

For the past several weeks we've been engaged in a topical study on the Doctrines of Grace. Having seen Total Depravity, we've been considering Unconditional Election. Thus far we've seen Election Defined, wherein we defined election as God's gracious choice of individuals, from eternity, for salvation, based solely upon His covenant love.

This brought us last week to Election Defended, wherein we sought to answer five common objections to the doctrine of Unconditional Election, which brings us this morning to Unconditional Election Applied, wherein I want to suggest five ways the truth of Unconditional Election should be applied to our hearts and lives.

It's an interesting fact, that the majority of teaching about election is found in the NT letters. The reason being, the NT letters were written to believers; to those who've been called out of the world into the body of Christ.

And now that they've been called out of the world, the first logical question would be—why? Why were they saved and others are not? Why are they sitting in the church, forgiven of their sins, and having the hope of heaven?

Well, here's why—because God has loved you from eternity and has chosen you for salvation in Jesus Christ! You see, the doctrine of Unconditional Election is to be taught to Christians because it not only answers the question, why we are saved and others are not, but it also serves as an incentive for practical Christian living.

- I. Election Fuels Evangelism
- II. Election Provides Assurance
- III. Election Promotes Adoration
- IV. Election Encourages Holiness
- V. Election Demands Humility

I. Election Fuels Evangelism

1. Because we've talked about this last week as an objection to election, I can be rather quick with it here.
2. Simply put, far from being a hinderance to evangelism, election is actually a powerful motive for evangelism.
3. And here's why—because God has a people within every nation, and He will use us to call them to Himself.
4. 2Tim.2:10—"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."
5. Paul crossed three continents, endured all manner of hardship and affliction, for the sake of God's elect.
6. He knew God had a people scattered throughout those continents, and he knew God would use Him to save them.
7. J.I. Packer (*Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*)—"So far from making evangelism pointless, the sovereignty of God in grace is the one thing that prevents evangelism from being pointless. For it creates the possibility—indeed, the certainty—that evangelism will be fruitful. Apart from it, there is not even a possibility of evangelism being fruitful. Were it not for the sovereign grace of God, evangelism would be the most useless enterprise that the world has ever seen, and there would be no more complete waste of time under the sun than to preach the Christian gospel."

8. Evangelism would be useless (pointless) without sovereign grace, because man by nature is totally depraved.
9. Brethren, if God was not sovereign in salvation, all preaching and evangelism would be pointless and futile.
10. If God did not have an elect people He's promised to save, every preacher should sit down and close his mouth.
11. J.I. Packer, in his *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, suggests God's sovereignty in salvation should make us bold, patient, and prayerful in our evangelism.
12. (1) Bold—one reason why many people have a reluctance to share the gospel, is the fear of rejection.
13. The truth can be offensive to fallen man, and it's possible that we will be hated and even possibly mistreated.
14. Belief that God has an elect people and will use us to bring them to Himself, gives us boldness and resolve.
15. (2) Patient—by this I mean, the fact that God has a people means, we should never give up on anyone.
16. That God has a people and will save them in His time, encourages us to finally leave the results with Him.
17. (3) Prayerful—we must remember, God alone can change hearts and humble proud and foolish sinners.
18. Brethren, this is glory of believing that salvation is of God—we ultimately plead with a gracious and powerful God.
19. Yes, we plead with sinners—we must reason with them—but ultimately, we have to wrestle with God.
20. Brethren, here's a point that I fear is often overlooked—evangelism isn't predominantly about arguments.
21. The success of evangelism comes from the word of God energized and empowered by Spirit of God.
22. At the end of the day—evangelism isn't about wresting with dead sinners but with a gracious and powerful God.

II. Election Provides Assurance

1. The relationship between election and assurance may not be that clear at first, but they are closely connected (let me attempt to show you this connection by answering two questions).
2. (1) How does election provide assurance? Because election is unto salvation which includes glorification.
3. Remember, election is not salvation but is unto salvation, and salvation includes calling, regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
4. Rom.8:30—"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."
5. In other words, every person elected, will be called, and every person called will be justified, and every person justified will be glorified.
6. Simply put, every person elected will go to heaven—it's impossible to become a Christian and perish.
7. 2Thess.2:13-14—"God from the beginning chose you for salvation...to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
8. Notice, Christians are called by the gospel and for glory—they are called to share in the glory of Christ.

9. Remember, while we must distinguish between salvation planned and applied, we can never sever them.
10. What God planned He will do and He planned from eternity, to call a people to Himself and glorify them.
11. Brethren, think about it—how far back does our salvation go—for me, I as converted in January of 1994.
12. This is when my salvation was applied, but this is not when my salvation was planned—that happened in eternity.
13. Perhaps I can say, the roots of our salvation go all the way back to the eternal counsels or decrees of God.
14. That makes our salvation sturdy and certain—salvation is a strong tree that can never be blown down.
15. Every Christian has roots that go all the way back to the eternal, gracious, and loving election of God.
16. (2) How is assurance of election increased? By looking for the evidences of salvation for which we were elected.
17. In other words, we can read our election within our calling and conversion—the latter argues the reality of the former.
18. 1Thess.1:4-5—"Knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power."
19. How did Paul know they were elect? Because the gospel came to them in the power of the Holy Spirit.
20. 2Pet.1:10—"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things (the fruit mentioned in vv5-7) you will never stumble (you will have strong assurance that puts wind your sail)."
21. Notice first of all, that Peter wanted his readers to be diligent in making their calling and election sure.
22. In other words, this was something that Peter expected his readers to do—he expected them to labor for assurance.
23. And notice how—works argue calling and calling argues election—we read our election in our calling (which is evidenced in our works).
24. Thus, there's really only two ways you can be assured of your election—pry into the secret decrees of God, or else, read your election in your calling and conversion.
25. Canons of Dort (1:12)—"Assurance comes not by searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word—such as (1) a true faith in Christ, (2) a childlike fear of God, (3) a godly sorrow for their sins, (4) a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on."
26. Many people are confused on how our works relate to our assurance—some deny there's any relation and others make too much of them.
27. Simply put—our works function as a secondary ground of assurance and thus, as a means to an end.
28. The works of Christ are the primary grounds of our assurance, and Christ is the end to which our works point.
29. For example, we must look within to see whether we have faith in Christ, fear of God, godly sorrow, and a spiritual appetite.
30. Yes, my faith is in Christ alone—yes, I fear and love God—yes, I sorry for sin, and yes, I hunger for God.
31. But brethren, the longer we look the longer it becomes evident—all of these graces are weak and imperfect.

32. Our faith is mixed with doubt—our fear and love of God is mixed with coldness—and our sorrow and hunger are mixed with indifference.
33. Thus, while we must look within to ensure the evidences of our calling are present, this must lead us to Christ.
34. Any degree of fruit found in our hearts and lives come from Him and are the result of His electing love.
35. Furthermore, as we've considered our works, we are reminded afresh how foolish we are to trust in them.
36. Hymn (441)—"Thy works, not mine, O Christ, speak gladness to this heart; they tell me all is done; they bid my fear depart."

III. Election Promotes Adoration

1. If you remember, I've mentioned several times, the only reason Scripture gives for election is the covenant love of God.
2. God foreknew or foreloved His people from eternity, and thus, chose them for salvation because of love.
3. 1Jn.4:19—"We love Him because He first loved us"—His love for us is the cause and motive of our love for Him.
4. (1) His love is the cause of our love—this means, our love for Him is the consequence of His love for us.
5. Put another way—God loved His people in such a way so as to ensure that they will love Him in return.
6. Now I know, to some people it may seem strange (even self-serving), to say God elects us to love Him.
7. But you to remember several things—first, this is the reason we were originally created in the first place.
8. Short Catechism—"What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."
9. Secondly, loving God is not only our chief end (goal), but it's the highest and greatest blessing known to man.
10. Because of man's fall, he refuses to supremely love God and instead fixes his affections on less worthy objects.
11. These less worthy (and even sinful) objects, fail to bring true satisfaction and lasting blessing to our hearts.
12. Deut.30:6—"And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."
13. This is true life—to love God with all our hearts—and until this happens, we are but the walking dead.
14. (2) His love is the motive of our love—this means, His love for us is an incentive for us loving Him.
15. While there are a thousand reasons to love God, they all come down to two categories—who God is and what God does.
16. And both of these come together most beautifully (clearly) in election—because God is love He loves.
17. Thirty-nine Articles of Religion for the Church of England (Article 17)—"The consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons...because it does greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it does fervently kindle their love towards God."

18. Canons of Dort (1:13)—"The sense and certainty of this election afford to the children of God (1) additional matter for daily humiliation before Him, (2) for adoring the depth of His mercies, (3) for cleansing themselves, and (4) rendering grateful returns of ardent love to Him who first manifested so great love toward them."

IV. Election Encourages Holiness

1. Election encourages holiness because it (holiness) answers the end or goal of our election—election is unto salvation.
2. And remember, salvation is a broad concept that includes salvation from sin's penalty as well as power.
3. It includes justification and sanctification—we've not only been elected to be forgiven but to live holy.
4. Now let me briefly remind you what is meant by holiness—true holiness can be viewed from two perspectives.
5. First, heart obedience to the law of God, second, practical conformity to the image of Christ—these are one and the same.
6. Thus, the fact that God has elected us unto holiness, is reason for us to pursue after holiness or obedience.
7. Rom.8:39—"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."
8. CHS—"There is no truth that can so encourage a man to piety as the fact that he was chosen of God ere time begun. Loved by Him with an unlimited love that never moves, and that endures to the end—O my God! I desire to spend myself in Your service. 'Love, so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all,' for this rich mercy constrains us, compels us to walk in the fear of God, and to love and serve Him all our lives."
9. (1) Election provides for our holiness—Christians were elected in Christ, in whom we have all that's necessary for holiness.
10. Eph.1:4—"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him."
11. In other words—we were elected for the purpose of standing before the Father—"holy and without blame."
12. While this refers to the finished product (glorification), it of necessity includes the process (sanctification).
13. Thus, election ensures our holiness (both in its progressive and perfected state), because we were elected in Christ who is our sanctification.
14. How is Christ our sanctification? Two ways—He sanctifies us by His Spirit and He sanctifies with His grace.
15. 2Tim.1:9—"He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began."
16. Notice, Paul says that grace was given to us in Christ before time began—how was grace given before we existed?
17. Well, we have to remember an important distinction I made a few weeks ago between purposed and actual existence.
18. While the elect don't have an actual existence until time, they have a purposed existence from eternity.
19. This is how God can foreknow or forelove them from eternity—"Known to God from eternity are all His works."

20. Thus, Paul says, God saved and called us according to "His own purpose" in which grace was given us in Christ.
21. This means, because God purposed to save us in Christ, the grace necessary, was also purposed in Christ.
22. O my dear friends, this is why every elected person will be saved and will, to varying degrees, live holy.
23. John Owen—"God's decree of election does not depend on our holiness, but our holiness and happiness depends on God's decree of election."
24. (2) Election motivates us to holiness—by this I mean, we pursue holiness because we were chosen for holiness.
25. As we ponder the fact that we've been loved and chosen from eternity, it motivates us to pursue holiness.
26. Deut.10:14-16—"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."
27. (a) An election—the election mentioned in vv14-15, is a national election (not unto salvation) but privilege.
28. He chose the descendants of Abraham above all other people, for the sole reason—He delighted in them.
29. (b) A motivation, v16—"Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."
30. In light of their national election and privilege, they were to circumcise their hearts and not merely their flesh.
31. This means they were to become truly converted—they were to repent of their sins and believe in the promised Savior.
32. But why? Because of their election and privilege—their election and privilege were to motivate them.

V. Election Demands Humility

1. Election demands humility because, God elected His people from a common lump of depraved humanity.
2. 1Cor.1:26-29—"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."
3. I've said this before, but I think it needs repeating—our Calvinism is no better than our loving humility.
4. It makes little difference if we can defend the doctrines of grace, if they've failed to influence our hearts.
5. A proud Calvinist (or a proud Christian) is a very poor one—one that has yet to learn the very first lesson.
6. The first lesson the doctrines of grace teach us is—our boasting is not in ourselves but in the grace of God.
7. The only reason we are here this morning, worshipping and loving God, is because of His electing grace.