spirit's job not mine and then what that also can be helpful for us is that I'm not taking the credit for anybody's salvation you know and you should hopefully have never heard a pastor say well I saved I saved that guy no you didn't you were the instrument through whom God's gospel came and he's the one who saved them here's another this this would be an extreme but say the decision is fully and entirely and completely with the person why let's let's tie them up and let's take them into a dark room or cave or something and basically just torture them you know until they make the right choice because yeah that would be painful and I'm not saying we should do this or that anybody is doing this I hope that you're saying but I mean I think that's an extreme is like if it's really their choice then then the ends justify the means we want them to be saved and so you

know if we've got a waterboard somebody or something like that until they come to faith in Jesus Christ well it's all on them to make that decision we don't do that obviously because well we'd be committing a lot of sins and that's not the way it works so we've got to stay inside of here the other thing that can that can frustrate me is the people on both sides or whatever position you take who will argue about this and argue about this and people say well that's not fair okay if you believe it's not fair then how many people have you shared the gospel with this week you know if you really don't think it's fair then I should be seeing you you know sharing the gospel non-stop all the time and I don't so we have these guardrails the Bible teaches man's responsibility and salvation the Bible teaches God's sovereignty and salvation and we stay we stay here in orthodoxy this is what the Bible says right let's just say this is the Bible road and we're just driving down here going to Jesus I better stop drawing because I'm just adding stuff on here but I think you get the point that I'm trying to make questions good question so we're getting deeper here there's God's passive will we would say in that case God's passive will which needs to be understood in contrast to what his decreed will is those things that he ordains to happen so the passive will includes the things that God might desire in a sense but were not foreordained to come to pass and Michael that is a great question and that is one of those where clearly we see this is his passive will but it's not what he's ordained to happen from the beginning because we know that some will be saved and some will not be saved

I heard John MacArthur once talk about man's responsibility God's sovereignty and if you try to reconcile these things in your mind that you're going to end up he said under the covers with a flashlight quoting the Greek alphabet backwards there's just some things right that's why I love Romans 11 because God is an infinite being and I am not and if I could wrap my mind fully and completely around him then well he wouldn't be God and so there's things like that where I think you know for me whenever it was a struggle for me is just through prayer and through reading the Bible and what does the Bible explicitly say and teach well I see these things and so then you know we look to other scriptures where something is implied and then we try to do our best thinking through these things but being very careful right because we don't want to portray God in a way that he hasn't portrayed himself in his word good Charles Spurgeon you all know is one of my favorite pastor theologians of all time and he would make the comment that you know when it comes to election you know I can't lift up people's shirt tails and see like a stripe on their back that signifies that they are the elect we don't know it's not our job to know our job is to share the gospel our job is to plead with sinners that they would come to faith in Jesus Christ we don't share the gospel and say well I don't know you know maybe you're elect maybe you're a reprobate our job is to share the gospel clearly compassionately boldly in the hopes that they'll be saved that's ultimately God's territory not ours when you hear the term

[51:41] Calvinism anymore somebody says to me you're a Calvinist be like what do you mean by that because there's just a lot of things that they've associated with Calvinism we're talking about John Calvin which I think he would hate for there to be a group of people referred to by his name in the church so some of the John you just have to listen to what they're saying yes there's hyper-Calvinist groups out there for sure one of the ways I can tell is like these people seem really mean and grouchy they're probably hyper-Calvinist they don't seem to like love the Lord they don't seem to be joyful and happy in Christ they're probably hyper-Calvinist these are good things I mean study wrestle with chew on ask questions it's good that's the one thing that is really upsetting to me is talk to a guy who is a pastor in Oklahoma and you know just the word Calvinism if anybody I mean it would just divide his church because of associations with that that are wrong I mean they're outside of what the Bible says and then just people who have heard all these different things and they've just heard what Calvinism decided to destroy its churches and stuff like that because people have these heated arguments and we ought to be able to ask our questions and push back on things that don't make sense and have these discussions in ways that are sharpening and not you know dividing our church or dividing ourselves against each other I think you know if I was Satan and that's one of the ways I wanted to throw the church off of its mission that'd be a good way to do it let's just get them fighting over you know how they were saved all day long and then they're not going to be thinking about you know the mission that Jesus gave them to share the gospel that people would be saved so it's unfortunate you know I've been in those moments honestly where I've been heated and I've learned you know what that was a waste of time that didn't help me that didn't help this person didn't help our relationship so it's just again it's just too bad that we can't have these conversations without it being a fight you know I would say that yeah we need to fight

for what the Bible says but fight in a way where if it's my brother or my sister who's struggling with these things and has questions about these things then I need to be patient and I need to be I need to hear them and they I need to have as best as I can answers for their questions and sometimes maybe I need to go back and look at some things myself before I come back and provide that answer in all things whoever we're listening to we need to make sure that what they're saying whether it's me or somebody on

YouTube or wherever you listen to certain the radio make sure what they're saying matches what the Bible says this has helped me preparing sermons even preaching talking to people these are the guardrails anything outside of here is wrong so that's helped me I'm gonna pray I know that you may have more questions and that's good it's good for us to sharpen one another I encourage those questions I'm not threatened don't feel threatened about anything that I've presented tonight nobody should we should be able to have these conversations you know we have our church's statement of beliefs it's on our website list a lot of those scriptures as well about what we teach about salvation and so I encourage you to go and look at look at those things as well just for some of those scriptures also let's pray Heavenly Father we thank you for the time that we've had and Lord we thank you for your word that you've given to us to be a light and to our feet God you've given us your word to reveal yourself to us that we would know you better and more deeply and more intimately and certainly Lord when it comes to our salvation the great gift that you've given to us through Jesus

Christ your son God it's good for us to think deeply about salvation and so Lord I pray that what's been shared tonight would cause us all to think deeply about that and ultimately Lord thinking deeply about it that it would abound in greater praise from us towards you Lord we know that your Bible says that there is a responsibility man has a responsibility to hear the gospel and to believe it and Lord you've commanded us to be the ones who go and who share your gospel and to do so in a way that is clear presenting everything sin salvation heaven and hell all of it the crucifixion the wrath that you endured there on the cross all of it in the hopes Lord that people would be saved Lord we pray that the conversations that we would have about these things moving forward would just help us help us to become better students of your word that we would desire to spend even more time with you not to win an argument with somebody not to make somebody look foolish and ourselves look smart but because it's good to be with you and it's good to spend time in your word and it's good for us to have conversations with one another regarding who you are and your grace to save us so Lord we thank you for all that you are all that you've done and all that you will do and we look forward to the day when we will see you face to face and and just have that fellowship with you and be able to ask these questions of you to you to your face Lord what a day that will be but father until then you've given us all the opportunity that we need and the time we need to spend searching you and seeking you and being like so God help us we pray in Jesus name amen to learn more visit us in person or see the website at highlandparkbaptist.net you