

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 1

The History and Doctrines of Trinity Bible Church

I. THE BACKGROUND.

A. For twenty-three years our Pastor was associated with the Central Bible Church of Portland, first as Assistant Pastor for ten years, and then as Pastor for thirteen years (1968-1981). On January 17, 1981, the Church Council voted to ask him to resign, which he did. He preached for the last time at Central Bible Church on Sunday morning, January 18, 1981.

B. The issues which led to the Pastor's resignation:

1. Practical: the Pastor's opposition to the contemporary trends in many churches today, especially in music. This was considered by many to be hindering the growth of the church.
2. The Pastor had been preaching through the Gospel of John and those who were looking for an issue to ask him to resign objected to his teaching on election and the sovereignty of God in salvation. They considered this in violation of the church's doctrinal statement.

Therefore, there were negative and positive issues.

C. The Division: following the Sunday morning service on January 18, 1981.

II. THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH – FROM JANUARY 24, 1981 TO THE PRESENT.

A. The Beginning: Contrary to what many at Central Bible Church said, a new church was not pre-planned, but was spontaneous under the leading of the Spirit of God. Our first meeting was a men's prayer meeting at the original Gresham Internal Medicine Clinic on Saturday, January 24, 1981. Our first Sunday morning service was at the Gresham Armory the next day, on Sunday morning, January 25, 1981.

B. Our meeting places: The Gresham Armory, David Douglas High School, Centennial High School, then three Parkrose elementary schools: Thompson, Sacramento, and Knott. Now we are meeting in the PDX South Shore Campus building.

C. The Development of the Church.

As the people met together each week, the Pastor, who was not actually asked to be the Pastor until several weeks later, met with the men during the week, discussing what the Scriptures had to say about the local church. From those meetings there was a growing conviction that the ministry of the church should be God-centered, not man-centered, and that it should be our primary purpose if we became a church to please God, not people. We believed that if God is pleased, His blessing will follow, and the people of His choosing will come. Furthermore we were strengthened in our conviction.

tion that the ministry of the church should be directed toward the people of God, teaching and Word of God and encouraging them in holy living.

Our church has also emphasized from the beginning the importance of the leadership of men and that our church should be strongly family oriented.

Several months after our first meetings, a pastor was called, and the church was legally set up as a church in accordance with the laws of the State of Oregon.

1. The leadership of Trinity Bible Church.

It is our prayer that the work will always be in accordance with the Word of God and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. And so in keeping with the teaching of the New Testament the following leaders were appointed:

- a. Elders, which included the Pastor.
- b. Deacons.

2. The characteristics of the ministry.

- a. *Our Services.* It was determined that we would a Sunday School for all ages, services on Sunday morning and Sunday evening, a mid-week meeting on Wednesday, and a men's prayer meeting each Saturday morning. It was also decided that we have a Tuesday morning Bible Class.
- b. *Bible teaching and Preaching.* Our services would always feature the expository teaching of the Word of God, both with regard to the books of the Bible as well as the great doctrines of the Bible. Cf. 2 Timothy 4:1-2.
- c. *Music.* We believe that God is glorified in the singing of the great hymns of the Church, and that we avoid contemporary music which is patterned after the world's music. Cf. Ephesians 5:18-19.
- d. *Money.* We believe that the Lord's work should be supported by the Lord's people, but we also believe that people should give as the Lord has prospered them, and as He leads them to give. No one is ever asked to pledge money to our church, nor do we take offerings in our services. An offering box is provided for the convenience of those who desire to give. Our Church Treasurer keeps accurate records as to what people give if they identify their gift in some way. Cf. 2 Corinthians 9:7.
- e. *Evangelism and Missions.* We believe that it is God's will that those who believe in Christ should participate in the spread of the Gospel at home and throughout the world by personal witnessing, by giving, and by prayer. Thus it is both a personal responsibility for every believer as well as the responsibility of the local church. We believe that the methods employed in evangelism and missions should reflect the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the spread of the Gospel to the world.

3. *Special ministries of our church.* Radio broadcast, Tuesday Bible Class (during the school

year), Spring Bible Conference, and Summer Family Bible Camp. We also have Bible Memory groups which meet once a week for twelve weeks beginning in January of each year.

4. *The Ordinances.*

- a. Believer's baptism by immersion. In addition, we publicly dedicate our children to the Lord by prayer at the request of the parents, but we do not use water.
- b. The Lord's Supper. We observe it regularly twice each month – on the first Sunday morning and the third Sunday night. We also serve the Lord's Supper on special days of prayer and on other special occasions at the discretion of the elders.

III. OUR DOCTRINES.

In our future lessons we will be considering what we believe, but the following is a general list of the major doctrines which are taught in Scripture, doctrines which we firmly believe.

We have chosen our name to indicate what we believe: Trinity Bible Church.

A. The Bible. We believe it to be the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God.

B. The Trinity of the Godhead: the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Bible teaches the absolute sovereignty of God in all things, and that this includes every part of our salvation.

C. Salvation. We believe that the doctrines of our salvation are best represented by what historically has been known as "the doctrines of grace." This includes the following five doctrines which show the need of salvation and on to the ultimate purpose that God has had in saving us. Someone back in church history (and we don't know who) arranged them in the following acrostic to help in committing their titles to memory.

1. T - Total Depravity.
2. U - Unconditional Election.
3. L - Limited Atonement.
4. I - Irresistible Grace.
5. P - Perseverance of the Saints.

D. God's Distinctive Purpose for the Nation Israel.

E. The Church: Her Nature and Purpose.

F. The Christian Life.

G. Prophecy and the Coming of the Lord.

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Lesson 2

The Bible

Intro: Trinity Bible Church is strongly committed to the teaching and preaching of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. This is consistent with our conviction, learned from the Scriptures themselves, that the primary purpose of the ministry of the church is the spiritual edification of the people of God. We teach it to all ages of people. Therefore in all of our services the main emphasis is upon the Bible, the Word of God. We teach the doctrines of Scriptures and also how the Word of God is to be applied to the lives of God's people.

We hold to this conviction because:

I. WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE TO BE THE VERBALLY INSPIRED WORD OF GOD.

Obviously the Bible was written by human writers, but we believe that each writer was guided by the Holy Spirit as to the very words which he used. This is what we mean by *verbal inspiration*. We do *not* believe that the Holy Spirit gave the writers the ideas that we find in Scripture, and then let them express themselves in their own words. That is called *thought inspiration*, and is the idea behind paraphrases of Scripture, as opposed to translations. In verbal inspiration the Holy Spirit used the understanding of the writers and their particular styles of writing, and yet guided them in ways that we cannot understand so that what we have is the very word of God. Therefore, we distinguish between the *Author* of Scripture, Who is the Holy Spirit, and the various *writers* of Scripture, Moses, David, Matthew, Paul, and so on.

We believe that verbal inspiration applied to the original manuscripts, but that God has led in the translation of His Word so that we have in our translations an accurate record of what the Spirit of God originally revealed to those who wrote the various books of the Bible.

Beginning with Moses and going on to the last writings of the New Testament, the books of the Apostle John, some 40 writers were involved over a period of approximately 1500 years in giving us God's Word. And one of the strongest arguments for the divine origin of Scripture is the amazing unity that is to be recognized between all of the books of the Bible – the thirty-nine Old Testament books, and the twenty-seven New Testament books. They are all equally true and unchangeable.

See 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

II. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY WRITTEN REVELATION *FROM* GOD, BUT ALSO THAT IT IS *THE ONLY* WRITTEN REVELATION *OF* GOD.

God has revealed Himself in several ways:

- 1) To the consciences of every human being. See Romans 1:19.
- 2) In creation. See Romans 1:20.
- 3) By His works and acts of providence. See such verses as Exodus 6:7-8 and 7:4-5.

But God has revealed Himself primarily in these last two ways:

- 4) In His Word. He has revealed Himself by His Names, by the citing of His glorious attributes, and by the

special ways in which He has revealed Himself to His servants. See Genesis 17:1; Exodus 6:3 ; Isaiah 6:1-3; Acts 17:22-31, and hundreds of other Scriptures.

5) Finally, and most completely, in Christ. See John 1:1-3, 14; 14:8-9; Hebrews 1:1-3.

But we must remember that we would have no record that God was revealed in Christ if we did not have the Word of God. And so this shows in a very special way the unique importance of the Word of God.

III. WE BELIEVE IN THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

This follows from the fact that it is the Word of God. No other book that has ever been written can compare with the Bible. It gives us the final word about God, about man, about sin and salvation, and about how those who believe in Christ are to live. It is often said that the Bible is our ultimate authority in all matters that have to do with faith and practice – and that covers it all. See Matthew 4:1-10; also Isaiah 55:10-11 Hebrews 4:12.

IV. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE COMPLETED WORD OF GOD.

God revealed His Word for 1500 years before Christ came, but His Word was completed within 100 years after Christ came. With the coming of Christ, God's revelation was completed. It remained only for the Apostles to explain for us the full meaning of His coming, His perfect life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His present ministry in heaven, and His return. Besides we have a very important statement in Paul's letter to the church of Colosse concerning the Word of God and its completeness. See Colossians 1:25-29.

V. WE BELIEVE IN THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE.

The Bible gives us all that we will ever need in this life in order to know God. It gives us the truth, and all of the truth, that God intended for us to have about sin and salvation. And it gives us all that is necessary for us to know about how to live to please God. We do not need anything in addition to what we have in the Scriptures, and so we should beware of those teachers who would like for us to believe that the Bible is not enough. See 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2-3; 2 Peter 1:1-4.

VI. WE BELIEVE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE TEACHER OF SCRIPTURE.

He is the Author of Scripture (as has been pointed out), but He is also the Teacher of Scripture. See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:6-14. In Ephesians 6:17 the Bible is called "the sword of the Spirit." It is the Word which the Spirit uses to bring sinners to Christ for salvation. See John 16:7-11.

Finally,

VII. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PREACHING AND TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

This is established by Paul's charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5. The church is not for entertainment; it is for the edification of God's people. And the only way that Christians can grow as Christians, is by learning the great truths of Scripture, and then living out those truths day by day in fellowship with the Lord. In fact, we believe this so strongly that we know that we can say that any church which is not obeying this charge which Paul gave to Timothy, is not a true church. We trust the Lord to keep us faithful to His will for the church.

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Lesson 3

The Doctrine of God

Intro: Of all the doctrines of Scripture, this is the most important. The Bible is pre-eminently a revelation of God. By this we mean that God has given us His Word that we might know Him. Therefore, our first and constant objective in studying the Bible must be to know Him, His character, His purposes, and His ways. We believe that God has given each person a realization that there is a God. God has also revealed Himself in creation. He makes Himself known by His mighty acts. He has made Himself known to the greatest degree in the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. But all of the above is made known to us and preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures.

I. THE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD.

By this heading we mean the Persons Who are to be recognized as God. We believe that there are three Persons Who rightly can be called God, Who are worthy of our worship, our trust, and our obedience. They are God, the Father; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and the Holy Spirit. They are equal in Deity, meaning that They all have the same divine attributes, or characteristics. And although They are Three Persons, yet They are one in nature, one in purpose. No one else in all of the Bible is identified with Them like they are identified with each other.

For example, read Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:8, 9, 16, 17.

II. THE ATTRIBUTES, OR CHARACTERISTICS, OF THE GODHEAD.

Bible teachers and theologians have distinguished between God's attributes by saying that some are communicable, while others are incommunicable. This means that God shares some of His attributes with us; others He does not share. Examples of God's communicable attributes are His love, His grace, His mercy, His goodness, His faithfulness, His patience, His lovingkindness, His holiness, and His righteousness. However, at the present time we possess none of these as completely and perfectly as they are to be seen in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Examples of His incommunicable attributes, those He does not share with us are His eternity, His spiritual nature, His omnipresence, His omniscience, His omnipotence (His sovereignty), His immutability, and His unity.

God's purpose in our salvation is to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ. See Romans 8:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 1:11-14; 1 John 3:2-3. All of these passages speak of God sharing His communicable attributes with us, which means that as we grow in the Lord, we are becoming more and more like Christ. However, none of us will ever be God. We will be like the Lord in many respects, but there will always be a difference between Him and us.

A brief summary of God's attributes is as follows:

A. God often has revealed Himself in His Names. One outstanding example is His Name Jehovah. It

is a Name formed from the verb, to be, and emphasizes that God is without beginning and without ending, that He is living and eternal as well as unchanging. See Isaiah 42:8.

B. God is spirit. This means that He is without a body such as you and I have. See John 4:24. And this also is related to His omnipresence.

C. God is love. See 1 John 4:8, 16.

As such He is gracious, merciful, good, faithful, patient, and full of lovingkindness. See Psalm 89:1, 2; 103:8; Nahum 1:7.

D. God is holy and He is righteous. He is absolutely without sin in His nature, and so incapable of sin in thought, word, or action. See Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 145:17.

E. God is omnipresent (everywhere present at the same time in the completeness of His Person). He is omniscient (all-knowing, knowing all things—the end from the beginning, infinitely wise). This means that God never learns anything because He already is perfect in His knowledge and wisdom. He is omnipotent (all-powerful, almighty, sovereign over the whole universe).

God is infinite in His presence, wisdom, and power. It is our conviction at Trinity that the work of the Lord in our day, has become very man-centered. And for that reason people in our churches know very little about God. We believe that the Lord's work needs to be God-centered, and that the people of God need to understand that God is sovereign in all things – in the affairs of the nations, in the lives of all people, and in carrying out His purposes regarding salvation.

III. THE WORKS OF THE GODHEAD.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in all that They do, and that is very clear with regard to creation and to salvation.

A. In creation.

This is a very important part of the work of the Godhead, showing Their wisdom and Their sovereign power, Their grace, and Their holiness. See Genesis 1:1-2, 31; Psalm 33:6-9; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:1-3. Therefore, we believe that God sustains what He has made, and that He is sovereign over all things including all nations and all people from creation to the end of time.

B. In salvation.

In order to understand salvation we believe that it is absolutely necessary to begin with God, not with man. All three Persons of the Godhead have been, are, and always will be active in salvation.

1. God, the Father.

Salvation originated with God. The Members of the Godhead determined in eternity past that there would be salvation, the conditions under which people could and would be saved, and even those who would be saved. Election to salvation is recognized in Scripture as the work of God, the Father. See Ephesians 1:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

2. Christ, the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ, through His birth by the virgin Mary, came to the earth to accomplish two important works:

- a. He came as the final and complete revelation of God, the Father. See John 1:14; 14:8-9; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-3.
- b. He came to provide salvation for all whom the Father had given to Him. See John 6:37; 17:2-3, 6-8. (We will be dealing with this in a later lesson.) He fully secured the salvation of the elect by His death on the Cross, His resurrection, and by His present ministry of intercession in heaven. The work of salvation will not be completed until the Lord returns when the bodies of the saints will be glorified. See. Rom. 5:8-10; 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 49-54; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 3:1-3.

3. The Holy Spirit.

In dealing with the work of the Holy Spirit it is important to distinguish between His work in the world, what He does for all believers, and what He does for those who walk in fellowship with God. We as believers are exhorted in Scripture not to quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19), not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30), but to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

As the Author of Scripture, the message of which is Christ and His redemptive work, the Holy Spirit is doing His work of carrying out the redemptive plan of God in the following ways.

- a. He convicts of sin (John 16:7-11).
- b. He regenerates (the new birth) (John 3:5-8).
- c. He permanently indwells every believer to fulfill the work of sanctification (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- d. He seals every believer in Christ, thus making salvation secure (Eph. 1:13-14).
- e. He baptizes every believer into the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).
- f. He teaches every believer the truth of Scripture (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15).
- g. He bestows spiritual gifts on the people of God for ministry (1 Cor. 12).
- h. He restrains sin (Gal. 5:16-26; 2 Thess. 2:7).
- i. He empowers for life and service (Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18-21).

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Lesson 4

Salvation – Part 1: Total Depravity

Intro: Having briefly looked into the nature of the Godhead, and after seeing the part which each Member of the Godhead has in the work of salvation, we now turn to consider more fully the doctrine of salvation itself.

Throughout the history of the Church, from the time of the Apostles on, theologians and Bible teachers in every generation have sought to express what they believed to be the teaching of Scripture on all subjects upon which the Scriptures express themselves. Individual churches have sought to do this, as well as the denominational churches. We have our doctrinal statement, and our elders spent many weeks working together formulating our doctrinal statement. Throughout the history of the church, what men have decided has varied from time to time. But it is the responsibility of all true believers to study the Scriptures, and from the Scriptures to arrive at as clear an understanding as possible of what is true doctrine. I want to give you just a brief background into one period in history regarding the doctrine of salvation so that you will appreciate more fully this lesson, and the next four to come in which we will be dealing with the doctrine of salvation. And I want you to understand why we speak of salvation as *the doctrines of grace*. But you will also learn from what I am about to say where the title, Arminianism, comes from.

On October 19, 1609 a man by the name of Jacobus Arminius died. He was a well known Dutch theologian. The year following his death, his disciples sought to make a statement of the main points of his theology. Basic to what Arminius believed was the freedom of the human will. He believed that while man was seriously affected by the fall of Adam, he was still capable of some good. Among the good that he was able to do was the exercise of faith in Christ so as to bring about his own salvation. He believed in election, but it was the choice that God made of those whom He knew would believe in Christ. Thus it was an election based upon God's foreknowledge of what He knew that man would do by exercising his own free will. He believed that Christ died for all, but that it was only *a provision* of salvation; it didn't actually guarantee the salvation of anyone. He believed that the Holy Spirit brought people to Christ, but he also believed that man, by the exercise of his free will, could resist and overrule the work of the Spirit. He believed that the Holy Spirit would not save anyone who didn't want to be saved. And finally, he taught that a true Christian could fall away and finally be lost.

Eight years later a National Synod was held in Dort, Holland (known later as the Synod of Dort) to examine the teaching of Arminius, and after seven months of study during which there were one hundred and fifty-four sessions, they rejected the teaching of Arminius in favor of the theology which came out of the Protestant Reformation. And they declare that the Scriptures taught five points which contradicted the teaching of Arminius. Sometime later, and no one knows exactly who did it, those five points were arranged in the form of an acrostic based on the letters of the word TULIP. They are:

- T – Total Depravity
- U – Unconditional Election.
- L – Limited Atonement
- I -- Irresistible Grace
- P – Perseverance of the Saints

I will not go into the meaning of each of these doctrines now because we will be spending a week on each of them, starting today with the doctrine of Total Depravity. This has to do with the Biblical doctrine of sin, its effect upon man, and how this has affected man's relationship with God.

Let me begin by giving you a definition of salvation.

Salvation is the work of God whereby sinful human beings are saved for ever from the consequences of their sin. Salvation is only by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation includes:

- 1) Justification. See Rom. 3:24; 5:1.
- 2) Sanctification. See Rom. 6:22; 1 Cor. 6:11.
- 3) Glorification. See Rom. 8:18, 28, 29.

Salvation has to do with man's deliverance by God from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin in daily life, and ultimately from sin itself. And the Scriptures teach that this is the only way of salvation. In its entirety "it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8, 9).

In order to understand salvation, it is absolutely necessary to understand what the Bible teaches about sin. And so this brings us to the consideration of TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

I. THE DEFINITION OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

Total Depravity expresses what man is before God. It does not mean that man is always, and in every instance, as bad as he can be. It does mean that man, in his whole being, has been corrupted by sin. It is total because it includes man's total being: body, soul, and spirit. It has rendered him both unwilling and incapable of seeking God. Man can be moral, and even religious, but he is totally alienated from God and entirely without any quality whatever that would cause God to look upon him with favor. He is "under sin" (Rom. 3:9), under the wrath of God, facing eternal judgment.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE.

A. The doctrine of original sin. See Rom. 5:12; Psa. 51:5.

It was through the original sin of Adam that the whole human race fell under the judgment of God. See Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-8, 19; Rom. 5:18; 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:21-22.

B. The evidences that man is a sinner.

One of the strongest statements on Total Depravity is Gen. 6:5. See also Isaiah's statement in Isa. 6:5.

An example of our Lord's teaching on human depravity is found in Matt. 15:1-20.

The Apostle Paul gave us what could be considered the classic New Testament passage on depravity in Rom. 3:9-20. Paul also taught that man is spiritually dead. See Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13.

The Bible also teaches that man is in bondage to his sin. Cf. John 8:34. He cannot come to Christ unless he is drawn to Christ by the Father. Cf. John 6:44, 65. Man is not only in bondage to his sin, but to Satan also. See 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. Thus, man is also blinded to the truth of the Gospel. He will not receive it, nor can he understand it. The whole Bible is a testimony to man's total depravity. He has always been inclined to evil. We can

see in the Old Testament how at times even the people of Israel were more inclined to serve idols that they were to serve the living and the true God.

In addition, human history gives abundant evidence of the depravity of man, and our newspapers carry the evidence every day. Even we as believers have to admit that we have a constant battle in our own hearts against sin in thought, word, and deed. And yet man refuses to call it sin because then he would have to admit that he has to deal with God. The main idea of liberals is that man is basically good, and yet they refuse to face the fact that we never have to teach our children to lie, or to cheat, or to disobey. In Psa. 58:3 we are taught that “the wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”

Consequently, man is incapable of doing anything that will please God with respect to salvation. Man cannot contribute to his salvation in any way. See Rom. 8:7-8.

The evidence that man is totally depraved is indisputable. His will is also depraved, not free unless we say that it is free to sin. It is only when we understand something about the nature of God and the effect that sin has had upon man, that we will be able to see that salvation has to be the way it is – *all of God!*

Concl: From the above teachings we can only conclude that man's condition in sin is hopeless. He cannot do anything for himself with respect to salvation, nor does he want to. He cannot and will not seek God. He is in bondage to his sinful nature, and to Satan also. His will is not free. His only hope for salvation is that God will intervene on his behalf. This is what God has done! He sent His Son to be man's Savior. This required that the Lord Jesus Christ die on the Cross for all who would believe on Him.

Thus, we see that the salvation of sinners is dependent upon the sovereign action of Almighty God Who is greater than all of the forces which hold man hopelessly in bondage to his sin. It is God Who justifies, Who sanctifies, and Who will glorify, all who believe in Christ.

So, in order to understand salvation, it is absolutely necessary that we understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of sin. When we do, then we will be able to see why salvation had to be the way God has ordained it. And then we will also see in the coming weeks that all of the doctrines of grace fit together perfectly.

As we discuss the other doctrines of grace in the following lessons you will be able to see that all of the glory for our salvation, therefore, rightfully belongs to Him.

Recommended reading: The Bondage of the Will, by Martin Luther.

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Lesson 5

Salvation – Part 2: Unconditional Election

Intro: This is the second of the Doctrines of Grace, the “U” in the TULIP. The doctrine of election is not being taught in many of our homes, nor in many of our churches, nor even in many of our Christian schools. And so when people hear about this doctrine for the first time, there is often a strong rejection of it because, as it is often expressed, it doesn't seem fair. Of course, the main question which we all need to ask is, “Is election taught in the Bible?” And an examination of the Scriptures will show us that it is! If it is taught only in one passage, that makes it a doctrine which we must accept. For example, see 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14:

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would remind you also of what Paul said about the believers at Thessalonica when he wrote his first epistle to them. I am referring to 1 Thessalonians 2:13:

13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

This is what we must do with all of the teachings of Scripture. We may not understand them at first, but if they are taught as true doctrine in Scripture, then we must accept the teaching as the Word of God. When we do that, then the Lord blesses us with understanding. People have been so indoctrinated with the false teaching that man's will is free, that it is often hard even for true believers to accept the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation. We somehow never have trouble with the sovereignty of God in everything else, but stumble over this doctrine when it comes to salvation. Man's total depravity requires that God take the initiative in salvation, and that He carry our salvation on to the very end when we will be like Christ.

In understanding any doctrine of Scripture it is important that we begin with the character of God. God is righteous in His character, and therefore righteous in all that He does. God had the right to do whatever He might choose to do regarding the salvation of man. He would have been perfectly righteous if He had chosen not to save anyone. He also would have been just as righteous if He had chosen to save everyone – and being sovereign He could have done this. Then we must conclude that God is righteous since He has chosen to save some, but not to save everyone.

There is no question but that this is a difficult doctrine, and that it runs contrary to what man believes to be fair. However, let us remember that there are none of the great doctrines of Scripture but what there are some passages which seem to be a contradiction of it. And so it should not surprise us to find that the same is true of the doctrine of election. What David said about the omniscience of God, we can say about all of the doctrines of Scripture, including election: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Psa. 139:6). Biblical truth needs to be made known to us by the Holy Spirit.

But now we are not just speaking of election, but of *Unconditional Election*. What do we mean by these words?

I. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION DEFINED.

The doctrine of Total Depravity teaches us that man is certainly in need of salvation, but it also teaches us that no one is deserving of salvation. And so when we talk about “unconditional election,” we mean that God has not been persuaded to choose any of us for salvation because of some good, some merit that He has seen in us. Nor did He choose us because He knew that we would accept Christ. The truth is that we would never have come to Christ if it had been left to us. See Romans 3:11. We had to be *drawn* to Christ or we would not have come. See John 6:44. God has sovereignly chosen those who are to be saved, and this choice was made solely on the basis of the will of God and the grace of God. Therefore, we believe because we are chosen. It certainly is not true that God chooses us when we believe, as some teach.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.

See Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Romans 8:28-30, 33; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Timothy 2:10.

III. ELECTION AND THE WILL OF MAN.

When Adam first sinned, he became a bondservant of sin, a slave of sin. As we have seen, every part of his being was affected by sin. So his will is also in bondage to sin. He freely makes his own choices, but those choices never lead him to God, but always away from God. Man freely sins of his own will, but he is never saved by the independent exercise of his will. See John 1:11-13; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5. Faith is a gift from God. When any person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, and wills to be saved, it is only because God has already done a work in his, or her, soul. See Romans 9:10-18; Philippians 2:12-13.

Therefore, the will of man is exercised when he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, but only because the Holy Spirit has convicted him, the Lord Jesus has drawn him, and God has bestowed upon him the gift of faith.

An outstanding example of the way God changes a man's heart and turns him to Christ is to be seen in the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, that great enemy of Christ, and the Gospel, and the Church. When the Lord appeared to Ananias telling him to go to Saul of Tarsus to put his hand on him so that he would receive his sight, and Ananias objected, this is what the Lord said to him:

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15).

Is it possible that the Lord intervened personally with Saul of Tarsus because no one really believed that he would ever be saved? The Lord loves to save the most unreachable to show His mighty power that His own might glorify Him.

IV. ELECTION AND REJECTION.

If God has chosen some to be saved, what about the rest of humanity? The Scriptures speak of this also. See Romans 9:19-24; 1 Peter 2:7-10; Jude 4.

Since God has ordained particular people to be saved, it is clear that He has chosen by His own decree to pass by the rest of mankind. He has left them to suffer the just consequences of their sins. This is called by theologians *the doctrine of reprobation* – those who stand condemned forever under the righteous judgment of God. This also is a very difficult doctrine, but we must accept the plain teaching of Scripture with such words as “fitted to destruction,” “appointed,” “ordained to this condemnation.”

V. ELECTION AND EVANGELISM.

Rather than discouraging evangelism, the doctrine of election is a great encouragement to witness for Christ. Without the sovereign work of God in choosing some to be saved, and drawing them through the preaching of the Gospel, evangelism would be an impossible task. People by nature do not want the Gospel, nor are they capable of understanding it, nor of responding positively to us because of their depravity. But since God has chosen many for salvation, we know that the work of proclaiming the Gospel cannot possibly fail.

We do not know who the elect are, and so we preach that whosoever will may be saved. But we know that whenever a person comes to Christ, he or she comes, not on their own, but that they have been convicted, drawn, and saved by the grace of God.

Concl: The doctrine of election with all of its ramifications is a very wonderful truth, and yet, at the same time, a very sobering truth. We do not see, and there never have been, multitudes of people who want to be saved, but cannot be saved. People today, as always, are not only content to live without God, but naturally resist any change. In spite of the fact that God gave His Word to the Jews, and that those Scriptures spoke of Christ, our Lord said to them, “And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). The Greek text says, *Ye will not to come to me*. This means that they were exercising their wills in their rejection of Christ.

God's promise stands:

- 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.
- 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.
- 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day (John 6:37-39).

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 6

Salvation - Part 3: Limited Atonement

Intro: In considering this aspect of salvation, we are seeking to answer the question, “For whom did Christ die? Did He die for all people without exception, or did He die only for those whom the Father had chosen for salvation, and given to Him? And this leads to another question: “Did Christ die just *to provide* salvation for those who would be willing to accept it, or did He die *to secure* the salvation of the elect? These are very important questions because the answer we give to them reveals what we understand about the character of God, and also about the effectiveness of Christ’s work on the Cross.

I. LIMITED ATONEMENT DEFINED.

The purpose of the death of Christ is a subject about which there has been a great difference of opinion among those who are real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many feel that the Scriptures teach that Christ died for everyone. This is often referred to as Universal Salvation. Most evangelical believers who hold to this position do not believe that all people will eventually be saved, but simply that Christ died for the salvation of all people.

On the other hand, there have always been those who believe that Christ died to secure the salvation of the elect; that is, that He died to guarantee that all of the elect would finally and eternally be saved. This is what is called, *Limited Atonement*. It has also been called, *Particular Redemption*, and a third title has been, *Definite Atonement*. This is the view that we hold at Trinity Bible Church. By *Limited Atonement* we are not putting any limits of *the value of Christ’s work on the Cross*, but just upon *the purpose of His death*. What *purpose* did Christ have when He went to the Cross? Did He die hoping that all people without exception might be saved, or did He die specifically to make sure that those whom the Father had chosen, would most certainly be saved?

One major issue that is involved in answering this question is the unity of the Godhead. Can we think that God had chosen certain ones for salvation, and then that Christ would extend His work to include those whom the Father had not chosen, or that the Holy Spirit would convict and seek to regenerate those whom the Father had not chosen. Let us let our Lord answer the question for us. See John 6:37-39:

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

These words make it clear that our Lord came to do the Father’s will, and we know that the Father’s will regarding salvation had been expressed in His election of some to be saved. And so if Christ came to do the Father’s will, He must have come to die for those whom the Father had chosen, and had given to Him.

II. CALVINISTS AND ARMINIANS.

Today many people call themselves Calvinists because they believe that salvation is eternal. But we are learning that Calvinists believe much more than that. They believe that God is sovereign in salvation, that He has chosen those who are to be saved, and that these are the people who are being saved. They believe that the

work of Christ was truly “finished” in that it secured the salvation of those for whom He died. They do not believe that people come to Christ “on their own,” but that they are convicted, saved, and drawn to Christ by the sovereign work of the Godhead. Calvinists believe that salvation is *all of God*, and that even our faith is a gift from God. Many Arminians believe that it is possible for us to lose our salvation by our disobedience. We all have to admit that there have always been people who profess to know the Lord, but are not truly saved. These can and will turn away from Christ, but no one can take a true believer out of the hand of the Lord.

We have seen in considering the previous Doctrines of Grace which we have considered, that there are always passages which seem to teach the opposite. That is certainly true concerning God's purpose in election as compared with Christ's purpose in His death on the Cross. So we need to look at the objections which the Arminians raise concerning Limited Atonement as well as the Scriptural proof of Limited Atonement.

We turn first to:

III. THE OBJECTIONS TO LIMITED ATONEMENT RAISED BY THE ARMINIANS.

We will consider five prominent objections which Arminians raise against the doctrine of limited atonement.

A. Objection #1: The use and meaning in Scripture of the expression, “the world.”

This seems like a very convincing argument when reading John 3:16. But when all of the evidence is considered, we see that our Lord was expressing here that there was only one salvation for people wherever they lived in the world, and that God has His elect in all of the world. Regardless of a person's nationality, or what language he speaks, or in whatever generation he might live, for people throughout the whole world there is only one Savior, and He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes the word “world” is used in a universal, all-inclusive way. For example, Mark 16:15, “Go ye into all the world . . .” But in other verses it is very limited. See Luke 2:1. The Caesars did not have jurisdiction over the whole world, but only over the Roman world. In our Lord's day, and even today, there was a Gentile world, and a Jewish world. Keep this in mind when reading such passages as 1 John 2:1-2 and 2 Cor. 5:18-19.

B. Objection #2: The use of the word “all” in passages dealing with salvation.

In a passage like 1 Tim. 2:4-7, if it is God's will that “all men” be saved, is it not possible for a sovereign God to save “all”? But all are not being saved. So we come to the conclusion that God is not sovereign in salvation. However, such a thought is totally dishonoring to God. If He willed for all to be saved, all would be saved. How then can we explain this verse? If we see that here “all” means *all kinds of men*, that is, Jews as well as Gentiles, as Paul indicated in verse 7, then the passage describes what is actually taking place.

The same meaning is the correct interpretation of 1 John 2:1-2.

C. Objection #3: The expressions “whosoever believeth,” and “whosoever will.”

This is the message that we are to command to preach. See again John 3:16; also Rev. 22:17. We believe in the free offer of the Gospel to all people everywhere. We do not know who the elect are, and so we are to preach to everyone. It is true that whoever believes in Christ will be saved, and that no one will be saved who does not believe in Christ. But we believe also what the Lord said through Isaiah long ago. See Isa. 55:10-11. But when anyone believes, we know that God has done a work in their hearts.

D. Objection #4: The verse which Arminians believe is definitely in support of their position: 2 Peter 2:1.

The answer is that the false prophets and false teachers come among the people, the people of God, denying the Lord that bought them, the people, and in doing so they will bring upon themselves, the false teacher, swift destruction.

E. Objection #5: The Arminian argument that for Christ to die for some, but not for all, would be unfair.

Romans 9:17-24 answers this objection.

IV. THE CASE FOR LIMITED ATONEMENT.

A. The passages which teach a Limited Atonement.

See Matt. 20:28; John 10:11, 15-16, 25-30; Eph. 5:25-27.

B. Passages which give strong support to the Doctrine of Limited Atonement.

See Isa. 53:6; Rom. 4:23-25; 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:20; 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24-25; 3:18; 1 John 4:9; Rev. 1:5-6.

C. The passages which speak of the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

See Rom. 6:3-9; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 2:12-14; 3:1-4. If Christ died for all men without exception, then there are people in hell today who were united with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Such a thought is absolutely ridiculous.

D. The attributes of God, especially His sovereignty and His wisdom.

Two questions the Arminians need to answer: 1) Can it be possible that it is just as much a surprise to God when people are saved as it is to us? 2) Is God sovereign in every area of life except in salvation which is the most important of all?

E. The unity of the Godhead.

Would Christ attempt to go beyond the will of God in election to die for those whom the Father had not chosen? And would the Holy Spirit convict and save those whom the Father had not chosen. There can be no discord among the Members of the Godhead in anything.

F. The glory of God.

See Eph. 1:6, 11. If, as Scripture teaches, God does all things for His own glory, which gives God the greatest glory, a salvation which cannot be completed until man adds his faith, or a doctrine that was completed and secured by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ?

G. The problem of Double Jeopardy.

The Arminian believes that Christ died for the sins of all men, that He took the penalty for all whether or not they are ultimately saved. But he also says that anyone who does not believe in Christ goes to hell and suffers for his sins for all eternity. So we have a situation, according to Arminian teaching, which has double payment for the same sins. This is what is called, Double Jeopardy. What does such teaching do to the righteousness of God? Would God be just to demand double payment for the same sins?

Arminians retaliate by saying that the lost are not judged for their sins, but for their failure to receive Christ. This is partially true, but not the whole truth. See Eph. 5:5-6; Col. 3:5-6. If the wrath of God comes upon them for their sins, then their sins were not covered by the death of Christ.

Concl: And so we come down to the question, “Did our Lord actually put away the sins of those for whom He died (Heb. 9:26), or did He just make it a possibility? Also, were we really reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 5:10), or was it just a possibility?

The statements of Scripture are far too strong to admit any other teaching than that our Lord secured and guaranteed the salvation of all for whom He died. He did put away the sins of His people. They were reconciled to God by Christ's death. There is really much more sense to saying that Christ died for all, and that all will be saved, than to say that He died for all, but only some will be saved. The truth is that He died for the elect of God, and that they all, without exception, will be saved, and saved for all eternity.

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 7

Salvation - Part 4: Irresistible Grace

Intro: We have learned that God has chosen those who are to be saved, and that our Lord Jesus Christ died to secure their salvation. But we have also learned that the Scriptures teach that man is dead in His trespasses and sins, which means that he cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, that is, those truths which have to do with salvation. See 1 Cor. 2:14. And we have also learned that because man is spiritually dead, he cannot come to Christ unless the Father draws him to Christ. See John 6:44. *This work of drawing the elect to Christ is what we are concerned about in the doctrine of irresistible grace.*

I. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE DEFINED.

We have seen that there could be improvement in some of the titles give to what are called, “the doctrines of grace.” That is true of this doctrine. We are not to think of “irresistible” as meaning that we are saved against our wills. We mean by “irresistible” that the work of the Spirit of God in bringing the elect to Christ is always *effective*. The salvation of the Apostle Paul is an excellent example. By the work of the Spirit of God in his heart, he who had been one of the greatest enemies of Christ and the Gospel, was suddenly heard to say, “Who art Thou, Lord?”, and, “What wilt Thou have me to do?” God had worked in his heart to make him receptive to the Gospel. If God did not do this in each one who is saved, no one would be saved. This is because of what we are by nature – enemies of God! When God deals with us concerning salvation, He does everything needed to save us. He had chosen us in eternity past. He sent Christ to die for us. He gives us the will to come. He granted us repentance, and He gave us the faith to believe in Christ.

Sometimes in speaking of “irresistible grace,” Bible teachers use the words, *efficacious grace*. *Efficacious* is defined in the dictionary as “the power to produce an intended result.” God has that power. He has decreed that the elect shall be saved, and all of the elect without exception will be saved. We can also call this *sovereign grace*.

Another term that is often used to describe this doctrine is *God's effectual call*. This means that it is *effective*. The Bible teaches a *general call* which we give when presenting the Gospel. But that *general call*, under the blessing of God, becomes an *effective*, or an *effectual call*, when the elect, upon hearing the Gospel, are constrained and enabled to come to Christ to be saved. It may be that a person will hear the Gospel many times before he comes to Christ. Some come the first time they hear the Gospel. So whether immediately, or later, whenever a person is saved, it is because God has worked in his heart so that he finds Christ and the Gospel *irresistible*.

II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE.

A. Isaiah 55:10-11.

God stands behind the ministry of His Word, and He uses it as He pleases to accomplish His will. This is why in speaking to people about salvation, it is very important either to read or to quote the Word of God.

We have referred to the salvation of the Apostle Paul as an illustration of Irresistible Grace. Another illustra-

tion is that of the salvation of Zacchaeus.

B. Luke 19:1-10 – the salvation of Zacchaeus.

C. John 6:37, 44, 63-65.

D. John 10:16.

E. Acts 13:48.

F. Acts 16:14 – the salvation of Lydia.

G. Acts 18:27 – the ministry of Apollos.

Notice the word “called” in the following four passages.

H. Romans 8:28-30.

I. 2 Thess. 2:13-14.

J. 1 Peter 2:9.

K. 1 Peter 5:10-11.

As already mentioned, the salvation of the Apostle Paul can be considered as the greatest example of irresistible grace in the Bible.

L. Acts 9:1-22 – the salvation of the Apostle Paul.

III. ANOTHER ILLUSTRATION OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE.

This is to be seen in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. See John 11:38-46.

What did the Lord tell Lazarus to do? What did Lazarus require before he could obey the Lord? Did he obey? He had to have life before he could obey. We are actually given life before we can hear the Gospel and believe. This means that repentance and faith must be given by God.

1) On life before faith, see John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5.

2) On repentance, see Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26.

3) On faith, see Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29; Heb. 12:2; 1 Peter 1:21-23.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE REQUIRES THAT ALL PRAISE RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO GOD, AND BE GIVEN TO GOD, FOR OUR SALVATION.

See Psa. 103:1-3a; Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 1:3, 6, 12, 14; 2 Cor. 8:9; Rev. 1:4-6.

Implied in all of this is a corresponding humility on our part that God in His grace would choose us, call us, give us repentance and faith, and keep us for His very own in spite of our many sins and failures even since we have been saved.

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 8

Salvation - Part 5: Perseverance of the Saints

Intro: There are two doctrines which have to do with *the duration of salvation*. One is called *the eternal security of the believer*; the other, *the perseverance of the saints*. In the first we are concerned with what God does in keeping those who have truly been saved; in the latter, with the evidence in a person's life which shows that he has been saved. To state it simply, God keeps us, but we persevere. We do not persevere in order to keep our salvation, but we persevere because we are saved.

In these days when "decisions for Christ" are often made without any evidence in people's lives that they have been saved, there is a great need to emphasize the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. The Bible certainly teaches that a person cannot be genuinely saved, but go on living in the same way. Those who profess faith in Christ, but are not truly saved, are the subject of such verses as Matt. 7:21-23; John 6:66; 1 John 2:19. See also Titus 1:15-16:

15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

However, if a person has truly been saved, there will be certain proofs in that person's life. We read in 2 Cor. 5:17,

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

The professing church has paid far too little attention to the evidences that a person has been saved. Usually if a person professes to be a Christian, others are inclined to accept that profession even though the life that person lives may give no confirmation of his claim.

And so, first, let us look at:

I. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

A. A true Christian follows Christ. See John 10:27-28.

To follow Christ is to obey Christ, to live in obedience to the Word of God.

B. A true Christian continues in the faith. See Col. 1:21-23.

C. The warnings given in the book of Hebrews. See Heb. 3:5-6, 13-14; 4:1-2.

Such warnings in Scripture are designed to cause us to do as the Apostle Peter said in 2 Pet. 1:10-11, "to make your calling and election sure," in which he was referring back to 2 Pet. 1:4-9. Another warning is found in Rom. 2:28-29.

See also the references to *overcoming* in the Lord's letters to the seven churches in Rev. 2, 3. See Rev. 2:7, 11,

17, 26; 3:5,12, 21.

D. The epistle which teaches the Perseverance of the Saints: 1 John.

The following are a sample of the verses which apply to these main headings. Please read through the epistle and write down the other references which deal with these five main points.

1. Walking in the light (1 John 1:6-7).

Note that the Apostle John contrasted walking with merely talking.

2. Obedience to the Word of God (1 John 2:4-5).

This is basically the same as walking in the light but expressed in a different way.

3. Love for the brethren (1 John 2:9-11).

4. Not loving the world of evil (1 John 2:15-17).

5. Belief in the doctrine of Christ (1 John 2:22-23).

II. OTHER TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE WHICH SUPPORT THE TWO DOCTRINES OF SECURITY AND PERSEVERANCE.

A. The omnipotence of God. See Ecc. 3:14; Gen. 17:1-8; Eph. 3:20-21; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; Jude 24-25.

B. The present intercessory work of Christ in heaven. See Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25. Also see John 17:11-12, 15, 24.

C. The sealing work of the Holy Spirit. See 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30.

D. The intercessory work of the Holy Spirit. See Rom. 8:24-27.

E. The will of the Father. See John 6:39-40.

F. The immutability (unchanging character) of God. See Rom. 11:28-29.

G. The love of God. See Jer. 31:3; John 13:1; Rom. 8:38-39.

H. The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every verse in which the Lord spoke of everlasting, or eternal, life, would apply. See John 3:16; 5:24; 7:37-40; 10:27-30.

Concl: The failure of people to understand the doctrines of eternal security and the perseverance of the saints, is due to a failure to understand the nature of God and the nature of salvation. People are inclined to interpret the Bible in the light of their experience instead of interpreting experience in the light of the Word of God. Salvation is all a work of God, and God is totally sovereign in all that He does. Once a person is saved, he is saved forever, and he can never go back to be like he was before. See Phil. 1:6.

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland Oregon

Lesson 9

The Christian Life

Intro: We have spent the last five class periods on The Doctrines of Grace. This is the same as saying that we have spent the last five class periods on The Doctrine of Salvation. It is very important that every child of God has a clear understanding of the Gospel and the truth of salvation. *But what does the Bible teach about what happens to a person after he is saved?* We will be seeking to answer this question in this lesson. The answer is very clear in Scripture. The simple answer to the question is that every Christian needs *to grow*. The Apostle Peter stated this in 1 Peter 2:1-3 where we read:

- 1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,
- 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
- 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

The “word” to which he referred, is the Word of God, the Bible. “The milk” has to do with the simple truths of the Word. The “sincere” milk of the Word means *the pure milk of the Word*. It is not to be mixed with anything else. And the object of desiring “the sincere milk of the Word” is spiritual growth.

Then in the last verse of Peter's second epistle he came back to this same subject when he wrote:

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Peter 3:18).

We are saved by grace, and so it can be said that we are “in grace.” And so being “in grace,” we are to “grow.” There is much that we need to learn; that is why God has given us His Word. And we never stop learning. But just as a newborn baby in human life is only starting out, and needs to grow, the same is true of us as Christians. And as a newborn baby begins with milk, so do newborn Christians need milk, the milk of God's Word. And, as it was when we were born into this world, physical growth was personal with each one of us, the same is true of us as Christians. We grow individually. So we are talking about a very personal matter. Growth always takes time. We did not grow into manhood or womanhood over night. It has taken years. So we must be patient where our spiritual growth is concerned. And as long as we live, we must continue to grow. Growth is evidence that we have life, whether we are talking about physical life or the Christian life. So we need to have life before we can grow. This is the reason it is important to know that we have to be saved, to be born again, before there can be any growth.

Now let us consider what is:

I. THE OBJECT OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

By this we mean, Why did the Lord save us? Why do we need to grow? What does God have in mind when He tells us to grow?

The answer to these questions is also very clear in Scripture. *We are to grow to become like the Lord Jesus Christ!* This is the purpose of our salvation. It is a divine plan that would never have occurred to any of us. But it obviously is the goal of our salvation which is taught in Scripture. Let us look at some passages of Scripture which teach this amazing truth. See Rom. 8:28-30; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Phil. 3:20-21. These verses deserve our constant meditation. They are verses which should be stored away in our memories. They teach us how glorious it is to know Christ as our Savior. See also John 1:11-13.

But now we come to the question:

II. HOW DO WE GROW?

Or, to state it another way, What is the Christian life? Again we turn to the Word of God for our guidance in this matter. As we have learned in our studies in this class, when we become Christians, we are born into God's family. We receive eternal life, which is divine life. It is the very life of God Himself. And we must learn to live as the members of God's family. See in this connection, Col. 3:1-4; Isa. 55:8-9, and 1 Pet. 1:14-16.

The following points show us what God has provided for our spiritual growth.

A. The Word of God.

This is what we are specifically told in 1 Pet. 2:2-3. If we are to grow by the Word, we must read it. We must seek to learn what is in the Word. And then we need to understand it, and finally to obey its teachings. This is a life-long objective. Every Christian should read the Word of God daily. We have a Bible reading schedule which we encourage all of our people to use in reading through the Bible at least once every year. Reading the Bible is just as important for our spiritual health and growth as eating food is for our physical wellbeing. In fact, Job said,

11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food (Job 23:11-12).

Jeremiah said this about the Word of God:

Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts (Jer. 15:16).

So every Christian needs to take time every day for the reading of God's Word.

In connection with our reading, it is important for us to know that the Lord has given all of us a Teacher. He is the Holy Spirit.

B. The Holy Spirit.

We learned in our study of the Godhead, that the Holy Spirit has been given to every child of God. He indwells us permanently. And among the many things that the Holy Spirit does for us is to teach us the Word of God. He is the Author of Scripture, and therefore He has been given to us to be our Teacher. He not only teaches us the meaning of Scripture, but He shows us how to apply the Scriptures to our lives, and then He gives us the power to obey the Word of God. Read again John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:12-15. See also 1 Cor. 2:12-13. (The entire chapter has to do with our knowledge of Scripture.)

We must not expect to learn everything as we read it, but we look to the Holy Spirit to teach us little by little as we read the Word each day.

C. Prayer.

The Bible is our Prayer Book. From its pages we learn how to pray. Many wonderful prayers are recorded in the Bible from which we can learn how to pray. When we read the Word, the Lord speaks to us. When we

pray we are speaking to Him. And the best way to pray is to turn our Scripture reading into prayer. By Bible reading and prayer we have fellowship with God. We need to precede our Bible reading with a brief prayer for the blessing of the Holy Spirit, and then we can follow our Bible reading with a more extended time of prayer.

It is generally agreed among those who have studied the Word of God carefully that there are five kinds of prayer in Scripture:

- 1) Worship. This means the adoration of the Members of the Godhead.
- 2) Confession. We always have the need to confess our sins to the Lord, and to seek His forgiveness.
- 3) Praise and Thanksgiving. We thank the Lord for the many blessings we receive from Him – spiritual blessings, physical blessings, and material blessings.
- 4) Intercession. We pray for others.
- 5) Petition. We pray for ourselves and our own needs.

D. The church.

Next week our lesson will be on *the church*. But for now let us look at Heb. 10:24-25. See also Eph. 4:11-16.

We are thinking here about the local church, like Trinity Bible Church. We come together for the following purposes:

- 1) To worship and glorify God. We do this through the reading of Scripture, through the singing of hymns, and through prayer.
- 2) To be instructed in the Word of God.
- 3) To enjoy fellowship with each other in the Lord.

The church is not primarily for unbelievers. We are always thankful to have anyone meet with us, but the purpose of the church is to minister to the Lord's people, and all of the services of the church need to be designed for that purpose. Then as we go out into the world, we go to bear testimony for Christ by our lives and by word of mouth.

Finally, a word about:

E. The providence of God.

God deals with each of us in different ways. Salvation is His work from start to finish. The Apostle Paul said that "we are His workmanship" (Eph. 2:10), and that "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). But all through our lives He is working "all things" in our lives "together for good," our spiritual good. And so in the needs we face, the trials we have, in every detail of our lives, God is working out His purposes for us, the greatest of which is to make us like our Savior. See Rom. 8:28-30. The Christian life is a warfare with the world, the flesh, and the Devil (which we will learn more about in Lesson 11). But our God is greater than all the opposition that we face and makes us "more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). So day by day we all need to be learning to walk by faith, trusting the Lord to meet our needs and to work out His purposes in us, to make us like our precious Savior.

Concl: Much more could be said about the major points in this lesson, but these should be enough for us to know what we as Christians should be doing, and what we should be trusting the Lord to do for us, and in us. None of it is possible, however, apart from the enabling power of God. See Phil. 2:12-13.

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 10

The Church

Intro: Most people are familiar with churches, but they generally consider a church as the building in which people meet for religious services. But few understand the Biblical meaning of “the church.” A study of the New Testament shows that there were churches before there were church buildings. The church is not the building, but the people who worship God in the building. And a true New Testament church consists of people who know the Lord, meeting together to worship the Lord, for fellowship with each other, and for their personal edification under the ministry and guidance of elders and deacons. And it is very, very important that every Christian be associated with a local church. The importance of the local church is emphasized in Hebrews 10:19-25:

- 19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
- 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
- 21 And having an high priest over the house of God;
- 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.
- 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
- 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
- 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb. 10:19-25).

We can conclude from this that if it was absolutely essential for the Lord's people to assemble together regularly in those early days, it is, if anything, even more important today because we are much closer now to the coming of the Lord than the people of God were in those days.

What is the teaching of the New Testament regarding “the Church”?

I. THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF THE WORD, CHURCH.

A. The meaning of the word, ἐκκλησία.

This is the word that is translated *church* throughout the New Testament. Literally it mean *a called out people*. This means that Christians are called out from the world, and called to unite together as a distinctive group of people who belong to the Lord.

B. The origin of the Church.

In 1 Cor. 12:13 we learn that all believers have been baptized into the Body of Christ, which is another name for the Church. Therefore, we need to look for the first time that people were baptized by the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist spoke of the baptism of the Spirit as being future. See Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33. But in Acts 1:5 the Lord spoke of it as “not many days hence.” This is what took place on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, *and this is where the Church began*.

C. The use of the word *Church* in the New Testament.

1. It is distinguished from Israel.

See 1 Cor. 10:32. It is not Scripturally accurate to speak of Israel as “the church in the Old Testament.” Nor is it right to speak of the Church in the New Testament as “spiritual Israel.” Much confusion has resulted because some teachers have taught that Israel of the Old Testament became the Church of the New Testament.

2. The two uses of the word *church* in the New Testament.

a. The Church, the Body of Christ. See Eph. 1:22-23.

b. The local Church. For example, the church at Corinth, the churches of Galatia. See 1 Cor. 1:1-2; Gal. 1:1-2.

II. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

A. Elders, one of whom is the Pastor. See 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4. They are also called *bishops*.

B. Deacons. See Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13.

The qualifications for elders and deacons are very high because they are to be examples of godliness whom the people of the churches are to follow.

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

The local church has responsibilities to minister in three directions: toward the Godhead, toward the people of God, and toward the world.

A. Toward the Members of the Godhead: Glorification. See Eph. 3:20-21; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

B. Toward the people of the church: Edification. See Eph. 4:11-16.

C. Toward the world: Evangelism. See Acts 1:8.

IV. THE ORDINANCES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

A. Baptism.

We believe that the Bible teaches that those who believe in Christ for salvation should be baptized, that it is by immersion, and that it is administered to each believer only once. We believe that it is to picture the truth of Rom. 6:1-10, our union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. See also Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39; Eph. 2:4-6; Col. 2:12-13.

B. The Lord's Supper.

This differs as to its observance from baptism. Believers are baptized only once, but the Lord's Supper is to be observed repeatedly. See 1 Cor. 11:23-34. It commemorates the Lord's death. But it also pictures salvation as salvation is described in John 6:51-58.

V. THE MEETINGS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

The early church met regularly on Sunday, the Lord's Day, the first day of the week. It commemorated the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They also met at other times as they desired to do so. The meetings were for teaching, prayer, and fellowship with the Lord and with each other. See Acts 2:41-47; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.

We do not believe that Sunday is the Christian Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, observed under the Law. There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that the Sabbath was moved to the first day of the week. As stated above, meeting on the first day of the week was in remembrance of Christ's resurrection which was on the first day of the week.

VI. THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

The hope of the Church is the return of the Lord for the whole body of Christ. It is known as the rapture. See John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-15; 1 John 3:1-3.

This, along with other prophetic teaching of Scripture, will be discussed in our last lesson.

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 11

Angels, Satan and the Demons and The Christian's Three Enemies

Intro: You can tell by the titles given above that we have a lot of truth to cover in this lesson. And the truth that we will cover is extremely important because of the bearing it has upon our lives as Christians, as well as upon our ministry together in the church. As we learned in our lesson on the Christian Life, we are engaged in a spiritual warfare, not with enemies we can see, but with enemies which, for the most part, are unseen. We believe in angels, not because we have ever seen them, and we believe in Satan, or the Devil, not because we have ever seen him, nor have we seen any demons, but we believe that they all exist because we are taught in the Bible that there are such creatures. The Bible also teaches that we have a sinful nature, called in Scripture, *the flesh*. Our sinful nature is not taken away from us when we believe in Christ. In the same way we live in an ungodly world system over which Satan is in authority, and we as Christians have to contend with all of these unseen, but real, wicked influences. So it is extremely important that we understand what each of our enemies is and the provisions that God has made for our victory over them.

Let us by turning our attention to angels.

I. THE ANGELS.

The word *angel* in both the Hebrew language and the Greek, means *a messenger*. They are created spirit beings, usually invisible to the human eye (Psa. 104:4; Col. 1:16-17), higher in God's order than men (Psa. 8:4-5), created to be messengers of God. We assume from Matt. 22:30 that since creation there has been neither an increase or decrease in the number of angels. We do not know how many angels there are, but Heb. 12:22 speaks of "an innumerable company of angels." See also Psa. 68:17 and Rev. 5:11. We assume that the dwelling place of angels is the second heaven. (See Paul's reference to "the third heaven," or paradise," in 2 Cor. 12:2, 4.)

The angels are classed in two groups:

A. The elect angels (1 Tim. 5:21).

These are the angels who continue to serve and to worship God, as they were created to do. Among these is Michael, the archangel (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7), and Gabriel (Luke 1:26). The Bible has a great deal to say about them. Angels are not omniscient (1 Pet. 1:12) even though they are very wise and very powerful. The elect angels minister on God's behalf to His people (Psa. 34:7; Heb. 1:14).

B. The fallen angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

The chief among these is the Devil (meaning *the Accuser*), who is also called Satan (*the Adversary*). According to Isa. 14:12-14 and Ezek. 28:11-19, he led a revolt among the angels, and those angels which revolted with him are called "devils" in the KJV, but the preferred translation is *demons*. There is only one Devil, but many demons. Hell was primarily prepared "for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). The demons are under the

authority of the Devil and cooperate fully with him in his opposition to God and to the people of God. The Devil is the leader of all of the forces of evil in the universe. Although the Devil's doom was sealed by the death of our Lord on the Cross (Heb. 2:14-15), yet, in the providence of God he is permitted to continue his evil work in the world. He finally will be cast into the lake of fire. See Rev. 20:10. At the present time he sometimes assumes the role of "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:13-14). At other times he is like "a roaring lion" (1 Pet. 5:8-9). It was through the Devil's temptation of Eve, and then in particular, by Adam's sin, sin entered into the world and the whole human race fell under the curse of God. See Rom. 5:12.

There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that more angels will fall into sin, nor does the Bible ever speak of salvation for angels.

Now on the basis of what the Scriptures teach about angels and their influence upon the human race, a good influence on the part of the elect angels, and an indescribably bad influence on the part of the fallen angels, we learn from the Bible that we as Christians have three enemies.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE ENEMIES.

Our three enemies are the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And, although they are the Christians's enemies, yet they are the enemies of all mankind, seeking to keep people from coming to Christ that they might be saved.

However, we need to understand that the Devil, and the world, and man's sinful nature (called in Scripture, *the flesh*), are primarily at enmity with the Godhead:

- 1) The Devil opposes Christ. See Gen. 3:1-5, 15; Matt. 4:1-11.
- 2) The world stands in opposition to the Father. See 1 John 2:15-17.
- 3) The flesh and the Holy Spirit are opponents. See Gal. 5:16-17.

Satan is called in Scripture, "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), and "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). In 1 John 5:19 we read that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." The NKJV translates that statement, "the whole world lies *under the sway of* the Wicked One." And it is very evident that the Devil has things going his way in the world today. But we must always remember, and be thankful to God, that the Devil can only operate within the limits of the sovereignty of God. God is in charge, not the Devil.

But what provision had God made for our victory over our three enemies?

Books have been written on this subject, and so there is much that could be said. But there are some very practical things that we can do, according to Scripture, which will help us in the opposition we face every day as Christians. Here they are:

- 1) For Satan, see James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9; Eph. 6:10-18.
- 2) For the world, see Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:4-5.
- 3) For the flesh, see 2 Tim. 2:22; Rom. 6:1-14; Gal. 5:16-26.

Ultimately our victory over the world, the flesh, and the Devil, is traceable to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was on the Cross that our Lord died to save us from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin in our daily lives, and finally from sin altogether. He is the Victor, and by relying upon Him as we are guided by the Word, victory can be ours through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Pastor's Class

Trinity Bible Church of Portland, Oregon

Lesson 12

The Last Days

Intro: It has been estimated that at least twenty percent of Scripture was prophetic when it was written. Much of this has already been fulfilled. But there is still much more that is yet to be fulfilled. And so when we speak of “the last days,” we are speaking of prophecy which is yet to be fulfilled. Often men are quick to predict the future, but since they have no control over the future, their predictions are no more than a guess. And this includes weather forecasting. However, divine prophecies are altogether different. God is omniscient and so He knows the end from the beginning, but He also has ordained all things, and controls all things, so His predictions are infallible, and can never fail.

I. THE LAST DAYS DEFINED.

When we speak of the end times, we are referring to those events which are introduced by the return of Christ for His Church and all of the subsequent events which lead up to the Eternal State when time shall be no more.

There is much disagreement among true Christians as to the order of events in Scripture. Much of this is due to the different ways in which the doctrines of Israel and of the Church are considered. And so some do not believe that there will be a literal reign of Christ on the earth. They are called *a-millennialists*, meaning *no millennium*. A millennium is a period of one thousand years. There are others who believe that Christ's coming will usher in the millennium. They are called *pre-millennialists*, meaning that they believe that Christ will come *before* the millennium. And then there are those who believe that the Church will win the world to Christ, and then Christ will come. They are called *post-millennialists*, meaning that they believe that Christ will come *after* the millennium. We at Trinity Bible Church are premillennialists. We do not believe that there is any major prophecy of Scripture that needs to be fulfilled before the coming of the Lord.

We also distinguish between the coming of the Lord as predicted in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, as compared with the coming of the Lord mentioned in Matthew 24:29-31 and 25:31-32. In the former passage the Lord comes in the air, and takes His people to heaven; in the latter passages He comes to the earth to establish His kingdom on earth.

II. THE ORDER OF EVENTS WHICH ARE YET TO BE FULFILLED.

It seems clear in Scripture that the next event to be anticipated following the resurrection and ascension of Christ, was His return. He spoke about this in John 14:1-3. Two angels spoke of His return just after our Lord's ascension as we learn from Acts 1:9-11. And so our Lord's return is the first of the prophetic events which are yet to be fulfilled.

A. The rapture of the Church (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

The word “rapture” is not a Biblical word, but it fittingly describes what will happen when the Lord returns for the Church. They will be *transported, raptured*, from earth to heaven. At this time the dead of this age will be raised and glorified, and those living when the Lord returns will also receive their glorified bodies. See 1 Cor. 15:51-54. And it appears from 2 Cor. 5:10 that this will be the time when we who are the Church will be judged before the judgment seat of Christ.

The next prophetic event will be:

B. The Great Tribulation.

True believers differ also concerning the Great Tribulation. Some believe that Christ will come and take away His Church before the Great Tribulation. They are called *pre-tribulationists*. This is our position at Trinity Bible Church. Others believe that the Lord will come in the middle of the Tribulation, and so they are called *mid-tribulationists*. And then there are still others who believe that the coming of the Lord to take away His Church will be at the end of the Great Tribulation, and so they are called *post-tribulationists*.

The Great Tribulation is described in detail in Rev. 6-19. Also see the first thirty-one verses of Matt. 24.

The purpose of the Great Tribulation will be twofold:

- 1) To judge the people on earth.
- 2) To bring Israel to the Lord.

This period is called in Jer. 30:7 “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” where it is described as a time that “is great, so that none is like it.” In Daniel 12:1 we are told that “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” This agrees with Matt. 24:21:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The Great Tribulation will end with the return of Christ to the earth.

C. The return of Christ to reign on the earth.

This marks the beginning of the millennium which is spoken of in Rev. 20:1-6. See also Matt. 24:29-31; 25:31-46. See also Rev. 11:15:

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

This is also spoken of in many Old Testament passages, for example, Isa. 9:6-7.

During this time Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit, and there will be righteousness and peace on the earth.

D. The events which follow the reign of Christ.

These events are described in Rev. 20:7-21:7. They are:

- 1. Satan released and finally cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10).**
- 2. The Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).**
- 3. The new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21:1-7).**

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPHETIC TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE.

We believe that prophecy, the doctrine of “the last days,” is, like all of the doctrines of Scripture, extremely important. We believe that it is a great incentive for holy living. See 2 Peter 3:11, 14, 17, 18; 1 John 3:1-3. We believe that we as the people of God need to know that this world is not going to continue on forever so that our hopes will not be upon this present life, but upon the life to come. Prophetic truth is also an

encouragement for us to be diligent and faithful in serving the Lord. See 1 Cor. 15:58. And this includes our witness to the world concerning the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. People need to know that there is only one way to escape the judgment of God against sinners, and that is through faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

The prophetic views express in this lesson are those held by the leaders, the elders and deacons, of Trinity Bible Church. We believe that these are the teaching of the Word of God regarding future events. We are well aware that not all Christians have the same views concerning the coming of the Lord and the last days. But it must be true that all of the Lord's people believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. To deny that is to deny Scripture. And so let us all continue to grow in our understanding of all of the truth of Scripture under the ministry of the Holy Spirit as we wait for the Lord from heaven.