

1. Might not agree with all I said last week – let me tell you how I think when I study

A. I have foundational truths I always retreat too – Biblical principles that help tremendously – tell you two

First Principle: God Is Perfect

A. When cataclysmic events happen – Tsunamis – children die etc.

Questions come up “If God is loving and if God is in control how could he allow that?”

1). First: I don’t judge him from my emotions – my thinking was shattered by the fall

2). Second: I don’t reduce the truth of sovereignty down to ease the tension

a). Coming up with some soppy excuse

“God really isn’t in control – but he does allow things to happen”

1a). No! Scripture says he’s involved and in control of all things = Sovereignty

B. In my pea brain – effected by the fall - I don’t understand why he allows certain things

1). That used to bother me until I saw the power of Biblical principles

2). There is foundational truth I can fall back upon – *God is perfect in all his ways*

Psa 18:30 (NIV) As for God, *his way is perfect...*

2 Sam 22:31 (NASB) "As for God, *His way is blameless...*

Point: I can rest in that! I don’t know why he allows certain things – but I know he never makes a mistake

A. Therefore when I can’t understand – when it seems wrong – the problem isn’t him – it’s me

B. I was witnessing at the Spectrum – “If God is in control why do so many innocent people die in things like Tsunamis and earth quakes?”

1). First of all there are no innocent people

All have sinned and fall short – the wages of that sin is death

2). Secondly – I do believe God is in total control of all things that happen

I don’t have a clue why he would allow a tsunami or an earthquake that kills so many. I agree a sovereign God could stop that. But I do know this – he never makes a mistake. He is perfect.

a). I was surprised when he said “I appreciate that. I’ve asked so many Christians that question and they try to get God off the hook with some soppy sentimentalism”

1a). We ended up having a great conversation – he really listened

C. God does a lot of things I’m not comfortable with – that’s because I am sinful

1). I now accept the problem is me – not him – I’ve stopped judging God – I REST

I just need to realize he is never wrong – he never makes a mistake

Transition: Brings us to another principle I see in Scripture that helps me with my theology on salvation

A. I want to tell you this so you can see how I approach the theology in Ephesians 1-2

Second Principle: God Has Designed All Things for His Glory

A. Creation is designed to bring him glory

Ps 19:1 (ESV) The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

B. Everything the believer does is supposed to bring him glory

1 Co 10:31 (ESV) So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Mt 5:16 (ESV) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

D. Our salvation is designed in a way to bring him glory

Eph 1:4–6 (ESV) even as *he chose us* in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁽⁵⁾ *he predestined us* for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁽⁶⁾ *to the praise of his glorious grace,* with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

1). What does salvation by grace do?

Eph 2:8–9 (ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁽⁹⁾ not a result of works, *so that no one may boast.*

- a). It obliterates any kind of boasting as to why we were saved – it gives all the glory to God
- b). The recipients of heaven get it

Re 19:1 (ESV) After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! *Salvation and glory* and power belong to our God,

- 1). Before we were saved we were blinded to the truth

2 Co 4:4 (ESV) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- a). But God came in rescuing power – He lit up our understanding – what did he show?

2 Co 4:6 (ESV) For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light *of the knowledge of the glory of God* in the face of Jesus Christ.

- 1a). The salvation message is about the glory of God in reaching lost man

Point: I could go on and on – but when I’m faced with a theological question about salvation

I retreat to this principle that is found through the scripture and is unshakable

- A. The question I ask: What understanding brings God the most glory?

- 1). Take election for example – what gives him the most glory
 - a). Him choosing me by grace alone = unmerited favor
 - Or him choosing me because I chose him?

Thought: Plus you have the weight of scripture

- A. Paul: The poster child for conversion

- 1). God thought his story was so important – you have it told in 3 separate places in Scripture
- 2). Paul was not searching for Christ
 - a). Was actively trying to destroy everything attached to Christ
 - b). He didn’t pursue Christ – Christ pursued him

- B. Why were you saved? Was it because you were more spiritual than most – “Always spiritual”

- 1). You had more spiritual wisdom than others – you figured it out when they couldn’t
- 2). Or were you like Paul – you were pursued when you weren’t seeking – you were subdued

C. S. Lewis: “Amiable agnostics will talk cheerfully about man’s search for God. For me, they might as well talk about the mouse’s search for a cat...God closed in on me.”

- C. Scripture says you were an enemy of God, hostile and unable to obey– Romans 5 and 8

You were blinded to the truth that could save you 2 Cor 4

You were dead to God and alive to sin – Satan was your spiritual father Eph 2 & John 8

- 1). But God reached down to you who hated him, didn’t want him or his ways
 - a). In a gracious, loving, merciful act that person was saved
- 2). He turned on the lights when you loved darkness – He gets all the credit I GET NONE

- D. I understand this argument of God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility has raged for years

- 1). God chose me – NO I chose God that’s why he chose me!
 - a). I understand there are scriptures that seem to support both sides
- 2). I think the weight of scripture is what I’m teaching – God’s sovereignty in salvation
 - a). I think Paul is the living example of this
 - b). I think this understanding is what brings God most glory

- E. If you don’t agree with me – that is fine – we’re still brothers and sisters and love each other

- 1). We both believe in salvation by grace – we just differ on how that grace comes about
- 2). We both believe in election – we just differ on how that comes about
- 3). If you disagree with me – please know why you do

- a). Please have a scriptural argument – not an emotional argument
“God chooses those who will be his – that’s not fair!”
 - 1a). Oh man who are you to judge God! Shattered, disjointed emotions
- b). You don’t want fair – fair is everybody goes to hell – for all have sinned
 - 1a). I need unfair – I need Jesus Christ hanging on the cross for my sin
That’s not fair – but I need that
- c). If God only chose one – that would be amazing grace!
 - 1a).
- 4). If you don’t agree – give me a Biblical argument not emotional
 - a). A Biblical argument – not a human argument – then we can talk – I’d love too

Summary: Just thought I’d let you know the way I think

- A. I will always choose what exalts God the most – what gives him the most glory
 - 1). Why? Because that is a principle I see laced all throughout the Bible
 - a). I feel very safe when I line up with that
- B. This is the way we must read Ephesians 1-2
 - 1). It is a doxology that gives praise to God for his great work in our salvation
 - a). There is no room to jam man in there at any place – it is all for God’s glory

2. Review: What we have seen – the blessings of being in Christ

- A. We saw that In Christ we are chosen before the foundations of the world
 - 1). This was a sovereign choice of God based on grace – Eph 1:4-6
- B. We saw at that time we were also give grace in Christ – 2 Tim 1:8-9
 - 1). He has been our Savior in God’s mind from before the beginning of time
- C. We saw those he chooses – he brings into a relationship that is eternal
 - 1). That nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God
 - 2). We saw the double grip of security
Jn 10:28–29 (ESV) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ⁽²⁹⁾ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.
 - 3). One of the greatest proofs of assurance is
Jn 6:38–39 (ESV) For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ⁽³⁹⁾ 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.
 - a). If you are a believer – you were chosen before the foundation of the world
And you were one of those given to Christ by the Father
 - b). Jesus is committed to the will of the Father
 - 1a). That will is he would lose none who have been given to him
 - 2a). I honestly don’t think he’s going to disobey the Father and fail at this
- D. We saw that all of our sins are forgiven in Christ – through his shed blood
- E. We saw how we are righteous in Him – God credits his perfect obedience to us
 - 1). That was the doctrine of substitution – what a grace saturated doctrine
 - 2). God chose us – Then came to earth and shed his blood to forgive us
And lived the life we needed to live so we could have the righteousness we needed
Then drew us into a loving, eternal relationship with Christ – my salvation amazes me

Transition: Let’s continue on with a couple more blessings of being in Christ

I. WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST – PART 2

Sixth blessing: In Christ Jesus you have become a new creation

2 Co 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is *in Christ*, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

1. If anyone is in Christ = this would be all who are saved

A. Here is the result of salvation. God has done something radical

Thought: Wish we'd teach this more – have less people claiming to be Christians who have never changed

A. Getting so bad - some are not using “Christian” any longer – it’s lost its power – means nothing

Now calling true believers – “Christ followers” = Biblical definition of a Christian

1). A genuine believer follows Christ

2). If you’re claiming to know Christ but not following him – what book did you read?

B. Listen to what Paul says – after talking about the way the unbelieving Gentiles lived

Darkened in their understanding – indulging in impurity

Paul says: Eph 4:20-23 (NIV) You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. (21) Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. (22) *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; (23) to be made new in the attitude of your minds;*

Point: The Christian lives differently than they did – Why? God has transformed them – they are new

2. What this is not saying

A. **Not saying:** We won’t have any of those old temptations any longer

That there won’t be any more evil thoughts – lustful looks – angry moments

B. **It is saying:** we have a new relationship with all that

1). We still fall – but find out quickly we’re not the same – conviction - miserable

2). We have a hunger for God’s word – we pray – That’s new!

3). We are in a relationship with God – call him Father – that’s new!

C. We now fight against sin – the war against temptation is new

Ga 5:17 (ESV) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, *for these are opposed to each other...*

1 Pet 2:11 (NIV) Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, *which war against your soul.*

1). You didn’t have that before – you were dominated by sin – you loved sin

a). This war is new! A proof you’re saved – you fight against sin now

2). You’re not always victorious – you may even have a besetting sin – but your fighting!

D. You want to serve Christ – you want to obey – because you are different

Php 2:12–13 (ESV) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ⁽¹³⁾ *for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

1). God has brought you to life – He is working things in you – that you are working out

3. God has radically changed me – redirected me

A. I’ve been given everything I need to live for him – new nature – new power – new desires

2 Pet 1:3-4 (NIV) *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness* through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (4) Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may *participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

1). Participate in the divine nature – resulting in an escape from the corruption of the world

a). I’m no longer victimized by sin – no longer bullied by temptation

b). No longer dominated by selfishness – I can now serve God and others

1a). I'm new – I can now live a life that has an impact now and for eternity

2a). I don't have to be trapped by the temporal

Thought: I love the Christian life – I know God – I'm his child – I walk with him – live for him

A. All that is because he has given me life – and made all things new

1). The new me desires holiness – desires to please him – and enjoys him

2). The old me hated God and desired sin – desired to please only me

a). What grace to make me NEW!

b). What grace to take that old me – spiritually dead me – and breath life into me

Eph 2:1–5 (ESV) And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ⁽²⁾ in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ⁽³⁾ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁽⁴⁾ *But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁽⁵⁾ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

B. Hell is no longer a threat! That's new!

1). Why? I've been rescued! My king has come and died for me – drew me to himself

He has done the miracle of giving life to the dead

a). I was like Lazarus – dead and stinking – the call came and I sprung to life

4. Question: Have you been made new?

A. How can I tell? Easy – you're not the same as you used to be

1). Something has happened in the past that has current results

You desire God – you fight against sin – you care about His will for you

a). You don't live every day like God doesn't even exist

B. You say "I don't see a change" – Then I say you still need to be saved

1). The Christian is one who moves from darkness to light

They are one who has put off the old and put on the new – there must be change

C. Praise God there is for the true believer! God has done that work that changes us

1). That is the evidence we will be with him for all of eternity

Transition: One of those great changes – you were a child of the devil – was your spiritual father – John 8

A. Now you have become a child of God – He is your Father

In Christ Jesus you have become a Son of God

Ga 3:26 (ESV) for *in Christ Jesus* you are all sons of God, through faith.

1. How glorious this is – Children of God

1 John 3:1 (NIV) How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

A. Does that amaze you saint? That Almighty God has chosen you and drawn you to himself

1). That he has adopted you – so that you would be his child?

2. Let this thought remove any fear of surrendering to him

A. You surrender to a loving Father – the Father of your dreams

B. When you come to him and say "I want to do your will. Whatever that may be"

1). You can be sure he's not going to use that desire to make miserable

"You know that thing you hate to do. Guess who's going to do that? You!"

2). He fits our lives into that place he knows will fit us perfectly

a). We will flow into that abundant life he speaks of

This is what he came to give us – we enjoy that when we surrender

- C. Here's the promise for those who live near to him – I want this

Psa 36:7-8 (NIV) How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. (8) They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.

- 1). Feasting on his abundance – drinking from the river of delights
 - a). That sounds better than where my will takes me – what the world can give me
- 2). This is what your father wants for you Child of God!

Question: But what if he tells me to do something I don't want to do? I'm sure he will

- A. He is Lord! When you came to him for salvation – you became a follower – signed over the pink slip

- 1). He will tell you to do things you don't want to do
 - a). Why? Because he knows what's best for you and you don't!
You want to do all kinds of stupid things that end up destroying you
 - 1a). You don't want to do anything that takes you out of the comfort zone
 - 2a). But he's not a comfort zone God – He moves out on the battle field
 - b). He will lead you to do things you don't see the value in first – but they develop you
 - 1a). They are part of that abundant life he came to give to you
 - 2a). They lead to joy – you end up drinking from his river of delights

3. Let this thought of being his child produce rest

- A. I have a rich Father who has promised to care for me
- B. As we saw last week – when he chose me – he became responsible for me
 - 1). The adopter takes full and legal responsibility for the adopted
 - 2). When we adopted Taylor - we signed papers – became legally responsible
 - a). It would have broke my heart if Taylor was consumed with worry
“I'm not sure where my food and clothes are coming from!” What!
 - 1a). That would be dishonoring me – my love – my history of providing
 - 2a). How our worry dishonors God who has promised so much
- B. And it wasn't just the bare minimum – I loved lavishing him with extras – just because I loved him
 - 1). God is the same way! He loves to bless us!

1 Ti 6:17 (ESV) As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, *who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.*

- a). Don't put your trust in the things of the world – they are so temporal – so fleeting
- b). Trust God your Father – he owns it all – and will richly provide you with things to enjoy!

Transition: Let's carry on and add to this thought – an incredible promise for those IN Christ Jesus

In Christ Jesus everything you really need will be supplied.

Php 4:19 (ESV) And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory *in Christ Jesus.*

1. What a promise – what a provision – what generosity

- A. Supply *every need* of yours ACCORDING TO his riches in glory
 - 1). The huge difference of out of his riches and according to his riches
Ex. Bill Gates – yeah I'll help - \$10.00 check – that's out of his riches
But if he wrote a \$10,000,000 dollar check – that's according to his riches
- B. God promises to meet all our needs *according to his riches*
 - 1). What are his riches – the world and all the people in it – everything
 - 2). Everything is his – therefore all of it can be used to meet our needs

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- C. We hear about these people inheriting so much money
“I wish I had a relative who was rich – when they died would leave me something like that”
- 1). Someone did die – who makes the richest person on earth look like a pauper
 - a). He has promised that your every need will be met
- Thought:** There is a condition there – we can’t live for the world and expect blessing from God
Mt 6:33 (ESV) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
- A. All what things will be added? Everything I NEED! Generously – according to his riches
- 1). But we must put him first – why?
 - a). If money – materialism is your idol – he must deal with that first – because he loves you
No idolater will inherit the kingdom of heaven
 - b). Therefore – he won’t provide something that would strengthen that idol’s grip on your heart
David Watson: It is unlikely that God will entrust us with spiritual riches until he sees that we are genuinely serving him, not mammon.
- B. Give yourself to him and REST – you cling to the world like it can provide – WRONG!
- 1). There are so many things that can empty your bank account quickly! Happens all the time
“It’s wiser to have your bank in heaven than to have your heaven in a bank.”
- Transition:** In Christ you’ve been made new – you’ve become a child of God
- A. As God’s child he has promised to provide for you generously – according to his riches
- 1). He won’t do that if riches are an idol – he would just be supporting what will destroy you
 - a). Scripture clearly says no idolater will inherit the kingdom of God
 - 2). When you seek him first – you can truly rest
 - a). You’re following him – your good shepherd – into green pastures – still waters
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CONCLUSION

1. Added a few more blessings of being in Christ

- A. We’ve been made new – we have become a child of God – every need will be met
- B. I love the rest following Christ brings – He is in total control – He will provide
 - 1). All I have to do is put him first – he takes care of everything else – fantastic - simple

2. You say – I don’t see that work of God in my life

- A. I lack an appetite for the word – a desire for him – I still live a worldly life
 - 1). My life is not characterized by obedience but sin
- B. The solution is not to try to be nicer – more religious – you need to be saved
 - 1). You need to go to him – admitting you can’t save yourself
You need to ask him to have mercy on you and do that saving work in you