

Lord, I come before You with an immense task—an awesome opportunity...a frightening responsibility. I am weak, unable to do this without the guidance, the filling, the empowering of Your Holy Spirit. Lead me in Your Word; fill me with Your words; empower me by Your Word; and encourage me through Your Word as Your sweet presence draws me nearer and nearer to You.

Help me to be a faithful ambassador in proclaiming Your holy truth. Vanquish all pride within me, all self-reliance and trust in the ability and willingness You have given me to speak, and cause me to place all my hope, all my confidence, in You alone. You alone can convey the wonderful truth of election.

Help me not to presume that I can solve this glorious mystery—I pray for protection and divine censure if I attempt to; O Father, I beg that You will defeat my arrogance if I venture and slip from the path of humility that this subject requires, that it demands; help me to proclaim its comfort, its power, its portrait of the love You have shown a depraved and sin-filled people.

Holy Father, I pray for wisdom, for boldness, for constraint, for enlightenment through Your Word...

Lord, lift the veil from a corner of this divine subject so that I may grasp and comprehend a small measure of its infinite worth and glory.

I pray for the congregation. I plead for open and receptive, generous and kind hearts and minds. I pray, Father, that Your grace will be in, amongst, and within each of us in full measure.

This message and vessel I commit, I submit, wholly to You—

*In the holy and ALL-powerful name of Jesus Christ Your Son and to the matchless and endless glory of Your name I pray,
Amen. (1/23/2002)*

THE “ABIDING” GOD OF ELECTION

(Sermon III, CBC, 1/27/2002)

Exodus 33:19

And the LORD said, “I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

Deuteronomy 10:15

Yet the LORD set His affection on your forefathers and loved them, and He chose you, their descendants, above all nations, as it is today.

Exodus 9:16

But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you My power and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

Malachi 1:2

“I have loved you,” says the LORD. “But you ask, ‘How have You loved us?’

“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” the LORD says. “Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.”

Isaiah 44:7

Who then is like Me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before Me what has happened since I established My ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let him *foretell* what will come.

II Kings 19:25

Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone.

Acts 13:48

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and *all who were appointed to eternal life believed.*

Romans 9:11 – 18

Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by Him who calls—she was told, “The older shall serve the younger.”

Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

It does not, therefore, depend on man's effort or desire, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to, and He hardens whom He wants to harden.

Romans 9.27

Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved.

Ephesians 1.4

For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—

John 6.37

All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never drive away.

John 6.39

And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none that He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day.

John 15.16

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.

John 17.6

I have revealed You to those whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to Me and they have obeyed Your word.

II Thessalonians 2.13

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Revelation 17.14

They will war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because He is the Lord of lords and King of kings—and with Him will be His called, chosen and faithful followers.

More than anything else, I pray that you will walk away today having seen to a greater extent,

The glory of God in Christ Jesus!

What I have prayed for this past week is that our eyes, hearts, minds, and souls will NO LONGER BE CENTERED UPON OURSELVES—that we as a church and as individuals will become singular in purpose, mission, and desire...

That Christ, our love for His glory, will become the ROOT of all our pursuits.

And one of the most impacting and quickening truths of God that will do this is the doctrine which I humbly approach today—

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.

You are saved because before the foundation of the world, God *chose* you to be saved—and He chose you "in love".

Bruce Milne states in his book, "Know The Truth", concerning the doctrine of election:

*It "...is a revealed truth, disclosed in Scripture. It is therefore to be received humbly from God and tenaciously believed along with all other revealed truths. That God has spoken to us concerning election means clearly that it is for our own benefit and His glory that we receive and believe it. To ignore or neglect it comes close to despising or dismissing the wisdom of God."*¹

Covenant will never knowingly do this. We will strive with all effort, all resources, and all prayer to be increasingly conformed to His image by being in submission to His wisdom—His truth, regardless of its

¹ Bruce Milne "Know The Truth" (pg. 182) ©1982 Intervarsity Press

difficulty. We will not be frightened or negligent when it comes to preaching and teaching the hard doctrines. We will proclaim boldly the glory of God in them.

This is the task that we face today—
Seeing God's glory, His wisdom, and His love in election.

As has already been read in just a mere "sprinkling" of verses (there are many, many,...many, more),

Election is a truth!
A God-breathed, God-ordained, God-spoken and decreed, never-gonna-go-away truth!

It is as permanent and unchanging as every other decree spoken and enacted by the voice of Almighty God!
And you are going to thank God for this!!

In a nutshell, if that is even possible,

ELECTION: You were **chosen** by God before you were able to choose Him. In fact, it is **ONLY** by God choosing you that **enables** you to choose Him.

John 6.64 – 65

"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 betray Him.

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.*"**

Now, this statement is a reiteration of **v. 44**, same chapter:

"No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

You cannot come to Christ without God, the Father, *enabling* you to do so—unless God, the Father, draws you. These are the words of Christ!

But I want you to look with me at another text right now. Turn with me to **I John 4.15 – 19**.

*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God **abides** in Him, and he in God.*

What a precious word that is, *abides*.

**THE ALMIGHTY GOD OF THE UNIVERSE,
YAHWEH,
MAKES HIS HOME WITH AND IN YOU!**

He ABIDES with you!

*Can you honestly look at yourself, at your heart, at your actions, **even on your best of days**, and not stagger in amazement, and wonder, and awe, and dread, and fear, and joy, and love, at the condescension of the holy and sovereign God of creation??!*

He has loved me with an everlasting love!²

...and He abides in me...

(*"And Can It Be" that I should gain...?*)³

v. 16

And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. GOD IS LOVE, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Now, we see here that love is a key—a foundation stone. One of several which if left out, ***there is no hope!***

Christian, love must be present within you!

There must be love in the Christian!

And this MUST be a love that *lives* for the **glory of God!**

A love that *rests* in the **glory of God!**

A love that *remains strong* because of the faith possessed in the **glory of God!**

² Jeremiah 31.3

³ Hymn written by Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

***“Be still and know that I AM GOD.
I WILL BE exalted among the nations!
I WILL BE exalted in the earth!”⁴***

A love that *looks forward* in excitement, hope, and faith to the **glory of God!**

“For the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea!”⁵

“That at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord! To the glory of God the Father!”⁶

So hopefully, you see quite plainly that this is not a love which in the same breath is used to describe the feelings you have for something that you like a whole lot, even for something or someone here that you in fact, do love.

IT IS YOUR LIFE—YOUR VERY BREATH!

*Oh, that we could be a people, a church, a nation, who can truly say from a heart ravished by this kind of love
“Not my will but Thine be done, O Lord.”⁷*

So how does this come about? How do we “achieve” this? What must we *do* to acquire this love? How must we act and what steps must be taken or method followed so that we might gain this love?

Well, we don’t do anything and there is no method to be followed!
Look at **v. 19** with me.

We love, because He first loved us.

Do you see it?

We love, because He **FIRST** loved us.

We abide in love. God is love. Therefore, God abides in us—but make no mistake about who causes this to happen, or who does the choosing—

*We abide in love and God abides in us because God **FIRST** loved us.*

Look at the second part of **v. 7**:

“...everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

The Greek word for born is “gennao”⁸ (ghen-ah’-o). It means to have received from God a new spiritual life.

This is regeneration! The great theme of the third chapter of John, and it is solely (soul-ly) the work of the Holy Spirit!

John Murray states this concerning regeneration:

“Regeneration is the beginning of all saving grace in us, and all saving grace in exercise on our part proceeds from the fountain of regeneration. WE ARE NOT BORN AGAIN (regenerated) BY FAITH, REPENTANCE, OR CONVERSION; WE REPENT AND BELIEVE BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN REGENERATED.”⁹

Just as it takes an “outside agent”, completely void of all influence from you, to bring about your physical birth—and you certainly can’t tell me that you made the call on your being born—so it is with your spiritual birth.

Similar to the way in which a mother and father choose to have a child, God has chosen that we be His children. Of course, the mother and father know very few details about the child that will be born.

⁴ Psalm 46.10 (NASB)

⁵ Habakkuk 2.14

⁶ Philippians 2.10

⁷ Matthew 26.39

⁸ Strong’s #1080

⁹ taken from “All Things New” by Peter Jeffery, but the original quote from “Redemption Accomplished and Applied” by John Murray ©1955 (pg 103) Emphasis mine.

God has known you, has chosen you, since before the foundation of the world!¹⁰ He knows EVERY detail about you! He knows the number of hairs on your head!¹¹ He knows when you will lie down and when you will rise.¹² He has ordained a plan for you! He KNOWS you and has loved you with an everlasting love!²

Look at **v.10**:

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Do you see that this love I’ve been talking about, that John has written not only to those Christians of his time, but to all Christians down through the ages and through to the ages to come, given to us by God, **IS IN NO WAY DEPENDENT ON OURS FOR HIM???!**

*THAT IT IS, IN FACT, GIVEN IN THE TOTAL **ABSENCE** OF LOVE FOR HIM???!
(O, Great God of Wonders!! “Who is a pard’ning God like Thee? Or who has grace so rich and free?”)¹³*

“...not that we loved God...”

Do you see the reality of those five words? “...not that we loved God...”

“...not that we loved God...”

Romans 5:8

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet (or, still) sinners, Christ died for us.”

Have you ever had someone that you love more than life tell you that they hate you? Or where every action is in defiance of you? Or worse, where they were totally indifferent to your presence? Where they would rather feast on the rotting food of hell than so much as acknowledge the new wine that is offered?

WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS...

While we were trampling the name of the Son of God...

Exchanging the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man...¹⁴

While we placed more importance on getting ahead in our jobs, getting along with our boss(es), instead of glorifying and growing closer to Christ who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell...¹⁵

While we had a heart that would rather be on the golf course, or fishing, or hunting, instead of worshiping Him on His day...

While we were still sinners...

Christ died for us.

*I ask you, what would compel God to “...save a wretch like me”¹⁶ if He had not **determined** to do so with an everlasting love— if He had not chosen you in Him before the foundation of the world?¹⁰*

People, this is reason to rejoice!! To sing and shout for joy!! To “...joy in the God of our salvation”!¹⁷

Now, if it has not already been made clear, or if you have not already seen it, *our election is unconditional.*

It is unmerited by us.

*It is undeserved; we are unworthy—**completely** unworthy.*

Nothing in us even desires it!

Yet, it is unchanging; it is unbelievable! It is humbling....

And joyous....

It is most glorious, comforting and assuring!

As Kenny began this series three weeks ago—

As God declared to Jonah almost four millennia ago,

“SALVATION IS OF THE LORD!”¹⁸

Now, the inevitable question is “Why”?

¹⁰ Ephesians 1.4

¹¹ Matthew 10.30; Luke 12.7

¹² Psalm 139.1 – 4 *“... You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and rise up;... You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.”*

¹³ “Great God Of Wonders” Hymn written by Samuel Davies 1723 – 1761. Put to music by Henry J.E. Holmes in 1875

¹⁴ Romans 1.18 – 23 (Emphasis on vs. 22 & 23)

¹⁵ Matthew 10.28

¹⁶ “Amazing Grace” by John Newton (1725 – 1807) Before his death, during a message, he proclaimed with a loud voice “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior!”

¹⁷ Habakkuk 3.18; **Isaiah 61.10**

¹⁸ Jonah 2.9

Why did He choose you? Why **would** He choose you?
There must be a reason why God does what He does. There must be a reason why He acts!
Of course there's a reason why He does what He does and why He acts! Of course there is! There is
NOTHING that God does or has done on a whim, because...

All His ways are perfect!!!¹⁹

There is definite, methodical, and intelligent reason behind EVERYTHING that happens under the sun and all of it is sovereignly ordained and orchestrated by God.

But if it's nothing in me,
If God, from way back before the foundation of the world, did not look ahead and choose me because I was going to choose Him anyway [which is simply an impossibility as it has no Scriptural basis, support, or validity, and is in fact, heretical because it makes God subject to the human will, the Creator subject to the created, the Divine subject to the corrupt! You can argue this until your throat is dry but the bottom line is that this line of thinking and theology makes the human being the one who calls the shot in salvation.],.....

then why did He choose me? Why would He choose you?

And how does this not take away my **free will**?

Let me first say that it doesn't take away your free will.....

It completely **annihilates** it!!

It destroys it!!

(Isn't that glorious??!)

I should rather say, it completely annihilates the **false idea** that you have a will that is *autonomously free* to choose between righteousness and sin.

Let me support this statement with some foundational texts, but also with the assurance that there are many, many more:

Proverbs 5:22

The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast by the cords of his sin.

John 8:34

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves to obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

II Timothy 2:24 - 26

And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being held captive by him to do his will.

You will not find any place in Scripture that teaches, or even remotely affirms, that man is autonomous! You will find the exact opposite—that man is completely, totally, dependent on God, whether they live for him or in defiance of Him²⁰. (**John 15:5**—Apart from Me you can do NOTHING).

We are slaves. Period!

Slaves either to sin or to righteousness;

Christ or the devil.

Matthew 6:24

*No one can serve **two** masters...*

Contained within these few words of Christ is the realization that **EVERYONE** serves a master...

And there are **only TWO**.

"...for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (the world, sin, riches)."

¹⁹ Deuteronomy 32:4 "The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He."

²⁰ Proverbs 16:4 "The LORD has made everything for His own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil."

There were no doubt many “gods” when Jesus was addressing those who were present. What He is telling them is that among all the pagan deities, they can all be reduced down to one—the devil—and you either serve him or you serve the Lord.

There is no neutrality; no non-aligned status.

Colossians 3:5-7

Therefore, consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come.

But what does that have to do with slavery, two masters, or there being no neutrality?

Look at v.7-

“...and in them YOU ALSO ONCE WALKED, WHEN YOU WERE LIVING IN THEM.”

Scripture refutes the idea of a self-governing will (free will—or a will that is completely detached from any and all influences of God) by saying that the will is overcome by what enslaves it. (II Peter 2:19—For by what a man is overcome, by that he is enslaved.)

Scripture rings loud and clear that if left alone to our own wills, if we were autonomous, we would NOT choose Him.

It goes against our nature, and if we are true to nothing else, we are true to our nature. (Our nature is sinful—we sin most readily.) If left alone to our own wills we would continue on in our sin and never seek God.

But we are given a new nature!

Ezekiel 36:26

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove your heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

[It is most humbling to realize that it is *really*, really, ONLY by grace that we have been saved.

Not, “by grace we have been given the ability to choose, as if there was no grace,”
but by GRACE we have been CHOSEN before the foundation of the world!]

But still, why?

Why would He choose you?

Why?

(The question that has no end.)

THREE REASONS:

1. BECAUSE HE COULD!

Because He said so. (I think that everyone understands what that means—

When mom gets tired of the rationalizing of her child as to why “*right this instant*” is not the best time to clean his or her room, she wields the weapon that no child’s argument can prevail against. All questioning stops and surrenders to a greater authority which simply says,

“Because I said so!”

(no weapon formed against it shall prosper!)

*“I will have mercy on whom I
will have mercy;
and I will show compassion on
whom I will show compassion.”* ²¹

*“who are you, o man, who
answers back to God? The thing*

²¹ Romans 9:15 [v.16 goes on to say, “So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, BUT ON GOD who has mercy.”]

*molded will not say to the
molder, 'why did you make me
like this,' will it?
Or does not the potter have a
right over the clay?"*²²

So one answer to the question why?

"Because I said so!"

(no weapon formed against it will prosper!)

2 FOR HIS GLORY!

EVERYTHING God does is for His glory!

God does not act in a way that will bring Him "lesser" glory. It is an impossibility.

It simply **cannot be** that God would act in such a way that would take glory away from Him and put it on something or someone else! Nothing in the Bible even remotely resembles God acting in such a way.²³

Romans 9.22 – 24

What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

*And He did so in order that He might make known the **RICHES OF HIS GLORY** upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He called, not from among Jews only, but also from Gentiles.*

Ephesians 1.5 – 6, 11 – 14, 18

*He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, **TO THE PRAISE AND GLORY OF HIS GRACE**,...*

v.11 - 14

*...also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to HIS purpose who works all things after the counsel of HIS will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be **TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY**.*

*In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, **TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY**.*

v.18

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the **RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE** in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.*

*The first chapter of I Corinthians makes explicitly clear that our only boast is in what **GOD** accomplished in us **through Christ**.*

*Christians, if we have anything to boast in at all, if there is anything that we have to feel proud about, it is only in what GOD has done in us **THROUGH CHRIST JESUS ON THE CROSS!***

We have no other boast!

I Corinthians 1.30 – 31

*But by HIS doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, that just as it is written, "**LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD**."*

Ephesians 2.8 – 9

²² Romans 9.20 - 21

²³ Isaiah 42.8 "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, not My praise to graven images."

Isaiah 48.11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another."

For by grace you have been saved through faith; AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, **IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD**; not as a result of works, THAT NO ONE SHOULD BOAST.

This kills the idea that we come to God on our own!
And if we do not come to God on our own, then God MUST decide it—He MUST choose it!

This gives ALL the glory to God!

Only He creates physical life where there is none.

“Lazar us...come for th!” ²⁴

Only He creates spiritual life where there is none.

*“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”
And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized;”* ²⁵

Only He regenerates the sinful soul and gives it a new desire, a new nature, a new will that **now chooses** to love God.

Romans 8.28 screams of the glory of God in election!

“And we know that all ²⁶ things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Think about this verse for a moment and you will notice something awesome. We tend to think of this verse in terms of *post*-conversion. But this cannot be!

“...all things...” This is determined! It is factual. It must be predetermined!

The “all things” that work together for the good of those called is a predetermined thing!

It is all-inclusive. It brings into the experience things *before* Christ in the life of the Christian!

(I would argue that all the “bad” things that happen in the life of a person who comes to Christ are part of those “good” things that brought them to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. I’ve heard testimony after testimony of those who tell of the terrible things that happened in their lives that drove them to the foot of the cross—that had those things not happened, they may never have realized their need for Jesus. They thank God for those terrible things that God used, ordained, to lead them to life eternal!)

[We do not become “called” *after* we receive Christ! We have been chosen before the foundation of the world; therefore, **all things** relates to the whole of life. You can look at the life of the saints down through the ages and see evidence of this.

Paul. Once the scales were removed from his eyes, the knowledge and experience that he had in Judaism allowed him to be one of the greatest missionaries and apologists that Christianity has ever known!

You will find evidence of the providential hand of God in every life of every Christian that proves all things work together for good, both before and after conversion.]

Since it is inclusive of all experience, a sovereign God who, as **Proverbs 16.4 & 9** states, directs the steps of man and has made everything for its own purpose, must determine it.

3. NO OTHER WAY

If you have realized the condition that sin has left us in—

²⁴ John 11.43, 44 (v.44: “He who had died came forth,...)”)

²⁵ Acts 9.17 – 18

²⁶ Strong’s #3956 (*pantós*)—“Includes the idea of oneness, a totality or the whole,...” The Complete Word Study Dictionary by S. Zodhiates ©1992 AMG Publishing

- A) that we are at enmity with God [Eph 2.3 states that we are children of wrath];
- B) that we are completely unable to do good [Ro 3.12 states that there is NONE who does good, not even one!];
- C) that we don't even have the desire to seek God or do good! [Ro 8.5 states that those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh and are hostile towards God.];
- D) and that because of these, we are unable to approach God. [Eph 2.18 states that it is ONLY through Christ that we have access to the Father. (Also look at Hebrews)];

then you must logically realize that there is simply NO OTHER WAY—**definitely**, NO OTHER WAY!

The doctrine of unconditional election must be viewed, as must the entirety of Scripture and the call of the Gospel, with a full realization and acceptance of our own depravity. This is what abolishes the pride of arrogantly thinking that we can obtain any part of salvation on our own, by our own free, autonomous decision or will.

Two weeks ago, Kenny brought us a powerful message on just that—our total helplessness and depravity.

We echo the voice of Paul in saying,
*“...nothing good dwells in me.”*²⁷

The cry of Isaiah in lamenting,
*“Woe is me; I am undone! For I am a man of unclean lips and live among a people with unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”*²⁸

We are dead, lifeless, with no good or worth in us.
 We may not be murderers in reality, but there is murder in our hearts and blood on our hands.

What's worse is that apart from Christ, the quickening of the Holy Spirit of God, we are helpless to do anything about it because as long as we live a “semi-moral” life, we are believed, and convinced, to be “good”.

In the last Desiring God class, I used the example of the NYC firefighters to show this—²⁹
 Who in their right mind would stand up and accuse even one of them of *wickedness*? Of having a heart full of evil and a soul completely wicked, depraved, and beyond any hope at all?

That apart from Jesus Christ, they are not even *able* to do anything good?!

NO ONE WOULD DARE SAY THIS.

People are building monuments and memorials. Their courage is being commemorated—their selflessness and their goodness is being exalted.

Do you see the point?

How in the world can they be convinced of their wretchedness, their utterly evil hearts, when the world that they live in is carrying them on its shoulders? Applauding them? Treating them as heroes? Heralding them? Thanking them with tears, and gifts,....

Believe me (even more so, believe the Word of God) when I tell you—

Those firefighters [and I only use them as examples because they are the most prominent. Use anyone that you wish—relief workers, doctors, nurses, policemen, rescue workers, mission workers, pastors, benefactors, mayors, victim's families, survivors] who do not have Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior are **ENEMIES OF GOD! GOD-HATERS...AND WICKED TO THE VERY CORE OF THEIR SOUL.**

The only way that they will realize this, *the only way that anyone will realize their sinfulness,*
is to be pierced to the soul by the light of God's mercy and grace through Jesus Christ!

NO OTHER WAY!

²⁷ Romans 7.18

²⁸ Isaiah 6.5

²⁹ This is about four months after the terrorist attacks on and the destruction of the World Trade Centers in NYC on September 11, 2001 and the Pentagon attack which claimed more than 3,000 lives.

Almighty God,
by the royal and authoritative fiat of His divine will,
commands in the soul of the sinner whom He has set His electing love and affections on
since before the foundation of the world,

“I e t t h e r e b e l i g h t !”

and just as there was at the creation of the world, so there is in the creation of the new soul.

“...and there was light. And...the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.”³⁰

Let me close with this text—**John 1:1-13**
*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.
ALL THINGS came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being.
In Him was life, and the life was the LIGHT of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not
comprehend it.
There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that
all might believe through him.
He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.
There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made
through Him, and the world did not know Him.
He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.
But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,
Even to those who believe in His name who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,
but of God.*

BUT...OF...GOD

These three words make salvation possible to a people unable and unwilling to be saved, to approach
God, to enter heaven, to live holy lives.

BUT...OF...GOD!

GOD!!!

GOD ALONE!!!

*As a Christian this is reason for “exceeding great joy”!
It is reason for “...joy inexpressible and full of glory...”³¹*

It is cause to be happy in God! To stand firm in the faith. To endure every hardship. To be patient
through all circumstance.

It is the fuel for missions and evangelism!!! It is the assurance that missions and evangelism WILL NOT
FAIL! That people *will* come to Christ, and that they **WILL BE SAVED!**

God alone creates life where there was none...

Through Christ, GOD

***“...gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not
exist.”³²***

³⁰ Genesis 1:3, 4

³¹ I Peter 1:8

³² Romans 4:17b

