

Sermon of November 9, 1958

The Doctrines of Grace

Good morning, this is Fred Phelps. Westboro Baptist is dedicated to proclaim and defend the doctrines of grace. Commonly called the five points of Calvinism, and generally so called by their opponents. Though these doctrines are called, collectively, Calvinism, or the Calvinistic scheme of theology, as opposed to arminianism, they are in fact, the doctrines of grace. They magnify God's grace, and exalt it to its rightful position. Calvinism glorifies God, and humbles man whereas arminianism glorifies man and would dethrone God. As some of my hearers may not have a clear determinate idea of what arminianism precisely is, let me give a brief definition borrowed from Augustus Toplady. "*Armenianism consists,*" says he, Toplady you know is the author of the hymn rock of ages, "*chiefly of five particulars. One, the Armenians will not allow election to be an eternal, peculiar, unconditional, and irreversible act of God. Two, they assert that Christ died equally and indiscriminately for every individual of mankind. For them that perish, no less than for them that are saved. Three, that saving grace is tendered to the acceptance of every man, which he may or may not receive, just as he pleases. Consequently four, that the regenerating power of the holy spirit is not invincible, but is suspended for its efficacy on the will of man and five, that saving grace is not an abiding principle. But that those who are loved of God, ransomed by Christ, and born again of the spirit, may let God wish and strive ever so much to the contrary, throw all away and perish eternally at last.*" Mr. Toplady, of course, was a Calvinist, and stringently opposed this kind of Armenian Heresy.

And, this five prong system of heresy is espoused today by the majority of Christendom. Even those who are known as Baptists, alas, are oftentimes the dutiful worshipers of this Armenian idol. one can call the role of the well-known and nationally esteemed religious leaders of today, regardless of denomination and almost without exception these men are Armenian in theology. They preach that God is thoroughly disappointed because he cannot have his way with men's hearts, and that he is striving somewhat desperately and certainly incessantly to get men and nations to behave themselves so that he can bless them. But mortal man will not cooperate with God, they say, and so God is frustrated in his efforts to save men's souls and bring about universal peace and happiness. Now, against this God dishonoring theological hodge podge, we dare to lift a voice, confessedly insignificant to remind all who would listen that God is still God, he is not confused, he is not frustrated, he is not disappointed, he is not taken by surprise, indeed, he is in full control of every situation, telling the end from the beginning. All that happens in time, he decreed to happen from eternity.

Daniel 4:35 says, "**his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?**" Daniel 4:35. He is the almighty, the possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat his counsels, thwart his

purpose, or resist his will. As we read, **“but our God is in the heavens he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”** Psalm 115:3. **“He is the governor among the nations.”** Psalm 22:28. **“Setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties, as pleaseth him best. He is the only potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords.”** 1 Timothy 6:15. Such is the God of the bible. It is urged, by Armenian heretics, that if God could have his way, there would be no wars, but there are wars, whence it is concluded that God is thwarted in his purposes.

It is urged that God is anxiously endeavoring to bestow the gift of salvation upon every individual, but the majority of individuals simply refuse to accept of Gods gracious offer, and therefore God is defeated in his efforts to save them. Let it be simply stated in candid opposition to this view, that if the almighty God desired the salvation of every person in Topeka Kansas, then every person in Topeka Kansas would forthwith be saved. And the argument could be applied and extended throughout the inhabited earth, and if the sovereign God desired that there be no wars among nations, in this dispensation, then there would be no wars in this dispensation, for God is having his way, he is upon the throne, he is doing as he pleases, and who but a heretic would have it otherwise.

And now, may I briefly present the five points of Calvinism. The first is the doctrine of total depravity, or total inability, meaning simply that man, since his grievous fall in Eden, is completely and totally unable to do anything for himself to effect his recovery from his fallen state. **“As it is written, I know that in me,”** that is in my flesh, **“dwelleth no good thing.”** Romans 7:18. And, **“there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God,”** Romans 3:11. I will not at this time multiply scriptures to this point, but will develop the doctrine more fully at a later date. However, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. That is until a person is quickened by God the holy spirit, or born again, as the word is, he is utterly incapable of either believing in Christ, repenting of his sins, or accepting Christ as his personal savior, to use a hacnid Armenian expression. Therefore Christ said, **“no man can come to me except the father, which hath sent me, draw him.”** John 6:44.

The second of the five points, is the doctrine of election, or unconditional election. The enemies of God’s grace, violently resent the free preaching of this blessed doctrine. But it is most precious, and runs to the effect that God from eternity, chose to save some certain ones of Adams lost race, and he chose not to save others. And God did make this choice according to the good pleasure of his own will, and upon no other consideration. I cannot put it better than this excerpt from the Philadelphia confession of faith. It goes, *“by the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life, thru Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace. Others, being left to act in their sin, to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice, and these angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite that it cannot be increased or diminished.”* No teaching of scripture, friends, conduces more to reverence and awe, than the solemn doctrine of election, or

predestination. And in this day of wild heresy, it wants to be preached. For on every hand men are told that they shape their own destinies, by their own free choices, and decisions. That they are free moral agents. That God can do nothing either for them or with them, unless they allow him to. This of course, makes man sovereign, so that God must wait for man to decide to do this or that, before God himself can act with any degree of finality. But more on the doctrine of predestination next week.

The third of the five points is the limited atonement, or the limited design in the atonement. That is, that Christ died only for the elect. If Christ had died for every individual, then every individual would be saved. But he gave his life a ransom for many, not for all, the good Sheppard laid down his life for the sheep, no mention of the goats. He loved the church and gave himself for it, and for no other. It is gross error therefore to say that Christ died for all men without exception, and indiscriminately. The savior paid the ransom price for all Gods elect, therefore they are saved, for a just God cannot and does not exact payment twice. Christ did not pay the ransom price for the non-elect, therefore, they must pay it themselves, to the uttermost farthing, in hell. Mr. Spurgeon said, *“the Armenians say Christ died for all men, ask them what they mean by it. did Christ as to infallibly secure the salvation of all men? They say no, certainly not. We ask them the next question. Did Christ die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer, no. Christ has died that any man may be saved, if, and then follow certain conditions of salvation. Now,”* said Mr. Spurgeon, *“who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why you sir. You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon then, when you say we limit Christ’s death. We say, no my dear sir, it is you that do it. we say that Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude, that no man can number. Who thru Christ’s death, not only may be saved, but are saved, must be save and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved.”*

The fourth of the five points of Calvinism is the doctrine of irresistible grace, or the effectual call. Christ said, *“all that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. And again, the sheep hear his voice. And he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out, for they know his voice. And again the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear, shall live.”* All those whom God the father elected, and for whom Christ died, will in their lifetimes sooner or later, receive a call to salvation, that is irresistible. As the hymn runs, *“why was I made to hear his voice, and enter while there’s room, while others make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come.”* And the Philadelphia confession has it again, *“those whom God has predestinated unto life, he is pleased and is appointed in an accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. Enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God. Taking away their heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh. Renewing their wills, and by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.”* And it will be a happy day for you, my dear friend, when you receive your call from God, to eternal salvation.

You are in his hands to save or to destroy. You deserve to be punished for your sins, and God will be thoroughly just, should he cast you forthwith into Gehina, or the final hell of punishment, which is the lake of fire. How unspeakably blessed then if you should find yourself interested in Christ and his propitiatory sacrifice.

I come now to consider briefly the happy doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, the fifth of the five points. This is the security of the saved, or eternal security of the believer. Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his spirit, and given the precious faith of his elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. Whence, he still begets and nourisheth in them faith thru repentance, love, hope and all the graces of the spirit unto immortality. And though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock, which by faith, they are fastened upon. Notwithstanding through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet he is still the same and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God, unto salvation. Where they shall enjoy their purchased possession. They being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity. Any minister who delivers himself therefore, to the effect that a true believer can throw all away and perish at last, understands nothing at all about the grace of God, and salvation and is very likely himself unconverted. As Mr. Spurgeon said once again, *“Oh, that miserable doctrine which says that the saints set out for Canaan, but never reached the place, the doctrine which denies that the pilgrims to glory go from strength to strength until every one of them in Zion appeareth before God, but which teaches that sheep of Christ may be rent by the wolves. That the stones in the spiritual temple may be scattered to the four winds. That the members of Christ may be run away from his sacred body, and that the spouse of Christ may be mutilated, shocks my reason, my experience, my faith, my entire spiritual nature. I believe in the final perseverance of every man in whom the regenerating grace of God has wrought a change of nature. Each object of his love is sure to reach the heavenly goal. For neither sin nor Satan can destroy the blood washed soul. Satan may vex and unbelief the saved one may annoy, but he must conquer, yea as sure as Jesus reigns in joy. The precious blood of Gods dear Son shall ne’er be spilt in vain, the soul on Christ believing must in Christ forever reign.”*

This is Fred Phelps, Pastor of Westboro Baptist Church. Next week I’ll speak, the Lord willing, on the subject of the absolute predestination or sovereign election. And now peace be to the brethren and love with faith from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them who love our Jesus Christ in sincerity, amen