

Second Presbyterian Church
Richard D. Phillips, Senior Minister

New Members' Class

Lesson #2: The Doctrines of Grace

The Doctrines of Grace

- Calvin's teaching (1536-64) and the Belgic Confession (1561)
- Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)
 - Professor of Theology at Leiden
 - Taught Prevenient Grace: "the grace sufficient for salvation is conferred on the Elect, and on the Non-elect; that, if they will, they may believe or not believe, may be saved or not be saved "
- The Arminian Remonstrance (1610)
 - Conditional Election
 - Universal Atonement
 - Prevenient Grace
 - Grace Necessary but not Irresistible
 - Perseverance Necessary but not Certain
- The Synod of Dordt (1618-19)
 - Arminian pastors deposed (some banished)
 - Belgic Confession & Heidelberg Catechism confirmed
 - Canons of Dordt

The Doctrines of Grace

- T – Total Depravity The Problem
- U – Unconditional Election The Grace of the Father
- L – Limited Atonement The Grace of the Son
- I – Irresistible Grace The Grace of the Spirit
- P – Perseverance of the Saints The Result

Total Depravity

- Defines the *extent* of sin's corruption. Man is *comprehensively* corrupted by sin.
- The key issue is the spiritual inability of man in sin and his total need for sovereign grace.
- Some Key Texts
 - **Romans 3:10-12** as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."
 - **Ephesians 2:1-3** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
 - **1 Corinthians 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.
 - **John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

Unconditional Election

- Election = Choosing
- Teaches that God predestined some to be saved apart from any merit or condition on their part
- The elect are known only through a true and saving faith
- Key Texts:
 - **Deuteronomy 7:7-8** It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the LORD loves you
 - **Ephesians 1:4-6** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace... **Ephesians 1:11** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.
 - **Romans 9:10-16** And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call- 12 she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." 14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.
 - **Romans 9:19-21** You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use?

Unconditional Election

- Objections to:
 - Unfair (see Romans 9:14 & 19)
 - Nullifies Free Will
 - Teaches “dark determinism”
 - Destroys the Motive to Evangelism
 - Destroys the Motive to Sanctification
- The Key Issue:
 - Is it biblical?

Limited Atonement

- Pertains to the *extent* of the atonement
- Calvinists limit *scope*; Arminians limit *efficacy* of the atonement.
 - Reformed: Christ made *full* atonement for *the elect*
 - Arminian: Christ made a *limited* atonement for *all*
- Key Texts:
 - **John 17:9** I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.
 - **Matthew 1:21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."
 - **Matthew 20:28** even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
 - **John 10:11** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Irresistible Grace

- Does not teach that no one can or does resist grace
- Teaches that *in conversion* we are born again by the sovereign, irresistible working of God's grace
- Key Texts
 - **John 6:37** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
 - **Matthew 9:9** As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.
 - **Ezekiel 36:26-27** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Perseverance of the Saints

- Believers *must* persevere in faith to be saved.
- The elect *will* persevere in faith unto salvation
- Grounds the eternal security in the sovereign grace of God
- Key Texts:
 - **Colossians 1:22-23** he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard,
 - **Philippians 1:6** And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
 - **1 Peter 1:3-5** According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The Trinity and the Doctrines of Grace

- *Unconditional Election*: The Father Ordaining
- *Limited Atonement* (Particular Redemption): The Son Accomplishing
- *Irresistible Grace*: The Spirit Applying
- *The Result* = a sure and certain salvation for the elect (i.e. those who truly believe), with all praise and glory belonging to our triune God