

ROMANS 9:14-18

EXPLAINING THE INEXPLICABLE

WHAT WE HAVE IN CHAPTER 9 IS ONE OF THE MOST IF NOT THE MOST DEBATED TOPIC IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE.

THIS IS A TOPIC THAT DRIVES SOME AWAY FROM CHURCH AND BRINGS OTHERS TO CHURCH.

IT HAS BEEN DEBATED SINCE IT WAS WRITTEN.

THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS AND THE ARGUMENT COULD BE MADE THAT THEY CAN ALL BE SUPPORTED WITH SCRIPTURE.

SO WHAT I TEACH TODAY AND WHAT PASTOR Bo HAS BEEN TEACHING IS WHAT WE BELIEVE WITH EVERY FIBER OF OUR BEING.

IN FACT, THE DOCTRINE OF THE ELECT IS WHAT BROUGHT ME BACK TO CHURCH.

MY ENTIRE LIFE GROWING UP I WAS TAUGHT THAT I WAS THE ONE THAT CHOSE CHRIST.

THAT I WAS THE ONE THAT INVITED HIM INTO MY HEART.

THAT I MADE HIM LORD OF MY LIFE...

CAN WE MAKE GOD DO ANYTHING?

OF COURSE WE CAN'T.

BUT WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE HE IS LORD AND WE CAN WORSHIP HIM AS LORD.

WE CAN RECOGNIZE HIM AS LORD OF OUR LIFE.

WHEN I BECAME OLD ENOUGH TO READ AND UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE FOR MYSELF, I REALIZED THERE'S NO SINNER'S PRAYER.

THERE IS NO MENTION OF INVITING JESUS INTO OUR HEARTS...

I WOULD HEAR PASTORS SAY THINGS LIKE THIS AND IN MY MIND I KNEW THE BIBLE DIDN'T SAY THAT.

I WOULD SEE COMPLETE AVOIDANCE OF THIS TOPIC AND COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY.

WELL NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY THEY AVOIDED IT OR MAYBE EVEN TWISTED IT.

IT WAS BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO UPSET PEOPLE.

THEY DIDN'T WANT NUMBERS TO DECREASE.

OUR CALLING AS CHRISTIANS IS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL, IT IS TO REPRESENT CHRIST WELL IN ALL WE DO.

IT IS TO SERVE AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBOR.

IT IS TO SERVE AND LOVE OUR KING.

IT IS NOT TO SAVE THE LOST.

THAT'S UP TO GOD.

SO I HAVE A QUESTION...

CAN WE SAVE ANYONE?

DO WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO GIVE SALVATION TO ANYONE?

THEN WHY WOULD THINK THAT WE COULD SAVE OURSELVES?

IT BRINGS ME GREAT COMFORT KNOWING THAT THE PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM DON'T HAVE TO DEPEND ON ME FOR SALVATION.

CAN GOD USE US AS VESSELS TO DELIVER THE GOSPEL?

ABSOLUTELY! BUT HE IS THE ONE THAT SAVES.

WE SHOULD ONLY BE CONCERNED WITH PLANTING AND WATERING SEEDS.

1ST CORINTHIANS 3:6,7

6 I PLANTED, APOLLOS WATERED, BUT GOD WAS CAUSING THE GROWTH. 7 SO THEN NEITHER THE ONE WHO PLANTS NOR THE ONE WHO WATERS IS ANYTHING, BUT GOD WHO CAUSES THE GROWTH.

I UNDERSTAND THAT SOME PEOPLE MAY HAVE A DIFFERENT VIEW ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE ELECT AND HOW GOD WORKS IN OUR SALVATION AND THAT'S OK.

PLEASE KNOW I'M NOT MAD OR UPSET WITH ANYONE THAT DISAGREES.

BECAUSE HERE'S WHAT I KNOW...

THERE ARE TWO REQUIREMENTS TO BE A CHRISTIAN, FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND REPENTANCE OF SINS.

GOD DOESN'T CONDEMN US FOR HAVING A DIFFERENT VIEW OF SALVATION OR ESCHATOLOGY.

BUT THERE IS SOMETHING THAT WE ABSOLUTELY MUST AGREE ON.

THE BIBLE IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM IS THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD.

WHICH MEANS WE MUST BELIEVE EVERY WORD IN IT.

AS A PASTOR I WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT I TEACH.

AND MY CONVICTION IN THIS AREA IS THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN IN ALL THINGS TO INCLUDE OUR SALVATION.

NOW I'M GOING TO TELL YOU GUYS SOMETHING THAT MAY SHOCK YOU.

I AM NOT A CALVINIST AND NEITHER IS PASTOR BO.

FIRST OF ALL, I THINK THE TERM CALVINIST SENDS THE MESSAGE THAT WE WORSHIP JOHN CALVIN AND THAT'S CERTAINLY NOT THE CASE.

IN FACT, WE DON'T AGREE 100% WITH THE CALVINIST VIEWPOINT.

SO, WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?

WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE INFALLIBLE INSPIRED WORD OF GOD.

WE BELIEVE IN THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.

WE BELIEVE THAT JESUS WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN AND LIVED A PERFECT SINLESS LIFE.

WE BELIEVE THAT HE WAS CRUCIFIED, THAT HE DIED AND ROSE AGAIN ON THE THIRD DAY AND NOW SITS IN GLORY AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER MAKING INTERCESSION FOR US!

AND THE FATHER FOUND HIS SACRIFICE ACCEPTABLE TO ATONE FOR THE SINS OF THOSE THAT WOULD BELIEVE.

WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS A GIFT FROM GOD THAT NO MAN SHOULD BOAST!

WE BELIEVE THAT THE GIFT OF FAITH DRIVES US TO CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE.

WE BELIEVE THAT WITHOUT GOD WE HAVE NO HOPE AND THAT WE ARE DEAD IN OUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

THESE ARE UNDENIABLE TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE.

GIVEN TO US BY GOD HIMSELF SO THAT WE MAY KNOW THE TRUTH.

WHICH BRINGS US TO THE TEXT FOR TODAY.

ROMANS 9:14-18

14 WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? IS THERE ANY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS WITH GOD? MAY IT NEVER BE! 15 FOR HE SAYS TO MOSES, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." 16 SO THEN IT DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE ONE WHO WILLS OR THE ONE WHO RUNS, BUT ON GOD WHO HAS MERCY. 17 FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS TO PHARAOH, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND IN ORDER THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED ¹⁸ THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." 18 SO THEN HE HAS MERCY ON WHOM HE DESIRES, AND HE HARDENS WHOM HE DESIRES.

THE TITLE OF TODAY'S SERMON IS EXPLAINING THE INEXPLICABLE.

PAUL IS DOING HIS BEST TO CONVEY WHAT MOST WILL CONSIDER A VERY DIFFICULT TRUTH.

IN HIS DESIRE TO EXPLAIN SOMETHING SO DEEP AND SO PROFOUND HE IS TRYING TO PREEMPTIVELY ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT MAY ARISE AS WELL AS COMBAT ANY BAD THEOLOGY.

WHICH IS WHAT ALL CHRISTIANS SHOULD DO.

1ST PETER 3:15

15 BUT ¹⁴SANCTIFY CHRIST AS LORD IN YOUR HEARTS, ALWAYS BEING READY TO MAKE ¹⁵A DEFENSE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU, YET WITH GENTLENESS AND FEAR,

IN ORDER TO DEFEND OUR FAITH WE MUST KNOW THE WORD OF GOD.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHY THEY BELIEVE WHAT THEY BELIEVE.

SO MANY PEOPLE JUST TAKE THEIR PASTORS WORD FOR IT.

I ENCOURAGE YOU TO JUDGE EVERYTHING I SAY WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

MAKE SURE THAT WHAT I'M SAYING IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

AND IF YOU COME ACROSS SOMETHING THAT SEEMS AS IF IT DOESN'T ALIGN WITH WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS THEN PLEASE COME TO ME AND LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

THESE VERSES IN ROMANS CHAPTER 9 ARE SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT IN THE BIBLE FOR SOME PEOPLE.

AND PAUL KNEW THAT!

THAT'S WHY HE SAYS WHAT HE SAYS IN VERSE 14

ROMANS 9:14

'14 WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? IS THERE ANY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS WITH GOD? MAY IT NEVER BE!

WHAT IS THE COMMON RESPONSE FROM A CHILD THAT FEELS AS IF THEY HAVE GOTTEN THE SHORT END OF THE STICK?

THAT'S NOT FAIR!

AND PAUL KNOWS THAT'S EXACTLY HOW THE READERS OF THIS LETTER WILL RESPOND TO WHAT HE HAS JUST SAID IN

ROMANS 9:13

'13 JUST AS IT IS WRITTEN, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

SO IS IT FAIR?

IS IT FAIR THAT GOD LOVED JACOB AND HATED ESAU?

YES IT IS....

WELL PASTOR HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?

WELL EXACTLY THE SAME WAY PAUL SAYS IT.

IS THERE ANY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN GOD?

AND THE ANSWER IS OF COURSE NOT.

THE FIRST THING THAT WE HAVE TO REMEMBER IS THAT WE ARE ALL BORN SINFUL.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT THE MAJORITY OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT WE ARE EITHER BORN GOOD OR NEUTRAL...

SO HOW DO WE KNOW THAT WE ARE BORN INTO SIN?

PSALM 51:5

SURELY I WAS SINFUL AT BIRTH, SINFUL FROM THE TIME MY MOTHER CONCEIVED ME.

THAT'S THE NIV AND IF WE LOOK AT THE GREEK IT IS THE BEST TRANSLATION FOR THAT VERSE ACCORDING TO HOW SPEAK TODAY.

THE NKJV SAYS IT THIS WAY

PSALM 51:5

BEHOLD, I WAS BROUGHT FORTH IN INIQUITY, AND IN SIN MY MOTHER CONCEIVED ME.

WELL THAT SOUNDS LIKE MAYBE HIS MOTHER CONCEIVED HIM OUT OF WEDLOCK, BUT WE KNOW THAT'S NOT THE CASE BECAUSE KING DAVID HAD OLDER BROTHERS.

WELL PASTOR I STILL DON'T KNOW IF I BELIEVE THAT WE ARE BORN SINFUL, I MEAN AN INFANT DOESN'T KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG.

AND THAT IS TRUE, BUT WHEN WE ARE BORN, WE HAVE INHERITED THE SIN NATURE.

HOW DO WE KNOW?

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH RIGHT?

SO IF BABIES ARE BORN COMPLETELY INNOCENT THEN WHY DO SOME OF THEM DIE?

AND THE ANSWER IS BECAUSE WE ARE SINFUL FROM THE MOMENT OF CONCEPTION AS KING DAVID SAID.

WE ARE BORN PHYSICALLY ALIVE BUT SPIRITUALLY DEAD.

EPHESIANS 2:4-7

4 BUT GOD, BEING RICH IN MERCY BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE WITH WHICH HE LOVED US, 5 EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD [E]IN OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER [F]WITH CHRIST—BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED— 6 AND RAISED US UP WITH HIM, AND SEATED US WITH HIM IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS, 7 SO THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE SURPASSING RICHES OF HIS GRACE IN KINDNESS TOWARD US IN CHRIST JESUS.

WE ARE DEAD IN OUR SINS UNTIL GOD OPENS OUR EYES.

UNTIL HE BREATHES THE BREATH OF LIFE INTO US, GIVING US THE FREE GIFT OF FAITH.

UNTIL HE CALLS US OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELOUS LIGHT.

SO LET'S THINK ABOUT THIS.

WHAT DO DEAD PEOPLE DO?

NOTHING, THEY ARE DEAD.

IF WE ARE DEAD IN OUR SINS WHAT WOULD CAUSE US TO SEEK GOD?

GOD DOES! GOD! HE WHO CAN BRING DEAD THINGS TO LIFE.

JUST LIKE WHEN JESUS CALLED LAZARUS OUT OF THE GRAVE, HE WAS DEAD.

THAT'S WHY JESUS WAITED FOUR DAYS, SO THERE WOULD BE NO DOUBT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS ACTUALLY DEAD!

SO WE ARE LIKE LAZARUS, WE ARE DEAD IN OUR SINS UNTIL GOD BREATHES THE BREATH OF LIFE INTO US.

ROMANS 9:14

'14 WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? IS THERE ANY UNRIGHTEOUSNESS WITH GOD? MAY IT NEVER BE!

SO WHY DID GOD CHOOSE JACOB TO BECOME ISRAEL?

WHY DID HE CHOOSE ABRAHAM TO BE THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS?

WHY DID HE CHOOSE MOSES TO LEAD HIS PEOPLE OUT OF CAPTIVITY?

WHY DID HE CHOOSE MARY TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE CHRIST?

WHY DID HE CHOOSE THE APOSTLE PAUL TO BE THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES?

WHY DID HE CHOOSE YOU TO BE HERE TODAY TO HEAR THIS SERMON?

WHY DID CHOOSE ME TO BE PASTOR?

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED....

PAUL KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO...

ROMANS 9:15

'15 FOR HE SAYS TO MOSES, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

EVERYONE THAT GOD HAS CHOSEN IS BECAUSE IT IS WHAT HE DESIRED ACCORDING TO WILL.

NOT BECAUSE THEY HAVE DONE SOMETHING DESERVING OF HIS BLESSINGS.

OUR PROBLEM IS THAT WE THINK GOD OWES MANKIND SOMETHING.

WE THINK WE DESERVE SOMETHING THAT WE DON'T.

WE WANT GOD TO BE FAIR RIGHT?

ACTUALLY WE DON'T, IF WE WANTED GOD TO BE FAIR THEN EVERYONE DESERVES HELL.

THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT.

FOR NONE ARE RIGHTEOUS NO NOT ONE.

FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

WHAT WE SHOULD WANT IS GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY.

BECAUSE IN HIS INFINITE GRACE HE CAN OPEN OUR EYES TO THE TRUTH OF WHO WE REALLY ARE.

EVIL SINFUL PEOPLE, THAT WILL CONTINUE IN SIN AND DARKNESS UNLESS HE INTERVENES IN OUR LIFE.

WE MUST COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT WE ARE HOPELESS UNLESS GOD GRACIOUSLY OPENS OUR EYES SO THAT WE CAN SEE HOW DESPERATELY WE NEED HIM.

ROMANS 9:15

15 FOR HE SAYS TO MOSES, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION."

MOSES HAD JUST BEEN THROUGH A VERY TRYING EXPERIENCE.

WHILE HE WAS ON MOUNT SINAI RECEIVING THE TWO TABLETS FROM THE LORD THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL GREW IMPATIENT AND MADE FOR THEMSELVES OUT OF THEIR GOLDEN JEWELRY A CALF TO WORSHIP.

AND WHAT WAS GODS RESPONSE TO THIS GROSS DISPLAY OF IDOLATRY?

HE COMMANDED THAT ABOUT THREE THOUSAND OF THEM BE PUT TO DEATH.

NOW HE WOULD'VE BEEN COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED IN KILLING THEM ALL.

BUT HE SOVEREIGNLY CHOSE TO ONLY EXECUTE 3,000 AS A WARNING TO THE OTHERS AND ALSO TO PRESERVE THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

HORRIFIED BY THEIR GREAT SIN MOSES MAKES INTERCESSION FOR HIS PEOPLE.

EXODUS 32:31,32

31 THEN MOSES RETURNED TO YAHWEH AND SAID, "ALAS, THIS PEOPLE HAS ^{1Q} COMMITTED A GREAT SIN, AND THEY HAVE MADE ^{1R} GODS OF GOLD FOR THEMSELVES. 32 BUT NOW, IF YOU WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN—BUT IF NOT, PLEASE BLOT ME OUT FROM YOUR BOOK WHICH YOU HAVE WRITTEN!"

DOES THIS LAST LINE SOUND FAMILIAR?

WE HEARD SOMETHING VERY SIMILAR FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL A FEW WEEKS AGO...

ROMANS 9:3

3 FOR I COULD ^{1A} WISH THAT I MYSELF WERE ACCURSED, SEPARATED FROM CHRIST FOR THE SAKE OF MY BROTHERS, MY KINSMEN ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, 4 WHO ARE ISRAELITES,

BOTH OF THESE MEN WERE WILLING TO BE ETERNALLY SEPARATED FROM GOD IF IT MEANT SPARING THE NATION OF ISRAEL...

THEY HAD BOTH SEEN AND EXPERIENCED THE GOODNESS OF GOD AND DESPERATELY WANTED THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO KNOW WHAT THEY KNEW.

BOTH MOSES AND PAUL HAD ENCOUNTERED A GRACIOUS GOD THAT SAVED THEM AND THEY WANTED THAT SAME SALVATION FOR THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

ROMANS 9:15

15 FOR HE SAYS TO MOSES, “I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION.”

SO LET'S LOOK AT THIS INTERACTION BETWEEN MOSES AND THE LORD.

EXODUS 33:12

12 THEN MOSES SAID TO YAHWEH, “SEE, YOU SAY TO ME, ‘BRING UP THIS PEOPLE!’ BUT YOU YOURSELF HAVE NOT LET ME KNOW WHOM YOU WILL SEND WITH ME. MOREOVER, YOU HAVE SAID, ‘I HAVE KNOWN YOU BY NAME, AND YOU HAVE ALSO FOUND FAVOR IN MY SIGHT.’

HAD MOSES DONE SOMETHING SPECIAL TO FIND FAVOR IN THE EYES OF THE LORD?

HAD HE DONE SOMETHING THAT IMPRESSED GOD AND THAT'S WHY HE CHOSE HIM?

NOT IN THE LEAST!

MOSES WAS A MURDERER.

HE DISOBEDIED THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION AND FOR THAT DISOBEDIENCE THE LORD ALMOST TOOK HIS LIFE.

WHEN GOD CALLED HIM TO BE THE ONE TO ADDRESS THE PHARAOH ON HIS BEHALF, HE ARGUED WITH GOD SAYING THAT HE COULDN'T SPEAK WELL.

SO, NO MOSES HADN'T DONE ANYTHING TO DESERVE THIS POSITION GOD BESTOWED UPON HIM.

BUT GOD SAID HE KNEW MOSES BY NAME....

THIS TELLS US THAT MOSES' NAME WAS ONE THE NAMES THAT HAD BEEN WRITTEN IN THE LAMBS BOOK OF LIFE BEFORE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH.

EXODUS 33:13-17

13 So now, I pray you, if I have found favor in your sight, let me know your ways that I may know you, so that I may find favor in your sight. See also, that this nation is your people. 14 And he said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 Then he said to him, "If your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. 16 Indeed, how then can it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us, so that we, I and your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the ^bearth?"

MOSES KNEW THAT UNLESS THE PRESENCE OF GOD WAS WITH THEM THAT THEY WOULD FAIL, THE PEOPLE WOULD TEAR EACH OTHER APART AND ALL DIE IN THE WILDERNESS.

ONLY THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD WOULD SET THEM APART FROM ALL THE OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

WITHOUT GOD THEY WOULD BE JUST AS HELPLESS AND HOPELESS AS EVERYONE ELSE.

EXODUS 33:17-19

17 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in my sight, and I have known you by name." 18 Then ^bMoses said, "I pray you, show me your glory!" 19 And he said, "I myself will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of Yahweh before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

IN OTHER WORDS, GOD SPARING THE PEOPLE AND CONTINUING TO GUIDE THEM WAS BASED SOLELY ON HIS GRACE AND COMPASSION.

IT WAS BECAUSE HE CHOSE TO DO THIS AND FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN IT WAS WHAT HE WANTED TO DO.

THE LORD HAD THE ABSOLUTE POWER TO EITHER CONDEMN THEM FOR THEIR IDOLATRY OR TO GRACIOUSLY SAVE THEM AND HE REMINDS MOSES OF THIS FACT.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND HIS GRACE ARE NOT ONLY COMPATIBLE BUT THEY ARE INSEPARABLE.

BECAUSE ALL MEN ARE SINFUL AND DESERVE GODS CONDEMNATION, NO PERSON IS WRONGED OR TREATED UNJUSTLY IF GOD CHOOSES TO CONDEMN THEM.

THAT IS JUSTICE, HIS MERCY TOWARDS ANY PERSON IS PURELY BY HIS GRACE.

MEANING HE WILL SHOW SAVING GRACE ON WHOM HE CHOOSES ACCORDING TO HIS PERFECT SOVEREIGN WILL.

TO FURTHER PROVE HIS POINT PAUL GOES ON IN ROMANS 9:16 TO SAY:

ROMANS 9:16

16 So then it does not depend on the one who wills or the one who runs, but on God who has mercy.

IT IS NEITHER MAN'S CHOICE NOR HIS PURSUIT THAT INITIATES MERCY FOR THE SINNER.

SALVATION CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BY MAN'S CHOICE OR EARNED BY EAGER PURSUIT.

WHAT WOULD CAUSE AN EVIL SINFUL MAN TO SEEK A HOLY PERFECT GOD?

PRIOR TO SALVATION WE SEEK FLESHLY PLEASURES, WE SEEK WHAT WE DESIRE ACCORDING TO OUR OWN WILL...

WHAT WOULD MAKE US THINK FOR EVEN A MOMENT THAT WE WOULD JUST SUDDENLY DECIDE ONE DAY TO PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS?

ROMANS 5:6-8

6 FOR WHILE WE WERE STILL WEAK, AT THE RIGHT TIME CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY. 7 FOR ONE WILL HARDLY DIE FOR A RIGHTEOUS MAN, ¹⁰THOUGH PERHAPS FOR THE GOOD MAN SOMEONE WOULD DARE EVEN TO DIE. 8 BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS OWN LOVE TOWARD US, IN THAT WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US.

CHRIST DIED FOR US BECAUSE WE ARE WEAK, UNGODLY SINNERS.

HE DIED FOR US SO THAT WE MAY BE FORGIVEN OF OUR SINS.

NOWHERE DOES IT SAY THAT HE DIED FOR US BECAUSE HE KNEW ONE DAY ON OUR OWN WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF GOD, WE WOULD COME TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

WHERE WOULD WE GET THE FAITH REQUIRED TO BELIEVE IN JESUS IF GOD DOESN'T GIVE IT TO US?

DO YOU THINK WE WOULD JUST SUDDENLY ONE DAY REPENT OF OUR SINS ON OUR OWN?

YOU CANNOT FIND ANYTHING IN THE BIBLE THAT SUPPORTS THAT THOUGHT PROCESS.

HERE'S THE SCRIPTURE THAT PEOPLE USE TO SUPPORT THAT THOUGHT PROCESS....

JOHN 3:16

16 "FOR GOD ¹⁰SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ¹¹ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

THIS IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH.

WHOEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS SHALL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE...

BUT WHAT CAUSES THEM TO BELIEVE?

ROMANS 10:13

FOR "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."

THIS IS ALSO ABSOLUTE TRUTH...

BUT WHAT CAUSES THEM TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD?

HERE'S WHAT OUR LORD JESUS SAYS

JOHN 6:60-65

60 THEREFORE MANY OF HIS DISCIPLES, WHEN THEY HEARD THIS SAID, "THIS IS A DIFFICULT STATEMENT; WHO CAN LISTEN TO IT?" 61 BUT JESUS, KNOWING IN HIMSELF THAT HIS DISCIPLES WERE GRUMBLING AT THIS, SAID TO THEM, "DOES THIS CAUSE YOU TO STUMBLE? 62 WHAT THEN IF YOU SEE THE SON OF MAN ASCENDING TO WHERE HE WAS BEFORE? 63 THE SPIRIT IS THE ONE WHO GIVES LIFE; THE FLESH PROFITS NOTHING; THE WORDS THAT I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU ARE SPIRIT AND ARE LIFE. 64 BUT THERE ARE SOME OF YOU WHO DO NOT BELIEVE." FOR JESUS KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING WHO THEY WERE WHO DID NOT BELIEVE, AND WHO IT WAS THAT WOULD ¹⁴BETRAY HIM. 65 AND HE WAS SAYING, "FOR THIS REASON I HAVE SAID TO YOU, THAT NO ONE CAN COME TO ME UNLESS IT HAS BEEN GRANTED HIM FROM THE FATHER.

WE CAN DISAGREE ON A LOT OF THINGS BUT WE MUST AGREE THAT THE BIBLE IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

I KNOW THAT THERE ARE SOME IN HERE THAT JUST DON'T AGREE AND THAT'S OK.

IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT I DON'T LOVE YOU, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT I'M ANGRY WITH YOU.

SOME OF YOU MAY BE SITTING HERE WONDERING HOW DO I KNOW THAT GOD CHOSE ME?

WELL THE FACT THAT YOU'RE HERE TODAY IS NOT BY ACCIDENT.

I BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON IN THIS ROOM IS HERE BY DIVINE APPOINTMENT.

EVERYONE THAT IS HERE IS HERE BECAUSE THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE WANTED YOU TO HEAR THIS MESSAGE.

SOME OF YOU MAY BE WONDERING HOW DO I KNOW IF MY FAITH IS REAL?

SO WE NEED TO ASK OURSELVES A FEW QUESTIONS...

FIRST... DO YOU LOVE JESUS PERFECTLY?

WELL TO LOVE JESUS PERFECTLY WOULD BE TO PERFECTLY KEEP HIS COMMANDS SO WE CAN'T LOVE HIM PERFECTLY.

NEXT, DO YOU LOVE HIM AS YOU SHOULD?

WELL WE SHOULD LOVE HIM PERFECTLY SO THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS THE SAME AS THE FIRST.

IF WE CAN RECOGNIZE THAT WE HAVE FALLEN SHORT THAT IS THE FIRST STEP.

THE LAST QUESTION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT...

DO YOU LOVE HIM AT ALL?

DO YOU LOVE THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE AT ALL?

DO YOU LOVE HIM MORE THAN YOUR SIN?

DO YOU DESIRE A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM?

ARE YOU CONSISTENTLY WORKING OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING?

THE STANDARDS WE ARE CALLED TO ARE HIGH.

WE MUST PERSEVERE.

WE MUST STRIVE TOWARDS HOLY LIVING.

NOT BECAUSE GOD IS KEEPING SCORE, NOT BECAUSE WE CAN EARN HIS FAVOR OR OUR SALVATION BUT BECAUSE WE WERE CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING GLORY TO GOD.

AND WHAT BETTER WAY TO BRING GLORY TO HIM THAN SIMPLY DO WHAT HE ASKS OF US,

LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL HEART SOUL MIND AND STRENGTH AND LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS AS WE LOVE OURSELVES.

NOW THE NEXT FEW VERSES ARE DIFFICULT TRUTHS, BUT THAT DOES NOT MAKE THEM ANY LESS TRUE.

ROMANS 9:17

"FOR THE SCRIPTURE SAYS TO PHARAOH, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, IN ORDER TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND IN ORDER THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED ^HTHROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."

WE MUST FIRST REMEMBER THAT EVERYONE IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY HAS BEEN PLACED THERE BY GOD.

ROMANS 13:1

EVERY ^APERSON IS TO BE IN SUBJECTION TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES. FOR THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXCEPT ^BFROM GOD, AND THOSE WHICH EXIST HAVE BEEN APPOINTED BY GOD.

AND GENERALLY OUR FIRST RESPONSE TO THIS IS “WHAT ABOUT ALL THE EVIL MEN THAT HAVE RULED THROUGHOUT HISTORY.”

HERE'S WHAT I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THAT.

GOD GIVES THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY ASK FOR.

IF YOU HAVE AN EVIL NATION THAT DESPISES THE LORD HE WILL APPOINT AN EVIL RULER OVER THEM.

PHAROAH WAS IN THE ULTIMATE POSITION OF AUTHORITY OVER EGYPT FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE, AND THAT WAS SO THAT ALL THE NATIONS WOULD SEE WHAT GOD DID TO HIM AND HIS ARMIES.

BUT THIS GOES MUCH DEEPER THAN LEADERS, THIS CAN BE SAID FOR EVERY PERSON THAT HAS EVER LIVED.

EVERYONE HAS BEEN CREATED FOR A SPECIFIC REASON.

AND IN A BROADER SENSE WE WERE ALL CREATED FOR THE SAME REASON.

TO BRING GLORY TO GOD.

WELL HOW DO NON-BELIEVERS BRING GLORY TO GOD?

SOME ARE LIKE PHAROAH USED TO ACCOMPLISH GODS WILL AND FOR GOD TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF.

BUT EVERYONE THAT DOES NOT BELONG GOD WILL BRING GLORY TO HIM.

PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11

9 THEREFORE, GOD ALSO HIGHLY EXALTED HIM, AND BESTOWED ON HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME, 10 SO THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, OF THOSE WHO ARE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND UNDER THE EARTH, 11 AND THAT EVERY TONGUE WILL CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS ^{THE}LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

ON THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT THOSE THAT BELONG TO CHRIST WILL HAVE ALREADY BOWED TO HIM AS KING, THEY WILL HAVE ALREADY CONFESSED THEIR SINS AND CONFESSED JESUS AS LORD.

BUT THOSE THAT REJECTED HIM AND HIS SACRIFICE WILL BOW AND THEY WILL CONFESS TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.

WHEN THAT DAY COMES PHAROAH WILL BE AMONG THOSE THAT BOW AND CONFESS.

BUT HOW DO WE KNOW THAT GODS PLAN TO USE PHAROAH IN THIS WAY WORKED?

JOSHUA 9:8,9

8 BUT THEY SAID TO JOSHUA, "WE ARE YOUR SERVANTS." THEN JOSHUA SAID TO THEM, "WHO ARE YOU AND WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?" 9 THEY SAID TO HIM, "YOUR SERVANTS HAVE COME FROM A VERY FAR COUNTRY BECAUSE OF THE ^EFAME OF YAHWEH YOUR GOD; FOR WE HAVE HEARD THE REPORT OF HIM AND ALL THAT HE DID IN EGYPT,

GOD'S WILL IS GOING TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

HIS PLANS NEVER FAIL AND HE IS NEVER THWARTED.

HE ALWAYS HAS BEEN AND ALWAYS BE IN CONTROL.

AND THAT SHOULD BRING US GREAT COMFORT AS CHRISTIANS!

TO KNOW THAT THE GOD WE SERVE IS IN CONTROL.

WHEN EVERYTHING IN OUR LIFE SEEMS TO BE FALLING APART HE IS WORKING OUT ALL THINGS FOR OUR GOOD.

THAT HE CAN TAKE THE MESSES WE MAKE AND TURN THEM INTO POWERFUL MESSAGES ABOUT HOW HE SETS PEOPLE FREE.

TO KNOW THAT EVERY TEST WE ENDURE AS A CHILD OF GOD WILL ONE DAY BE TURNED INTO A TESTIMONY OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE OUR LIFE.

SO, HERE'S THE QUESTION WE HAVE TO ASK OURSELVES...

WHY WOULDN'T WE WANT GOD TO BE IN CONTROL?

IF WE DON'T WANT GOD TO BE IN CONTROL THAT MEANS WE DESIRE THAT CONTROL.

WE WANT THAT POWER AND AUTHORITY.

THAT MEANS THAT WE DON'T WANT TO SUBMIT EVERY PART OF OUR LIVES TO THE ONE WHO GAVE US LIFE.

IT IS A GOOD GOOD THING THAT GOD IS CONTROL.

I SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE, THAT WHEN I TRY TO CONTROL THINGS ON MY OWN, I TEND TO MESS IT UP.

IF I THINK I'M IN CONTROL I BECOME PRIDEFUL AND ARROGANT AND ULTIMATELY SOMEONE ENDS UP GETTING HURT.

YOU GUYS READY FOR ANOTHER DIFFICULT VERSE?

ROMANS 9:18

18 SO THEN HE HAS MERCY ON WHOM HE DESIRES, AND HE HARDENS WHOM HE DESIRES.

PASSAGES SUCH AS THIS POINT TO THE UNRECONCILABLE TENSION BETWEEN GODS SOVEREIGNTY AND MANS WILL.

ESAU WAS REJECTED BEFORE HE WAS BORN, JUDAS WAS APPOINTED TO BETRAY JESUS.

YET BOTH MEN THEMSELVES CHOSE TO FOLLOW SIN AND UNBELIEF.

JESUS EXPLAINED TO HIS DISCIPLES IN JOHN 15:16 "***YOU DID NOT CHOOSE ME, BUT I CHOSE YOU, AND APPOINTED YOU***"

HE ALSO PROCLAIMED TO UNBELIEVING JEWS IN JOHN 8:24 "***YOU SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS; FOR UNLESS YOU BELIEVE THAT I AM HE YOU SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS***"

AND IN JOHN 3:18 JESUS SAYS "***HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE HAS BEEN JUDGED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.***"

IN OTHER WORDS... IT IS BECAUSE OF MEN'S NATURAL AND WILLING UNBELIEF THAT GOD IS JUSTIFIED IN CONDEMNING THOSE WHO ALREADY DESERVE IT.

SO WE MUST ASK OURSELVES WHO ARE WE TO SIT IN JUDGEMENT OVER A HOLY PERFECT GOD THAT CHOOSES TO EXTEND GRACE AND MERCY TO SOME?

PAUL ANSWERS THIS QUESTION LATER IN CHAPTER 9 BUT I THINK THE INSIGHT THOSE VERSES PROVIDE ARE NECESSARY TO EXPLAINING THIS THOROUGHLY.

ROMANS 9:19-21

19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? Will the thing molded say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this”? 21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel ^{for} honorable use and another ^{for} dishonorable use?

IT IS OK IF WE DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.

IN FACT, I DON'T KNOW OF ANYONE THAT HAS EVER UNDERSTOOD IT.

AND HERE'S WHY...

GOD IS INFINITELY WISE, HE IS INFINITELY PERFECT, INFINITELY HOLY AND INFINITELY JUST.

WE ON THE OTHER HAND ARE FINITE... MEANING WE ARE LIMITED.

WE HAVE LIMITATIONS, SO IF WE ARE LIMITED AS TO WHAT WE CAN KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WE CAN NEVER EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND A GOD THAT IS LIMITLESS.

BUT WHAT WE CAN DO IS TRUST HIM, IN FACT WE MUST TRUST HIM.

WE CAN BELIEVE WHAT HE HAS SAID THROUGH HIS WORD IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE.

IN FACT THAT'S WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO IS TO BELIEVE.

I'D LIKE TO LEAVE YOU GUYS WITH A FEW THOUGHTS AS WE CLOSE TODAY.

WE ARE ALL BORN SINFUL.

PSALM 51:5

SURELY I WAS SINFUL AT BIRTH, SINFUL FROM THE TIME MY MOTHER CONCEIVED ME.

THE FIRST STEP TO SALVATION IS KNOWING THAT YOU ARE A SINNER AND YOU NEED TO BE SAVED.

THAT HAPPENS WHEN GOD OPENS YOUR EYES TO TRUTH OF WHO JESUS IS.

WHICH IS OUR SAVIOR, HIS BLOOD POURED OUT FOR ALL THAT WOULD BELIEVE.

JOHN 3:16

16 "FOR GOD ^[D]SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ^[E]ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

JESUS'S DEATH ON THE CROSS ONLY ATONES FOR THOSE THAT BELIEVE.

IF HIS DEATH COVERED EVERY SIN THAT EVERYONE HAD EVER COMMITTED THEN EVERYONE WOULD GO TO HEAVEN BECAUSE THEY WOULD BE WITHOUT SIN...

WE SAW VERY CLEARLY TODAY THAT GOD CHOOSES WHOM HE WANTS TO ACCORDING TO HIS SOVEREIGN WILL.

ROMANS 9:18

18 SO THEN HE HAS MERCY ON WHOM HE DESIRES, AND HE HARDENS WHOM HE DESIRES.

AND IN HIS MERCY WHEN HE REVEALS TO US THE TRUTH OF WHO JESUS IS WE FIND HIM IRRESISTIBLE.

JOHN 6:39,40

39 NOW THIS IS THE WILL OF HIM WHO SENT ME, THAT OF ALL THAT HE HAS GIVEN ME I LOSE NOTHING, BUT RAISE IT UP ON THE LAST DAY. 40 FOR THIS IS THE WILL OF MY FATHER, THAT EVERYONE WHO SEES THE SON AND BELIEVES IN HIM WILL HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND I MYSELF WILL RAISE HIM UP ON THE LAST DAY.”

AND AS THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN CALLED ACCORDING TO GODS PERFECT AND SOVEREIGN WILL WE MUST PERSEVERE TO THE END.

JAMES 1:2-4

2 CONSIDER IT ALL JOY, MY BROTHERS, WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER VARIOUS ^[B]TRIALS, ³KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH BRINGS ABOUT PERSEVERANCE. ⁴AND LET PERSEVERANCE HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK, SO THAT YOU MAY BE ^[C]PERFECT AND COMPLETE, LACKING IN NOTHING.

WE MUST PERSEVERE BELOVED.

WE MUST NEVER STOP LOVING GOD AND LOVING PEOPLE.

WE MUST NEVER STOP GROWING DEEPER IN OUR FAITH.

WE MUST NEVER STOP MAKING DISCIPLES.

UNTIL JESUS CALLS US HOME WE MUST LIVE FOR HIM AND THE GLORY OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

