

VI. The Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology)

- * The salvation process can be looked at as happening in 3 stages.
- * What God does in our lives to bring us to the point of salvation, the actual salvation experience, and the changed life as a result of this experience.

A. God Calls sinners

1. God wants every person to be saved

- * He makes His prevenient grace available to all.
- * Prevenient grace is God's grace which prepares the unbeliever for salvation.
- * It draws and prepares person for salvation.
- * It is the bridge between the saved and the unsaved.
- * God makes this possible/available to all.
- * It is not dependent on, or conditioned by, acts of merit.

Scripture References Assuring that God wants all to be saved:

- * Titus 2:11 "Christ appeared to all men"
- * I Tim 2:6; 4:10 "Christ died for all"
- * Jn. 3:16 "For God so loved the world...whosoever will"

2. God elects (predestines) believers to salvation

- * Predestination is one of the theological words that creates a lot of confusion.
- * *Show comic: Calvin invents predestination*
- * Election (predestination) is the act of God by which He has graciously chosen for salvation all those that He knew before would respond.
- * Rom. 8:29 "For whom He foreknew He also predestined..."
- * Election happens before salvation, and the goal/purpose is salvation.
- * Election is not going on at this time - God is not still finding out who will respond, he already knows who will respond.
- * *Election is based upon foreknowledge, but just what is that?*

a. Foreknowledge Definition #1:

- * Some define foreknowledge as choice. God chooses some.
- * Election (salvation) is limited to only those God has chosen.
- * Free will does not come into the picture.

b. Foreknowledge Definition #2:

- * Foreknowledge means prescience.
- * God knows beforehand those who would respond to His call.
- * In His foreknowledge God foresaw those who would respond to His offer of salvation, and actively elected them to salvation.
- * This allows for human choice (to reject God).
- * A Baptist theologian asked an old preacher if he believed in the doctrine of election. The old saint replied, "Yes sir. The Lord is voting for me, the devil is voting against me and the way I cast my ballot is the way the election goes."

Summary

- * We can't let ourselves get into endless discussions on this, to the neglect of doing what we are supposed to do as Christians.
- * *Show comic: Freewill vs. predestination, non Christian goes by.*

3. God calls (draws) people to Him.

* The Holy Spirit draws the sinner to God, a process we label “calling.”

a. Who does God call?

- * God calls all people (Matt. 11:28, Jn 3:16)
- * Sinners are spiritually dead, but they cannot recognize on their own that they are dead.
- * They are not aware of their need, let alone the remedy for it.
- * Eph. 2:1 says, "You were dead in your trespasses".
- * The Holy Spirit helps the dead sinner to recognize that they are dead, and then draws them to God.
- * God can draw people through the word, his Spirit, his servants, and his providential dealing with men.
- * This is not an irresistible call. The potential is there for the resistance to the call: "He comes to His own, and His own receive Him not.

b. To what does God call us?

(1) To repentance

- * See Matt. 3:2; Mark 1:14ff; Acts 2:38
- * Repentance (Metanoia) realizing the wickedness of one’s actions to the extent that they feel sorrow **and** a desire to change.
- * The word is of such strength that it is not just a mental process, but a conduct change follows.

(2) To faith

- * See Mark 1:15; Jn. 6:29; Acts 16:31
- * Faith is the connecting bridge between prevenient grace and the initial state of salvation.
- * One must place his personal trust in the savior.
- * Faith is a full assent of the mind to a declaration of the promise of God, & this is based upon the authority of the one who made the promise (God).

4. The Holy Spirit becomes the agent of salvation (Jn. 3:3-8)

- * The Holy Spirit convicts the unsaved of their sins (Jn. 16:8-11)
- * Conviction is more than feeling guilty, it has a positive effect of leading the sinner toward God.
- * The HS becomes the source of new life--the one who brings about the new birth.
- * "Unless you are born again...born of water and Spirit"

- * *After God works on the heart of a sinner, drawing him to salvation, then comes the actual salvation experience when the person accepts Christ as his/her personal savior.*

B. God changes the standing of sinners

1. Atonement

- * Man was separated from God because of sin.
- * Atonement refers to Christ paying the price for our wrongdoing, in order to restore our broken relationship with God..
- * The atonement is the heart of the Gospel.
- * This was Jesus' reason for coming.

Optional lecture

- * There are many theories as to how Jesus dying atones for our sins.
- * No matter how you understand it, here are 2 things we must remember:
 - * An objective act had to take place to propitiate God wrath--this act was Christ's death.
 - * In His death, something happened vicariously to appease the wrath of God, on our behalf.

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- * Because of the atoning work of Christ, man can be reconciled with God.
 - * Reconciliation is the result of Christ's work: It is man and God being brought back together.

- * *In addition to paying the price for our sins, Salvation brings about our...*

2. Regeneration

- * This long word, regeneration (palingenesia) simply means re-birth.
- * Regeneration is when the Spirit gives life to a soul previously dead in sin (Jn. 3).
- * God gives new life to those who were once dead--they are "born again."
- * Regeneration is a moral change wrought in the heart of man by the Holy Spirit.
- * Regeneration is a radical change brought about by the efficient work of the HS.
- * It is an act of God, not simply our turning over a new leaf.
- * Regeneration is a complete work. We are resurrected from death unto life--this is not partial.
- * See Matt. 19:28; Tit. 3:5; Jn 3:5; 2 Cor 5:17; I Pet 1:3; 1 Jn. 5:1; Jms 1:18

- * *Another result when we accept Christ as our savior is our...*

3. Justification

- * Justification is a law or courtroom term.
- * Justification is the judicial declaration of God by which He pronounces us "not guilty" for the sins we have committed.
- * We did sin, and should have received a guilty verdict, but we receive an "acquittal" because Christ volunteered to take our punishment in our place.
- * The sentence has been served, so we are not required to serve it again.
- * Justification is both an act and a state.
 - * Justification is a judicial act: God pronounces judgment, but gives life, based on the work of Christ.
 - * Justification is the state into which we are introduced before God.
 - * When God looks at us, it is "just as if I'd never sinned."

- * Justification is a great concept for Chr. counselors to understand & communicate
- * We tend to remember wrongs in our past and hang on to them--God does not.

4. **Adoption**

- * The act by which man is received into the family of God and given the privileges of sonship (Rom. 8:12ff).
- * God claims the repentant sinner as His own child.
- * Through adoption, the newcomer becomes a member of the family and is entitled to all the rights and privileges of a natural-born child, even sharing in the eternal inheritance.
- * We were aliens/strangers but are now called His children (Rom 8:17; Gal 4:6-7).

C. God changes sinners

- * Once we are saved, positionally (objectively) we stand pure before God.
- * But practically (subjectively) there are still areas that we need to work on.

1. **Sanctification**

a. **Definition**

- * Sanctification is separation to God; this involves separating from evil, and being conformed to the image of Christ.
- * It involves:
 - * Separation from moral evil
 - * Separation to God
 - * Being conformed to the image of Christ.
- * Sanctification is both an act and a process.

b. **Definite act of Grace (Positional Sanctification)**

- * At salvation we are sanctified, declared "saints" (sanctified ones)
- * See I Cor. 6:11; Heb. 10:10
- * Our position before God is now as saints.
- * At salvation a righteousness is imputed to us, a right. not our own.
- * Ex. Paul even called the Corinthians- "saints" and "sanctified ones.")
- * But sanctification does not mean we can now do anything we want.
- * "Should I sin so that grace may abound? No way!" Rom. 8:1

c. **Ongoing process (Progressive Sanctification)**

- * Sanctification does not mean sinless perfection.
- * The actualization in our lives of what God has declared us to be at our salvation. How is this accomplished?
 - * This process is through the indwelling power of the HS (Rom. 8:13).
 - * Through our submission and yieldedness to God (Rom. 6:13; 12:1)
 - * Through constant measurement of ourselves against the standard of the word (2 Cor. 3:17)
 - * Through practice (Heb. 5:12-14)
 - * When we see Christ we will be like him.

2. **Perseverance (eternal security)**

a. **Two Major View of Perseverance**

(1) Calvinistic Definition:

- * Once saved always saved.
- * There is unconditional election, eternal security.
- * The power is in the salvation, it cannot fail.
- * There may be temporary backsliding, but genuinely saved people will come back.
- * *Show comic: I used to be a Calvinist too, until...(Hobbes)*

(2) Armenianistic Definition:

- * There is eternal security to those are genuinely saved whose lives are marked by continual growth and sanctification.
- * It allows for the element of human choice.
- * Because we are given freedom of choice, humans can fail, falter, fall, fold, or fizzle out.
- * If someone chooses not to continue in that salvation, may, after a genuine salvation experience, be lost.
- * Conditional Security (A/G's position)
- * It places the responsibility on the believer to persevere.

* *Show comic: I've converted from Calvinism to Armenianism...*

b. **Scriptures Supporting Eternal Security**

- * John 10:27-29 "His sheep they shall never perish, no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand."
- * John 5:24 "He who hears and believes has eternal life...has passed from death unto life."
- * John 6:32, 37 "All the father gives I will not cast out" "I lose nothing"
- * Rom. 11:29 gifts and callings are irrevocable. (They take this out of context, but it is used.)

c. **Scriptures Supporting Conditional Security**

- * Matt. 18:21-35 "a slave asks for forgiveness, is granted it, then he goes and does not grant it to someone else. The master revokes the initial forgiveness."
- * Luke 8:11-15 "Parable of the seed and sower." Various soils show the picture of people who respond but do not persevere.
- * John 15:1-6 "Vine that does not bear fruit will get cut off"
- * Heb. 2:1-3; "We must not lose our attention, lest we drift away."
- * Heb. 3:2 "How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"
- * Heb. 3:6ff "If we hold fast in our confidence"
- * Heb. 5:8-9 "All who obey him, for he is the source of salvation."
- * Heb. 6:4-9 the entire theme of the book of Hebrews seems to support the possibility of falling away, and warns against it.)

d. **Assurance of Salvation**

- * We can have assurance that we are forgiven and that we have the promise of salvation. (I Jn. 1:8-9; 5:11-13)
- * We can have assurance that the HS indwells us and is the earnest (down-

payment) of eternal life. (Rom 8; 2 Cor 1:21-22; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30)

- * We can have assurance that should we sin, we have an advocate with the father, Christ Jesus (1 Jn. 2:1-2; Heb. 4:14,16).
- * We can have assurance that sin cannot have dominion over us. (Rom. 6:11-16,23; Jn. 16:5,11)
- * We can have assurance that we are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:35, 37-39)
- * We can have assurance that we are kept by the power of God (1 Pet1:3,9)

