

## Sovereignty and Free Will

\*Children – it could be worse!

Romans 9:1-10:4 ESV

- I. God owes us nothing.
  - a. He is sovereign over this world. He is in heaven and He does what He pleases – He is the Potter and we are the clay. As sinners, we all deserve judgment.
  - b. Through the gospel both His wrath and His mercy will be on display. Proverbs 16:4 NIV “The LORD works out everything to its proper end— even the wicked for a day of disaster.” You will accomplish a purpose of God whether you receive mercy or wrath.
  - c. It doesn’t matter how you think it should be.
    - i. “You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” \*It’s not fair! He is the Potter and you don’t get to judge Him.
    - ii. Romans 11:34-35 ESV “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?” God isn’t asking you for advice and He doesn’t owe you anything no matter how good you’ve been.
    - iii. Job’s journey. 36 chapters of “it’s not fair.” Job 38:2 ESV “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” Job 42:5-6 ESV “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in<sup>to</sup> dust and ashes.”
  - d. Confirmation bias.
    - i. Israel is using the law to become righteous instead of seeing the law as a mirror that reveals sin and foreshadows a sacrifice. It’s not just Israel. Proverbs 14:12 ESV “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
    - ii. If it was arbitrary, you’d have to be okay with it. Hypothetically let’s say – God wanted some to display His wrath? \*He’s breaking down their right to have an opinion, so they can think God’s thoughts with Him.
- II. God’s condition of mercy.
  - a. Romans 9 is used by some to assert that there is no condition man meets for mercy; it is only God’s sovereign choice. 31 percent of today’s pastors and churches are reformed in theology. Augustine, Luther (the awful doctrine), and John Calvin. God arbitrarily chooses some to be saved and His glory is seen in His sovereignty. If you are chosen to be the elect then you have only God to thank and praise. If you aren’t chosen, you will only

get what you justly deserve. The elect don't cooperate in any way with God's grace, so you can't ever be lost. Unconditional election means you were not chosen because of a condition you met other than God chose you.

- i. John Wesley and George Whitefield – Predestination Calmly Considered – 90 points. He maintained that if predestination, as taught by Whitefield was true, then God would be worse than the devil. The devil only tempts, God makes them sin.
  - ii. In non-essentials liberty. As Whitefield's funeral approached a woman asked Wesley if he would see George Whitefield in heaven. "A lengthy pause followed, after which John Wesley replied with great seriousness, 'no madam.' His inquirer at once exclaimed, 'Ah, I was afraid you would say so.'" To which John Wesley added with intense earnestness, 'Do not misunderstand me, madam; George Whitefield was so bright a star in the firmament of God's glory, and will stand so near the throne, that one like me, who am less than the least, will never catch a glimpse of him.'
- b. Confronting Calvinism – Removing an Unnecessary Offense with God.  
\*God's own definition of His glory is His goodness, not His sovereignty.
- c. I contend that Paul alone gets to give the conclusion of His argument. Romans 9:30-33 ESV "What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup> but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness<sup>[a]</sup> did not succeed in reaching that law. <sup>32</sup> Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, <sup>33</sup> as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." Who will God have mercy on? Those who believe in Jesus.
- i. What about those prepared for wrath? They have prepared themselves for wrath. Romans 2:4-5 ESV "Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."
  - ii. God is enduring them with patience – why? 2Peter 3:9 ESV "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you,<sup>[a]</sup> not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." \*He wants us to be saved, but won't force us.
- d. My debate in college with a Calvinist friend who insisted I believed in works and not grace. My characterization of our two positions: Two men

jump off a ship and are drowning because of their choice to abandon ship – eventually they both are passed out in the water and will die if nothing is done.

- i. Scenario one – one is chosen by the Swimmer, put on the life preserver called salvation, and pulled in by the captain; the other one is left to drown.
- ii. In the second scenario the Swimmer awakens both and offers them the life preserver – if they take it they are pulled in by the Captain on board. If they choose to resist help they end up drowning. \*My friend said that I was suggesting a works-based salvation.

### III. Sovereignty and free will.

- a. “Those who God foreknew, He also predestined...”
- b. Foreknowledge isn’t causative.
  - i. Adam and Eve.
  - ii. Peter’s denials.
  - iii. The DVR before the game is played.
- c. Predestination – Pre - Before they happen, Destination - things that God has determined will happen.
  - i. Israel will go into the promised land. \*Joshua – why three times in 9 verses?
  - ii. Israel’s salvation. \*If you do nothing, salvation will rise from somewhere else and you and your family will perish, but who knows that you’ve come to royalty for such a time as this?
  - iii. Salvation will only be in Christ. Whoever believes will be saved, and whoever rejects will suffer judgment. Will you stumble or be saved?