

The Church
in
Troubled Times



Trinity Bible Church
Sunday School
Summer 2022

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*I will build My church;
and the gates of Hades
will not overpower it.*

Matthew 16:18b

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Introduction

In his letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul mentions “the present distress” (1 Corinthians 7:26). We don’t know what this crisis in Corinth was, but it was putting pressure on everyone. This crisis made it even more important for the Corinthian believers to understand the doctrine of the church and to put it into practice in their city.

The COVID-19 crisis has been a distress for Trinity Bible Church. This crisis makes it even more important for us to understand what the Bible says about the church, and to put it into practice in the Portland/Vancouver and surrounding area.

When troubled times come, the church should not expect simply to survive, exist, and remain in the world. Rather, the church stands, grows, learns, strives, fights, advances, and prevails in troubled times. This is what we should expect. This is because the church has a promise from Christ Himself: “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18), and: “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). God does not lie. He is faithful to perform what He has promised to us who believe. He is faithful to perform what He has promised to His church.

Jesus spoke these promises to the church in the hearing of disciples who had never seen a church, had never been to church in their lives, and had no idea what a church was. Yet it was these very men whom God used to lay the foundation for His church (Ephesians 2:20). We are as unlikely candidates for building the church as they were (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). Yet God has chosen us to continue what He began to build through them (John 15:16).

The Lord did not leave us, His disciples, without instructions for the church. The church is an institution that God created. Everything about the church is His idea and is important to Him. He loves the church, and so the church’s structures, plans, characteristics, and mission are defined not by the word of men, but by the Word of God. Some of these God-ordained aspects of the church are touched on in this

booklet, including the church’s mission, the ministry of the Word, corporate worship, the ordinances of communion and baptism, fellowship, outreach, spiritual gifts, church leadership, church music, and more.

These essential aspects of the church are revealed by God in His Word, not simply because these are the most useful or the most efficient ways to get things done. Rather, these aspects of the church are intended by God to reveal His own character to us and to the world around us. Oddly enough, even angelic watchers in an unseen realm learn about God’s character by observing the church (1 Corinthians 14:33; Ephesians 3:10). For this reason, one question that will be asked in the booklet is about what each aspect of the church teaches about the character of God.

However, a church can have all the right forms, even according to Scripture, and yet lack love. Such a church is nothing and has nothing. The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: “If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2). We must grow in love as we hold fast in faith to the Head of the church, the Lord of love, alive from the dead, Who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

In the church, each person is a minister. Each person is a necessary part. Each person has an essential function in the building of the church. The church is alive in vital union with the living Christ through the Holy Spirit. So it is important for each member of the church not only to know what the Bible teaches about the church, but also to grow in putting it into practice. For this reason, one question that will be asked in the booklet is about how you can grow in putting each aspect of the church into practice in your life. This question is not about how others around you might grow, but only about how you yourself might grow.

In this troubled time, may the Lord bless Trinity Bible Church in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Schedule

- June 5 Lesson 1: The Importance of Doctrine in Faith and Practice
2 Timothy 3:1-4:5
- June 12 Lesson 2: The Mission of the Church in the World
Matthew 28:16-20; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:6-11
- June 19 Lesson 3: The Success of the Church in the World
Matthew 16:13-20; Matthew 24:1-14; Ephesians 1:18-23
- June 26 Lesson 4: Biblical Metaphors for the Church
Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 5:23-32;
1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 19:7-8
- July 3 Lesson 5: The Local Church
Revelation 1:9-20; Hebrews 10:24-25
- July 10 Lesson 6: Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Church
Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:37-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
- July 17 Lesson 7: Church Membership
Acts 2:41-42, 46-47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 16:5; Romans 16:1-2;
1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- July 24 Lesson 8: Church Unity
Ephesians 4:1-6; Romans 12:9-13; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
- July 31 Lesson 9: Church Discipline
Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; Titus 3:9-11
- August 7 Lesson 10: Spiritual Gifts in the Church
1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4:7-16;
Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11
- August 14 Lesson 11: Church Government
Acts 14:23; 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Hebrews 13:17
- August 21 Lesson 12: Preaching in the Church
1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13;
1 Timothy 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2
- August 28 Lesson 13: Church Music
Psalm 150; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17

Memory Assignment

Ephesians 4:11-16

- 11 And he gave some, apostles;
and some, prophets; and some, evangelists;
and some, pastors and teachers;
- 12 For the perfecting of the saints,
for the work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the body of Christ:
- 13 Till we all come
in the unity of the faith,
and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
unto a perfect man,
unto the measure of the stature
of the fulness of Christ:
- 14 That we henceforth
be no more children,
tossed to and fro, and carried about
with every wind of doctrine,
by the sleight of men,
and cunning craftiness, whereby
they lie in wait to deceive;
- 15 But speaking the truth in love,
may grow up into him in all things,
which is the head, even Christ:
- 16 From whom the whole body
fitly joined together and compacted
by that which every joint supplieth,
according to the effectual working
in the measure of every part,
maketh increase of the body
unto the edifying of itself in love.

The Church's One Foundation

Samuel J. Stone, 1866

Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

1. The church - 's one Foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ her Lord;
 2. E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the earth,
 3. Though with a scorn - ful won - der Men see her sore op - pressed,
 4. The church shall nev - er per - ish! Her dear Lord to de - fend,
 5. 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, And tu - mult of her war,
 6. Yet she on earth hath u - nion With God the Three in One,

She is his new cre - a - tion By wa - ter and the Word:
 Her char - ter of sal - va - tion One Lord, one faith, one birth;
 By schi - sms rent as - un - der, By her - e - sies dis - tressed,
 To guide, sus - tain and cher - ish, Is with her to the end;
 She waits the con - sum - ma - tion Of peace for ev - er - more;
 And mys - tic sweet com - mun - ion With those whose rest is won:

From heav'n he came and sought her To be his ho - ly bride;
 One ho - ly Name she bless - es, Par - takes one ho - ly food;
 Yet saints their watch are keep - ing, Their cry goes up, "How long?"
 Though there be those that hate her, And false sons in her pale,
 Till with the vi - sion glo - rious Her long - ing eyes are blest,
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! Lord, give us grace that we,

With his own blood he bought her, And for her life he died.
 And to one hope she press - es, With ev - 'ry grace en - dued.
 And soon the night of weep - ing Shall be the morn of song.
 A - gainst or foe or trait - or She ev - er shall pre - vail.
 And the great church vic - to - rious Shall be the church at rest.
 Like them, the meek and low - ly, On high may dwell with thee.

Lesson 1: The Importance of Doctrine in Faith and Practice

Notes on Lesson 1

- I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BACKGROUND OF TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH.
 - A. Central Bible Church. For twenty-three years, Pastor L. Dwight Custis was on the staff of Central Bible Church here in Portland—ten years as Assistant Pastor of the church, and thirteen years as pastor. While many of the people who now make up Trinity Bible Church formerly attended Central Bible Church in Portland, we believe that, under the leading of the Lord, Trinity Bible Church was established by the Lord for the purposes which are emphasized in what follows. We have no desire to dwell upon the past except to emphasize that there were specific reasons for the establishing of a new church in Portland. We believe that to have a clear understanding of the origin of our work will, under God’s blessing, help us to maintain the distinct character of Trinity Bible Church.
 - B. The issues which led to Pastor Dwight’s resignation.
 1. Practical: the pastor’s opposition to the contemporary trends in churches today, especially in music, but also in methods of ministry. This was considered by many to be hindering the growth of the church.
 2. Doctrinal: the pastor's teaching of The Doctrines of Grace. Notes on these doctrines are included beginning on page 23 for your own personal study.
 - C. The Division: On Sunday morning of January 18, 1981 the pastor preached his final message at Central Bible Church.
- II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH – FROM JANUARY 24, 1981 TO THE PRESENT.
 - A. The Beginning: At the time of the pastor’s resignation from Central Bible Church, there were no plans for the formation of a new church. But people who on their own had decided to leave Central Bible began to call one another to find out what others who were leaving were going to do. And so Trinity Bible Church was not pre-planned, but spontaneous under the moving of the Holy Spirit. A men's prayer meeting was called for Saturday, January 24, 1981. Our first Sunday meeting was at the Gresham Armory, January 25, 1981.
 - B. Our Meeting Places: The Gresham Armory, David Douglas High School, Centennial High School, three Parkrose Schools—Thompson, Sacramento, and Knott Elementary Schools, and now the PDX South Shore Campus.
 - C. The Development of the Work: Much prayer and searching of the Scriptures went into the planning of Trinity Bible Church. For many weeks the men met faithfully to seek the Lord’s leading for our work. We wanted even our name to indicate the nature of our work. And so we chose the name, Trinity Bible Church. We believe in the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all co-equal in Deity. The Bible is the foundation of all that we believe, and our guidance as to what the Lord wants us to be

Notes on Lesson 1 (continued)

and how we are to live. We are a Church, dedicated to the glory of God, seeking to edify believers through the teaching of the Word, and ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and around the world as the Lord leads us.

It was our conviction from the very first that the ministry of the church should be God-centered, not man-centered, and that it should be our primary purpose to please God, not people. We believe that, if God is glorified, the people who attend our services will receive true spiritual blessing. We believe that the trend in many churches today is to have programs that will please and attract people instead of seeking to glorify God. When God is glorified, we believe people will be blessed.

Furthermore, we believe that the only way we can know that we are glorifying God is to make sure that our lives are pleasing to the Lord, and that we are conducting the work according to the teaching of the Bible, which we believe to be the very Word of God.

From the beginning, our church has also emphasized the importance of the leadership of men, not only in the church, but also in the home.

1. The leadership of Trinity Bible Church: We believe that the New Testament teaches that the local church is to be under the direction of elders and deacons. Our pastor is one of the elders.
2. Our services: The Scriptures teach that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so we have regular meetings every Sunday, morning and evening, plus a meeting on Wednesday night for Bible study and prayer. The main emphasis in all of our meetings is upon the exposition of Scripture.
3. Music: We believe that God is glorified in the singing of the great hymns of the Church, and we avoid contemporary music which is patterned after the world's music.
4. Money: We believe that the Lord's work should be supported by the Lord's people, and that each one should give as the Lord prospers us and leads us to give. No one is ever asked to pledge money to the church, nor are offerings taken in our services. An offering box is provided for the convenience of those who desire to give. Our Church Treasurer keeps accurate records of all gifts which are identified.
5. 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 to the whole world. 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 Scripture regarding the spread of the Gospel to the world.

Notes on Lesson 1 (continued)

6. Special ministries: We broadcast regularly over KPDQ-FM at 4 p.m. each Sunday. A Bible Class is taught by the pastor each Tuesday morning during the school year. We also regularly have a Spring Bible Conference and a summer Family Camp.
7. The Ordinances of the church: We believe the Scriptures teach that there are two ordinances of the church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We baptize by immersion those who have professed faith in Christ. We observe the Lord's Supper twice each month—usually on the first Sunday morning of the month and the third Sunday evening. We also observe the Lord's Supper on Days of Prayer, and other times at the discretion of the elders.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE IN FAITH AND PRACTICE.

By “doctrine” we mean *the teaching of the Bible*. By “faith” we mean *what we are to believe*. And by “practice” we mean *how the teaching of Scripture is to affect our lives*.

By way of getting started in our studies, let us consider together the Apostle Paul's instructions to his son in the faith, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5. This epistle was the last of Paul's letters written under the direction of the Holy Spirit and included in the Scriptures. He had no way of knowing how things would be in the last days, but they were sovereignly revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. And these verses serve to guide all of us who minister in the years following the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. What the Apostle Paul told Timothy almost two thousand years ago is God's message for us today.

There are three parts to what Paul told Timothy:

- 1) Conditions in the world in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-13).
- 2) What Timothy needed to be concerned about with regard to himself (2 Timothy 3:14-17).
- 3) What Timothy needed to do in his ministry, and why (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Lesson 1: The Importance of Doctrine in Faith and Practice

MEMORY: Ephesians 4:11

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

PURPOSE: *In a day when in many churches the importance of Biblical doctrine is either minimized or denied altogether, it is important for Christians to see the place that doctrine has in Scripture along with the practical application of those doctrines to daily living.*

2 Timothy 3:1-13

1. What does this passage tell us about the importance of doctrine in faith and practice in the church?

2 Timothy 3:14-17

2. What does this passage tell us about the importance of doctrine in faith and practice in the church?

2 Timothy 4:1-5

3. What does this passage tell us about the importance of doctrine in faith and practice in the church?

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4. What does the importance of doctrine in faith and practice in the church tell us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in putting doctrine into practice that this passage brought to mind?

Lesson 2: The Mission of the Church in the World

MEMORY: Ephesians 4:12 and review

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

Matthew 28:16-20

1. What is the mission of the church in the world according to this passage?

John 20:19-23

2. What is the mission of the church in the world according to this passage?

Acts 1:6-11

3. What is the mission of the church in the world according to this passage?

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4. What does the mission of the church in the world tell us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in putting the mission of the church in the world into practice?

Lesson 3: The Success of the Church in the World

MEMORY: Ephesians 4:13 and review

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

Matthew 16:13-20

1. What does the church's promised success in the world teach us about the church?

Matthew 24:1-14

2. What does the church's promised success in the world teach us about the church?

Ephesians 1:18-23

3. What does the church's promised success in the world teach us about the church?

-
4. What does the church's promised success in the world teach us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what you believe about the success of the church in the world?

Lesson 4: Biblical Metaphors for the Church

MEMORY: Ephesians 4:14 and review

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

A family: Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 5:1-2

1. What does this Biblical metaphor teach us about the church?

A body: Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:28-32 (optional, see also – Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Ephesians 4:4, 12, 16; Colossians 1:18, 24; 2:19)

2. What does this Biblical metaphor teach us about the church?

A temple: Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5 (optional, see also – 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16)

3. What does this Biblical metaphor teach us about the church?

A bride: Ephesians 5:23-27; Revelation 19:7-8 (optional, see also – 2 Corinthians 11:2)

4. What does this Biblical metaphor teach us about the church?

5. Can you remember or find any other metaphors for the church in Scripture?

6. What do these Biblical pictures of the church teach us about the character of God?

7. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what you have learned about the church from these pictures?

Lesson 5: The Local Church

MEMORY: Ephesians 4:15 and review

HYMN: “The Church’s One Foundation”

PURPOSE: *To see that the universal church must find expression in a local church.*

Revelation 1:9-20

1. What does this passage teach us about the local church?

Hebrews 10:24-25

2. What does this passage teach us about the local church?

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3. What do these passages about the church tell us about the character of God?

4. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what you have learned about the church from these passages?

Lesson 6: Baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Church

MEMORY: Ephesians 4:16 and review

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

PURPOSE: *To see that the local church must administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper.*

Matthew 28:18-20

1. What does this passage teach us about Baptism?

Acts 2:37-42

2. What does this passage teach us about Baptism?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

3. What does this passage teach us about the Lord's Supper?

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4. What do Baptism and the Lord's Supper tell us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in benefiting from Baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Lesson 7: Church Membership

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

PURPOSE: *To consider what the Bible says in relation to membership in a local church.*

Acts 2:41-42, 46-47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 16:5

1. What do these passages teach us about membership in a local church?

Romans 16:1-2

2. What does this passage teach us about membership in a local church?

1 Corinthians 1:2

3. What does this passage teach us about membership in a local church?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

4. What does this passage teach us about membership in a local church?

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5. What do these passages teach us about the character of God?

6. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what it means to be a member of Trinity Bible Church?

Lesson 8: Church Unity

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

Ephesians 4:1-6

1. What does this passage teach us about church unity?

Romans 12:9-13

2. What does this passage teach us about church unity?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

3. What does this passage teach us about church unity?

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4. What does church unity teach us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what the Bible teaches about church unity?

Lesson 9: Church Discipline

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

Matthew 18:15-20

1. What does this passage teach us about church discipline?

1 Corinthians 5

2. What does this passage teach us about church discipline?

Titus 3:9-11

3. What does this passage teach us about church discipline?

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4. What does church discipline teach us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what the Bible teaches about church discipline?

Lesson 10: Spiritual Gifts in the Church

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31

1. What does this passage teach us about spiritual gifts in the church?

Ephesians 4:7-16

2. What does this passage teach us about spiritual gifts in the church?

Romans 12:3-8

3. What does this passage teach us about spiritual gifts in the church?

1 Peter 4:10-11

4. What does this passage teach us about spiritual gifts in the church?

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5. What do spiritual gifts in the church teach us about the character of God?

6. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what the Bible teaches about spiritual gifts?

Lesson 11: Church Government

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

Acts 14:23

1. What does this passage teach us about church government?

Acts 20:28-32

2. What does this passage teach us about church government?

1 Timothy 3:1-7

3. What does this passage teach us about church government?

1 Timothy 5:17

4. What does this passage teach us about church government?

Hebrews 13:17

5. What does this passage teach us about church government?

(optional, see also – Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

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6. What does the Bible's teaching about church government teach us about the character of God?

7. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what the Bible teaches about church government?

Lesson 12: Preaching in the Church

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1. What does this passage tell us about preaching in the church?

1 Thessalonians 2:13

2. What does this passage tell us about preaching in the church?

1 Timothy 4:11-16

3. What does this passage tell us about preaching in the church?

2 Timothy 3:16-4:2

4. What does this passage tell us about preaching in the church?

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5. What does the ministry of the Word in the church tell us about the character of God?

6. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what the Bible tells us about preaching in the church?

Lesson 13: Church Music

MEMORY: Review of Ephesians 4:11-16

HYMN: "The Church's One Foundation"

Psalm 150

1. What does this passage teach us about music in the church?

Ephesians 5:18-20

2. What does this passage teach us about music in the church?

Colossians 3:16-17

3. What does this passage teach us about music in the church?

-
4. What does music in the church tell us about the character of God?

5. What are some ways you might grow in putting into practice what the Bible teaches about music in the church?

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 1: TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

Salvation is the work of God whereby sinful human beings are saved forever 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 Romans 3:24; 5:1.
- 2) Sanctification. See Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 6:11.
- 3) Glorification. See Romans 8:18, 28-29.

This is the only way of salvation. In its entirety “it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Another way of referring to the doctrine of salvation is by the expression *the doctrines of grace*. To help in remembering them, these doctrines are often presented in the following acrostic. Please memorize them.

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

The remainder of this lesson will be devoted to *the Doctrine 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.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE.

A. The doctrine of original sin. See Romans 5:12; Psalm 51:5.

It was through the original sin of Adam that the whole human race fell under the judgment of God. See Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 5:18; 6:23.

Illustration: Hebrews 7:9-10.

B. Man is spiritually dead. See Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13.

C. Man does not seek God. See Romans 3:11. The whole passage, Romans 3:9-18, is a revelation of man's Total Depravity. Here we also see that the natural heart of man prefers sin rather than God. Note also the teaching of our Lord in Matthew 15:1-20.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 1: TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN (continued)

- D. Man is in bondage to his sin. In addition to the fact that he does not seek God, our Lord taught that man cannot come to Him for salvation, speaking of that which man is naturally capable of doing for himself apart from God. See John 6:44, 65; 8:34.
- E. Man is not only in bondage to his sin, but to Satan also. See 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. Thus, man is also blinded to the truth of the Gospel.
- F. 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 Romans 8:8.

Conclusion: 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. We will also see 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 how salvation is all of God, and that all of the glory for salvation, therefore, rightfully belongs to Him.

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

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 2: UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

We must always keep in mind the absolute sovereignty of God in all things. This, because of the very nature of God, applies also to salvation. It would have been completely within the sovereign right of God if He had not chosen to save anyone. It was equally within His right to have saved all people without exception. And we must conclude that it was also His right to do as He has done: to save many, but not to save all.

This doctrine of Unconditional Election, like Total Depravity, is rarely taught in our homes, in our churches, or in our Christian schools today. Therefore, when it is taught, it stirs up a lot of opposition because many people do not believe it is the teaching of Scripture. It seems to them to be inconsistent with the love of God. Christians have been so indoctrinated with a belief in the so-called “free will of man” that they usually reject the doctrine of election without examining the evidence in Scripture, and without listening to an explanation of it.

There is no question but that this is a difficult doctrine, and that it runs contrary to what man naturally believes to be fair. However, let us remember that there is no major doctrine in Scripture but what there are so-called problem passages which seem to be in contradiction to it. That is true of this doctrine. However, the main issue, as with all doctrines, is this: Is it taught in Scripture? Does the Bible teach Unconditional Election? If it does, then Christians need to believe it, and seek, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to understand it. If it is not taught in Scripture, then it certainly needs to be rejected and exposed as error.

Our first task, then, is to explain what we mean when we speak of Unconditional Election.

I. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION DEFINED.

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. No sinner is worthy of salvation, and so the choice could not have been made upon the basis of personal merit. Nor was God's choice made on the basis that He knew that certain ones would accept Christ, that is, the foreknowledge of God. God certainly knows who will be saved. However, that was not the basis upon which election rests. People receive Christ because they are chosen by God. It is not the teaching of Scripture that people are chosen because God knew that they would believe. Be sure that you apply to this doctrine what we learned about man in the doctrine of Total Depravity.

II. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

There are two things to keep in mind regarding all of the doctrines of grace:

- 1) They all glorify God, not man.
- 2) They are in perfect harmony with each other.

The Scriptural doctrine of Total Depravity teaches us that man not only cannot come to God, but also that he would not if he could. Therefore, if anyone is to be saved, God must take the initiative.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 2: UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION (continued)

This initiative was taken by God in eternity past when, according to the Scriptures, He chose those whom He intended to save. So we see that divine election is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of the depravity of man.

III. 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.

IV. ELECTION AND THE WILL OF MAN.

This subject will come up again when we consider the doctrine of IRRESISTIBLE GRACE, but we need to note here that, since the will of man is in bondage, and, therefore, man cannot and will not come to Christ, it is necessary for God to work in the heart of man, changing his will, giving him the desire to be saved, and enabling him to come in faith to Christ for salvation. Cf. John 6:44; Philippians 2:12-13.

An outstanding example in Scripture is to be seen in the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. Cf. Acts 9:1-22.

V. ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

Since God has ordained some to be saved, the Scriptures teach that He has chosen to pass by the rest of mankind, leaving them to suffer the just consequences of their sins. See Romans 9:1-24; 1 Peter 2:8; Jude 4. This means that those who are lost have been rejected by the decree of God.

VI. 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, the work of evangelism would be utterly impossible because of man's depravity. But since we know that God has His elect who must be saved, we know that the work of proclaiming the Gospel cannot possibly fail. Cf. John 10:16, 25-26; Acts 18:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:10.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 3: LIMITED ATONEMENT

I. LIMITED ATONEMENT DEFINED.

This doctrine is concerned with the question, For whom did Christ die? Did He die for all people without exception, or did He die in particular for the salvation of those whom the Father had chosen to be saved? This also raises the question, Did our Lord merely provide the possibility of salvation for sinners, or did He actually secure the salvation of the elect and guarantee that they would be saved?

Christians throughout the years have been divided on these questions. Most Christians in our day hold to the view that Christ died for everyone. But there are others (and this is the position we take at Trinity Bible Church) who believe that Christ died for the purpose of saving the people who have been chosen by God for salvation. The first position is called Universal Redemption, that is, that Christ died for those who will be in hell as well as for those who will spend eternity in heaven. The second view is called Particular Redemption, meaning that Christ died to redeem particular people, that is, that He died for the elect of God, and that His death guarantees their salvation. This is the view that we are discussing now which is best known by the term, Limited Atonement. You will also find some writers who refer to this doctrine by the title, Definite Atonement. Limited Atonement does not put any limitation on the value of Christ's death. His death is sufficient to save every sinner who has ever lived. But the issue raised in the atonement question has to do with the purpose of Christ's death. Did Christ go to the Cross hoping that all people would be saved, or did He offer a sacrifice which would be accepted by the Father to secure the salvation of those whom the Father had chosen?

And so, when we speak of the Atonement, we are speaking of the saving work of Christ on the Cross. When we speak of Limited Atonement, we are saying that the purpose of the death of Christ was limited to the elect.

Universal Redemption carried to its extreme is the belief that all people will eventually be saved. But most people who believe in Universal Redemption actually hold that the saving merit of the death of Christ is limited to those who receive Christ as their Savior. So it is apparent that all evangelical believers put limitations on the death of Christ, either as to what is actually accomplished by it, or as to its purpose.

II. CALVINISTS AND ARMINIANS.

It is often regrettable that we identify each other with certain labels, but we have to recognize that the terms, “Calvinistic” and “Arminian”, do have historical as well as present-day significance. Many who are Arminian today claim to be Calvinistic because they believe that once a person is saved, he is always saved. It is true that Calvinists believe this, but they also believe in Limited Atonement. So the people who believe that salvation is eternal and yet hold to Universal Redemption really are Arminian in their view of salvation, and cannot rightly claim to be Calvinists.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 3: LIMITED ATONEMENT (continued)

III. THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED ATONEMENT ESTABLISHED BY SCRIPTURE.

A. The Arminians' objections to Limited Atonement.

1. The use of the expression “the world” in many verses of Scripture dealing with salvation. See John 3:16; 1 John 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.
2. The use of the word “all.” See 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:1-7. This would also apply to a verse like John 10:9 where the word “any” is used.
3. The expression “whosoever believeth” or “whosoever will.” See John 3:16; Revelation 22:17.
4. The verse which many Arminians feel is an unanswerable objection to Limited Atonement: 2 Peter 2:1.
5. Arminians appeal also to the fairness of God, that it is not fair to provide salvation for some, but not for all. But this is where we must remember the teaching of Isaiah 55:8-9.

B. The Calvinists' case for Limited Atonement.

1. The answers which can be given to the problems stated above. Every doctrine in Scripture has its problems, and those problems always have to do with verses which seem to teach the opposite. If possible, these problems need to be answered. Where they may not be cleared up, then we need to accept the teaching which has the greatest Scriptural support.
2. The attributes of God, especially His sovereignty and His wisdom. Add to these the unity of the Godhead, and ask yourself the question, *Would Christ attempt to go beyond the will of His Father in His death, or, did He come to do the will of the Father—to provide salvation for those whom the Father had chosen?* Thus we are asking the question, *Is the doctrine of the atonement in conflict, or in harmony, with the doctrine of election?*
3. The glory of God. Which gives God the greatest glory, a doctrine of a salvation which cannot be completed until man adds his faith, or a doctrine of salvation that was completed by the death and resurrection of Christ?
4. Those passages which specifically teach Limited Atonement, or Particular Redemption. See Matthew 20:28; John 10:11, 15-16, 25-30; Ephesians 5:25-27.
5. Those passages which give strong support to Limited Atonement. See Isaiah 53:6; Romans 4:25; 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24-25; 3:18; 1 John 4:9-10; Revelation 1:5-6.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 3: LIMITED ATONEMENT (continued)

Worthy of special mention are those passages which speak of the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. See Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 2:12-13; 3:1.

6. The problem of Double Jeopardy.

This represents the problem which the Arminian faces. He teaches that, if a sinner believes in Christ, then he is forgiven of his sins. This, of course, is true. But the Arminian also believes that if a sinner does not believe in Christ, it is as though Christ had not died for him. Therefore, the Arminian believes that Christ paid for every sinner's sins, but that the unrepentant sinner who does not believe in Christ must spend eternity in hell paying for his sins the second time. This means that the sins of that condemned sinner are paid for twice (Double Jeopardy): once by Christ, and again by the sinner. What does such teaching do to the righteousness of God? Would He not be unjust to demand a double payment for sin?

Some Arminians say that sinners are not condemned for their sins, but because of their failure to believe in Christ. In this way they try to answer the problem of Double Jeopardy. This, however, is not what the Scriptures teach. See Ephesians 5:5-6; John 8:24.

And so we come down to the question as to whether or not the Lord actually put away the sins of those for whom He died (Hebrews 9:26). Were we really reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10), or was reconciliation merely a possible reconciliation, provided for any who would take it? The statements of Scripture are far too strong to admit any other teaching than that the Lord accomplished and guaranteed the salvation of all for whom He died. He put away the sins of His people. They were reconciled to God.

There is much more sense to saying that Christ died for all, and that all will eventually be saved, than to say that He died for all, but that only some of those for whom He died will be saved. However, neither of those positions is according to Scripture.

Conclusion:

The truth is this: CHRIST'S PURPOSE IN DYING WAS TO SECURE THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO WERE CHOSEN BY THE FATHER. ALL OF THE ELECT, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WILL BE SAVED, KEPT, SANCTIFIED, AND ULTIMATELY GLORIFIED.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 4: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

I. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE DEFINED.

In the divine plan of redemption, God the Father eternally chose those whom He intended to save, and He gave them to Christ. In the fullness of time, Christ came to secure the salvation of the chosen ones, the elect, and this He did by His death on the Cross. However, since the elect are totally depraved, unable, and unwilling to come to Christ, it is necessary that they be drawn to Christ. This also is the work of the Godhead, but particularly the work of the Holy Spirit. He it is Who convicts the elect of their sin and their need of Christ, and Who regenerates them. This is the new birth. Therefore, all three Persons of the Godhead are involved in the work of salvation. And even though particular passages may not always make the distinctions that are made above, yet enough is revealed in Scripture to show that the works of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can be so distinguished.

This work of the Holy Spirit is called “irresistible grace” because it is completely unmerited. No one deserves to be saved. From a human standpoint there is no reason why anybody should be saved.

It is called “irresistible” because it is effective. It means that God actually saves all of those whom He intends to save. It does not mean that any of the elect is saved against his will, but it does mean that God works in an irresistible way in the hearts of His elect to make them willing to be saved, and enabling them to believe. But it also indicates that God provides everything necessary for our salvation: the will to come, the power to come, the repentance that is necessary, and even the faith necessary to believe in Christ. Those words, “the will to come, the power to come,” indicate that God actually gives life to the one He is saving even before that person believes. If He did not, the sinner would not come because he could not come. These points will be established by Scriptural evidence later in this lesson.

Sometimes the word efficacious is used instead of irresistible. Efficacious is defined in the dictionary as the power to produce an intended result. God possesses this power, and exercises it in the salvation of all of the elect. This is why we speak of sovereign grace.

This doctrine is also identified by the term, effectual call. In the preaching of the Gospel there is a general call for all to believe. We are issuing a general call when we say, “Whosoever will may come.” But the effectual call, or effective call (which is the meaning of effectual) has to do with that work of the Spirit whereby the elect, upon hearing the Gospel, are constrained to come to Christ to be saved. The elect do not always come the first time they hear. They may hear the Gospel many times before they come to Christ. But eventually all of the elect do come to Christ and trust Him as Savior.

II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE.

A. Isaiah 55:10-11.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 4: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE (continued)

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

C. John 10:16.

D. Acts 16:14 (Lydia).

E. Acts 18:27.

Note the word called in the following two passages:

F. Romans 8:28-30.

G. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

H. Acts 9:1-22 – that which can be considered the greatest illustration of irresistible grace in the Bible: the salvation of the Apostle Paul!

See also in this connection, 1 Corinthians 15:8-10; Galatians 1:15-16; 2 Timothy 1:8-11.

I. An illustration of irresistible grace: the raising of Lazarus from the dead. See John 11.

What did the Lord tell Lazarus to do? What did Lazarus require before he could obey the Lord? Did Lazarus obey? In the light of man's depravity (as illustrated in the death and resurrection of Lazarus), it is necessary for God to do everything that is necessary for man's salvation. This means that even 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 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Acts 5:31; 11:18.

3) On faith, see Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 1:21.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE REQUIRES THAT ALL PRAISE RIGHTFULLY BE GIVEN TO GOD FOR OUR SALVATION.

See Ephesians 1:3, 6, 12, 14; Romans 11:33-36; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Revelation 1:4-6.

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 5: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

I. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS DEFINED.

This doctrine has to do with *the duration* of salvation, that is, that true salvation is eternal. But it also teaches us that, once a person has really been born again, he will *persevere* throughout his life as a child of God. He may displease God by sinning, but he will never fall away and become unregenerate again.

The doctrine which teaches that once a person is saved he will always be saved, is *the doctrine of eternal security*. See John 10:27-28. *The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints* is a Biblical part of that doctrine, but it goes beyond what is usually taught by those who hold to the doctrine of eternal security. It has to do with *the practical effects of being saved*, that no one can rightly claim to be saved unless those practical effects are to be seen in his life. See 1 John 2:19.

Therefore, we must understand that these doctrines have to do only with those who *in reality* are saved. They have to do with true saints, the elect. It assures nothing for those many people throughout history who have *merely professed* to believe, but who have not actually been saved. For a true believer, perseverance is the inevitable consequence of his having been saved.

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

A. See again John 10:27-28. Note the words, “and they follow me.”

B. Colossians 1:21-23.

C. Hebrews 3:6, 14.

D. The epistle of 1 John, with its evidences of salvation, indicates what one may expect to see by way of continuing proof of salvation in the life of one who is a true child of God. Among these evidences are the following:

1. Walking in the light (1 John 1:6-7). Note that John contrasts walking with merely talking.
2. Obedience to the Word of God (1 John 2:4-5).
3. Not loving the world of evil (1 John 2:15).
4. Belief in the doctrine of Christ (1 John 2:22-23).
5. Love for other believers (1 John 3:14; 4:7-8).

APPENDIX: SALVATION – PART 5: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS (continued)

E. The warnings of Scripture regarding the possibility of professing to know Christ without actually possessing salvation.

1. Matthew 7:21-29.
2. Romans 2:28-29.
3. Hebrews 4:1-3.
4. The references to overcoming in the Lord's letters to the seven churches (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

III. OTHER RELATED TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE.

The following doctrines support the doctrines of the security of the believer in Christ and his perseverance in the faith.

- A. The omnipotence of God. See Ecclesiastes 3:14. Also see Genesis 17:1-8; Ephesians 3:20-21; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24-25.
- B. The present intercessory work of Christ in heaven (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25. Also see John 17:11-12, 15, 24).
- C. The sealing work of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30).
- D. The will of the Father (John 6:39-40).
- E. The immutability of God (Romans 11:28-29).
- F. The love of God (John 13:1; Romans 8:38-39).
- G. The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:24; 7:37-40; 10:27-30). Actually, every verse in which the Lord spoke of “everlasting life” or “eternal life” would apply. See John 3:16.