

Election and Evangelism

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Ephesians 1:13
Preached on: Sunday, August 17, 2014

Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

We've come to this question this morning. As we've studied the book of Ephesians, as we've seen the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, praising God for His sovereign work in salvation, for electing us, for choosing us, for adopting us, for redeeming us, and as Paul has gone through this one sentence of verses 3 through 14 of 202 words in the Greek text, we have seen Paul just bursting with praise for God. "Blessed be God." "To the praise of His glory." "Praise, praise, praise His name." You see something as you read the spirit, and the environment, and the atmosphere of this opening chapter. While we in the 21st century might get caught up in speculative questions and sometimes angry arguments about God chose, and what about man, and all of this, the Apostle Paul in what he writes in Ephesians, the spirit of that is totally foreign. The spirit of our animated debates is foreign to what Paul is writing here. Paul is writing in a spirit of utter worship and praise to God. And so, when we think about the doctrines of salvation, we should always be checking ourselves. There should always be a self-correcting feature in the way that we think about it, in the way that we discuss it, in the way that we teach it. There should be an atmosphere of praise and worship and adoration of God that frames everything that we say about His work in salvation. It should not be a matter of contentious debate if we're going to discuss it in the spirit in which the Apostle Paul presents it in the book of Ephesians.

And with that in mind, let me just read the text, and then we'll set the question for this morning. In verse 13, still continuing a sentence, one unit of thought that began back in verse 3. Paul is continuing that long unit of thought that we spent several messages developing. Now, in verse 13, he turns his attention to the readers of this letter in the first century, and he reminds them of their past experience and how it relates to everything that he has said in the prior ten verses. He says in verse 13,

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

He ends on that note of praise that we said framed everything else in the prior ten verses there beginning in verse 3. So, here's the question for this morning. Last week, we addressed the issue of election and the so-called free will of man, and we addressed that issue last week. I'm not going to repeat that material here this morning. We're going to pivot to a different question that is answered and addressed by the verse that we have in front of us, Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13. We're going to answer this question here today which says, "If God determined before the foundation of the world exactly who would be saved, why then do we evangelize? Why do we preach the Gospel if God has already determined in advance who it is that will be saved? What is the point of that?"

Now what we're doing as we go through here in these latter verses of Ephesians chapter 1, what we're doing is we're slowing down a bit. We're isolating individual issues that come up when the sovereignty of God in salvation is discussed. We don't want to give superficial answers to these questions. We realize that people have legitimate questions. That people have been taught differently than perhaps what we believe Scripture clearly teaches, and we realize that unless we deal with those questions earnestly, we are likely to leave people behind and have them with questions that interfere with their spiritual growth. We don't want that to be the case of anyone that's a regular attender, soon to be member of Truth Community Church. Those are legitimate questions that have good answers, and that's what we're trying to give here in this series. And so, we come to the question today of the relationship between election and evangelism, and next week we plan to explain how election and the sinner's faith fit together but we're just going to focus on it from this perspective. Let's step back and think about what we're doing here. Let's picture three groups, if you will, and group isn't a good way to say it, but that's what came to my mind, and that's what I'm stuck with. There's God and His electing, saving purpose which has been the focus of the early part of the passage that we're looking at. There's us as the church and our desire and our duty to obey God in whatever He tells us to do. And then, there are those who are outside the church that have not yet come to Christ. And what we're doing is we're thinking through how all of this kind of relates together. If we can think in those categories, better than group, if we think of God and His sovereign purpose, and us and our responsibility to obey, and the sinner who does not know God, and all of that, we're kind of seeing how these individual categories fit together.

And so, we spent a lot of time seeing God and His saving purpose. Last week, we looked at the sinner, the one who does not know Christ, and we saw the slave of his will to sin and to Satan. Well now, we're going to kind of look at it from this perspective and say, "How do we as the church, as it were, bridge the gap between God's saving purpose and the sinner who is dead in his trespasses and sins? How should we think about our role as God continues to work out His saving purposes in the lives of those who do not yet know Him?" And so, we're looking at the way we think about ourselves. The way that we think about our responsibility here in this message this morning. And that's what we're going to look at. We're going to consider four aspects of evangelism this morning, if you want to plan your notes out that way. We're going to see four aspects of evangelism that will help us understand the relationship between the preaching of the Gospel to God's electing purposes in saving men. That's what we're going to look at and hopefully give a

reasonable, scripturally based answer to this morning. And this applies to the way the pulpit preaches the Gospel. This applies directly. It is the same principles in terms of you speaking to someone privately about the condition of their soul. There is a unifying thread, a unifying principle through all of it. The things that give me confidence in the pulpit when I preach, the things that help me not to be intimidated by the opposition or hostility of sinners to the message of Scripture, are the same things that should give you confidence, that should give you an animated spirit, an optimistic spirit, when you speak to the lost. Because ultimately, it's about the power of God and the purpose of God, and we're instruments in implementing that. It doesn't ultimately depend on our wisdom, our strength, our cleverness. We rely on the purpose of God to accomplish it, and we just want to be obedient to His plan.

Here's the bottom line of all of it. Here's the bottom line of all of it. This simple crystallization will help you understand where your theology is really at: we believe, and the Bible teaches, that the power of God is greater than the will of man. People who believe that God can be successfully resisted in the proclamation of the Gospel, that it depends on the sinner's choice, they say that, "We believe that the will of man is stronger than the power of God." It boils down to that ultimately. And so, we believe that Scripture teaches that God has a purpose, He has a plan, and He has the power to carry it out. It comes down to that simple summary of it. And the question for us this morning is, we as Christians when we're evangelizing, where do we fit between the power of God and the sinful will of man? That's what we want to look at here this morning.

The first thing that we're going to see as we just deal with the text as it's come to us, we want to see, first of all, we want to see the conversion of the Ephesians. The conversion of the Ephesians. And what we mean by that is Paul as he is just unfolding this prayer of praise to God for His work in salvation, Paul eventually turns to the experience of his readers and addresses them in verse 13 there. He had not, one last time I'll say it, Paul had just been praising God for choosing us, for adopting us, and for redeeming us in Christ. Praising the Lord Jesus Christ for shedding His blood for the cleansing of sin on the cross. Praising God for His mercy, His goodness, His kindness for saving unworthy men. And so, his heart is just bursting in vertical as he goes. Now, so important for you to understand. So critical in forming a proper view of this passage. So essential for forming a proper theology: Paul, when he turns his attention to the conversion of the Ephesians in verse 13, he didn't suddenly forget everything that he had just said in the prior ten verses. The prior ten verses, 3 through 12, are informing everything that he's saying in verse 13 stated differently. We should not separate in our minds God's electing purposes from the way, and the manner, and the effectiveness of evangelism. Those two are related and connected. They are not meant to be separate and kept in separate rooms like you didn't want witnesses to taint their testimony before they got into court. These things are joined together. They are interrelated. They are linked to one another. And so, Paul, having just praised God, now turns his attention to the experience of his own readers. And what we see is that they heard the message as real men in real time from a real human communicator of one sort or another.

Look at verse 13 with me. He says, "In Him, you also," speaking to the readers. You also, remember. You were engaged in this. You are part of the outworking of the plan of this. And what does he say about these people, about you also? He said, "After listening to the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation." We'll stop it right there. Understand that in that little phrase there, Paul is describing something that happened in time in the experience of his readers. Someone came and spoke to them. They listened with their ears, and they responded to that message. And so, in a very, very simple sense, we need to see that Paul is saying "Someone came to you and spoke to you about the message of truth. Someone came and spoke to you about the Gospel of salvation, and in response to hearing that message you believed." We'll talk about that aspect of it more next week. But just in that little bit of phrase here, I want you to notice something really important so that we would not be misled by distortions and misrepresentations and straw men of the doctrine of election. Biblically speaking, despite how our teaching might be represented by deceitful men, the Bible's presentation and picture of election is this: God does not randomly zap people with salvation as if they were just walking down the street, and then BOOM! "Whoa! I'm saved!" It doesn't happen that way. The implementation of election does not happen in a random vacuum with God arbitrarily doing things in which human communication is divorced from and is unrelated to. We are not entries on an accounting ledger in the matter of salvation, and we don't treat people, we don't speak to people, as though they were blocks of granite to be shaped according to our will. No. No. What we see from what is said here in verse 13 is that the Gospel addresses real men who actually think and hear and respond. Real men with their emotions. Real men with their will involved. The Gospel addresses men as intelligent thinking beings. Stated differently, God uses human messengers and He uses human communication to bring the truth, to bring the Gospel, to bear upon those whom He intends to save. This is not a matter of engineering. It's not a matter of accounting or anything like that. It is real people engaging real other people with real truth with real communication. That is how God implements His purposes of election. Paul says, "You heard the message of truth." A man, someone, came and preached the Gospel to them. Someone explained somewhere to them that Christ had shed His blood for sinners and called them to put their faith in Christ. That's what Paul is describing in a very summary form. Look at verse 13 with me again. He says, "You listen to the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation." Someone spoke. Someone listened. These people believed.

And so, they heard the message of truth about Christ and God's saving purpose. It was the Gospel of their salvation. In other words, Paul says that they recognized that their spiritual deliverance from sin and judgment was found in the words that were being spoken to them. This is what was true in the lives of the Ephesians who received this letter. And so, beloved, just as a matter of simple Bible reading and simple Bible interpretation, I want you to notice what's happening here. Remember, and I'm not going to repeat everything that I said about this, verse 3 to verse 14 is all one long sentence in the original text. It is a single, very complex, multifaceted, but ultimately, one unit of thought. That's so important to understand. And so, Paul as he is expressing in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." "He chose us," verse 4, "in Him." Verse 5, "He predestined us to adoption." Verse 7, "In him we have redemption." Verse 9, "The mystery of His will. The kind intention of His purpose," and on it goes.

Verse 11, "We obtained an inheritance, predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." All of that is flowing into and informing and building what he describes in verse 13. When salvation has been expressed for ten verses as God's purpose, then in verse 13 what we're seeing is the way in which God implemented His purpose in the lives of the readers of this epistle. And so the evangelism was not divorced from the electing purposes of God. No, the electing purposes of God gave birth to the evangelism. Stated differently, the evangelism, even in the flow of the text, which is our main point for this morning, even in the flow of the text, the evangelism that took place flowed out of God's saving purposes. It was not contrary to it. Election did not sever or silence evangelism. It gave rise to it. It was the soil from which evangelism grew. It was the wound from which evangelism was born. These things are not separate from one another. You must see that. That these are not in contradiction. They are perfectly consistent with one another. And so, even in this text, you cannot separate the human activity of evangelism from the divine activity of election, alright?

Now, let's say it one other way. God brings His saving purpose to humanity through human teachers who explain the Gospel and call on men to turn from sin to Christ. That is how God implements and carries out His saving purposes. Turn over to the book of 1 Thessalonians. 1 Thessalonians chapter 1. You're going to see the same principles interacting, inter-playing in the letter to the Thessalonians as well. Verse 2, 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 2. Paul says, "We give thanks to God always for all of you." He's thanking God for them. It's not that he credits them and he's thankful to them. He's thankful to God for them, which means that the spiritual result that is manifested in their lives is attributed to the saving activity of God. You thank the one who did it, not the one who didn't do it, okay? So, "We give thanks to God always for you," verse 4, "knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you." We're thankful for you, because we know that God chose you. Now look at what he says. He goes in and gives a description of past evangelism that resulted in the salvation of the Thessalonians. He says, verse 5, "For our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake." Vertically, he thanks God, "God, thank You. You chose them, and so I'm grateful to You. Now, oh, yeah, I'm talking to you guys. Let me remind you of how the Gospel came to you. There was us, and there was you, and we spoke words to you and communicated to you, and it came not just in human power, but it came with the power of the Holy Spirit, because God was blessing our proclamation of the Gospel to you. And that's what resulted in your conversion."

Look at it there. Verse 5. "Our gospel. We preached the Gospel and it came to you. It came in word, yes, but not in word only, it came in the power the Holy Spirit, with full conviction." So God chose them, and Paul says, "The reason that it activated power in your life was because the Gospel was preached to you. We did it, and we did it with power. I remember. The Holy Spirit was animating my preaching. He was animating my discussions with you, Thessalonians, and because of the power that was at work in me, I know that it was at work in you as well." And so, Paul preached the Gospel. He didn't sit on the sidelines and wait for the Thessalonians to get zapped. He went to them. He spoke to them, and God blessed the preaching to them. And look at the results in verse 9. For

those of you who are not Christians here today, right here in verse 9 and 10 is what I would have imprinted upon your mind as you walk out later this morning. People had come and told Paul what had happened in the lives of the Thessalonians in subsequent days. It says, "They themselves report about us what kind of reception we had with you. We were with you. We spoke to you. You received us." And what was the result of the evangelism? Well, just like in Ephesus where they turned and believed in the Gospel, they believed in Christ, so in Thessalonians Paul says. "You," middle of verse 9 here, "You turn to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come." And so, there was a speaking that took place, and the result that was manifested was the fact that they turned away from their idolatry and turned to Christ and put their trust in Him to rescue them, to save them, to deliver them, to help them, because there is a coming wrath that is a threat to every man on earth.

And so, we see in the biblical pattern of the way that Paul spoke about his ministry, the Gospel came. The Gospel was spoken. It was spoken with power, and there was a result of conversion that took place in some of those who heard. Some walked away. Others believed. All reflecting the prior antecedent purpose of God that He determined before the foundation of the world. God was carrying out His choice, and He carried it out through evangelism. And so, for those of you that are here, you're not a Christian, you need to turn your life to Christ. God is pleading with you even now. Right at this very moment, through the proclamation of His word, turn to Christ and be saved. Turn from your sin. Turn from your stubborn, selfish will. Turn from your lying ways, and turn to Christ for salvation because you are in danger. You are threatened by the looming wrath of God and you need to be saved. That is the message of the Gospel. And so, when we say that election does not short-circuit evangelism, we see it right here in the text.

Now, there's another reason that we evangelize. We've seen it flowing out of the text that we've been studying, but there's another reason that we evangelize that in its own would settle it for any Christian. If we knew nothing else, this reason alone would be enough to elicit our glad obedience, our glad sharing of the Gospel, even if we had no understanding of what was happening in the invisible realm. And it's this. Why do we evangelize? The command of Christ. The command of Christ. Let's make it simple. Why evangelism? Why the proclamation of the Gospel? It's really, really simple at one level. We do this, we evangelize, we share the gospel, we preach Scripture and call men to repent because Christ told us to and He is our Lord and Master and we obey Him.

Turn over to the end of Matthew 28. We don't need to spend much time here. I just want you to see it in this context. Why do we evangelize? We evangelize because Christ commanded us to do so. Matthew 28 in verse 18, Jesus, the second member of the Godhead who came to earth in furtherance of the electing salvific purposes of God, verse 18, Jesus after His resurrection shortly before he returned to heaven speaks to His disciples and we stand in their shoes now in the 21st century. This is still the command to the church. Why do we evangelize? Because verse 18, Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." It's a command. That's why we evangelize. He says,

"Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." The Great Commission implicitly, why implicitly? Explicitly involves human communication. "You, my disciples, you have my teaching. You go. You use your mouth and tongue, and speak, and instruct, and explain everything that I commanded to those who have not heard. That is my command upon the church," Christ says in Matthew 28.

And so, there's so much that's explained by what we see in that verse. Why is it that our church has aimed to be a teaching church? Because teaching is central to what Christ told His disciples to go do and because we love Christ, we revere Christ, we fear Christ. We are under the authority of this one to whom all authority was given. And He said, "Go." He said, "Teach." He said, "Make disciples." Sometimes that's going to involve teaching those who are already converted. Many times it's going to involve those who have not been yet converted. But we teach, not because we want to be popular, not because we think that others are necessarily going to like it. Our primary motivation for teaching, for evangelism, for sharing the Gospel is a vertical response to the Lord of the church who gladly laid down His life and shed His blood for our redemption and, therefore, we gladly respond and say, "Yes, of course, Lord! After all that you've done! After shedding your blood. After telling me to go. What else can I do, but go?" It helps us understand why the church was not designed to be a variation of the Rotary Club. We're not the Chamber of Commerce. We're not trying to please and market things to people so that they will like us. We teach, we evangelize, because as Christians we do what Christ says for us to do. He told us to go. He told us to teach. So we go and we teach.

For some of us it wouldn't be a bad epitaph to have written on our tombstone, "He went. She went. He taught. She taught. They went and they taught. They went and they spoke." It's what we would be remembered by, as individuals and as a church. Not everybody's going to teach in the same way that a pastor teaches. But you teach your kids. You speak with your friends. You speak with fellow students. You speak with your neighbors. And as you share these things, what I want you to see is that in those simple ways, in those simple interactions in which you speak with them, you are carrying out what Christ said. "Go and make disciples. Teach them. Show them the truth." That's why we do it. We explain truth to the lost so that they would have the information that they need upon which to repent and believe in Christ. Christ commanded us. That settles it. What else do I need? What other motivation would I need to open a Bible and teach it to someone, to share it with someone? Christ said to do this. That's all I need to know. That's independent of election, in one sense. In that, independent in this sense, in that it stands alone as a reason to do it.

So, we see the conversion of the Ephesians. We see the command of Christ. Now, let's get maybe a little more theological here. Someone insists, maybe one of you, someone insists, "I hear what you're saying, but still." It's that little three letter word my ears always perk up at. It's people's way of saying, "I disagree with you. I believe what you're saying. I hear what you're saying, but." As soon as they say, "but" they just discounted everything else so that they can get what they want to say out on the table, right? I can't tell you how often that happens. "I believe in the sovereignty of God, but." "I believe you

are sincere when you say that, but I really don't." Yeah, whatever. Someone insists, "Why go through this charade? Why would we go through this charade? Hasn't God already chosen the elect? Isn't God going to do what He wants to do? So, why do we bother? Why do we go through? Why do we act this out if the outcome is already predetermined?" So, that's where we're going to go now. That's what we're going to address, that aspect of the objection. And you know, look. I don't want to dismiss the fact that people ask this question in sincerity because they genuinely don't understand. And so, I'm going to interact with it as a sincere question. You know, "Help me understand this. I don't get the connection between this choosing purpose of God and the outcome. I don't understand why we even bother with evangelism then." Look, you need to understand this third point, which in order to keep the alliteration, I'm going to title "the choice of God." The choice of God. And I'll explain what I mean by that. We've seen the conversion of the Ephesians, the command of Christ. Why do we evangelize? We've seen it from the text. We've seen it from Christ. Now, we need to understand it from this perspective: the choice of God. This helps so much to understand. God has chosen who would be saved, yes. He determined that before the foundation of the world. But for His glory, because it pleased Him to do so, He chose something else at the same time. Listen to me carefully. God has chosen to use the means of human evangelism to bring about His electing purposes.

Turn over to Romans chapter 10 verse 14. God not only chose who would be saved. He sovereignly freely, wisely, lovingly, graciously chose the manner in which His purposes in eternity would be implemented in time. As we talk about this, oh! Once again you see it, right? You see that we are engaged in things that take us into a realm that transcends earth, that transcends men, that transcends human thought, and we enter into a realm where God has thought, God has spoken, God has deliberated within the councils of the Trinity and determined what He wants to do. We, once again, metaphorically speaking, take off our shoes and set them aside because we are standing on holy ground. We see the wisdom of God on display, Romans chapter 10. What you love about this if you've only heard these things taught in a superficial abstract way or heard them taught from a position of hostility toward them, what's very encouraging is to see that Scripture answers these important questions for us. We don't have to speculate. We can read the Bible in our own language with our own eyes and see what God has to say about it. I love God for that. I love the Bible for that.

Now, Romans chapter 10 verse 13. It says, "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." Now, that's the call of evangelism. You call on the name of the Lord and you will be saved. I promise you on the authority of Christ, He won't turn you away. Now, verse 14. "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" How can they call on Christ if they haven't believed in Him? And Paul just starts to unpack it. He pulls back layers of the onion to get to the core of things. He's just systematically working his way back to explain the purpose and the necessity of evangelism, of the proclamation of the Gospel. And he shows why it's necessary. He says, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him in whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent?" And so, he says, "Look." He says, "If no one tells them,

they will not have what they need in order to believe." Stated differently: proclaiming the Gospel is the means that God has chosen to save the people that He has chosen. He chose us outside of time. He accomplishes it inside of time through the means of evangelism. God uses evangelism to save men that He set apart before time began. And so, this passage in Romans forbids us from getting into fruitless, mistaken, misguided theological speculations and tells us, "Be real! Use a level of sanctified common sense! How is someone going to believe in a Savior that they've never heard about? How is someone going to hear about the Savior unless someone tells them? And how is that person going to tell them unless somehow they're sent to do it?" And so, from within the church is given rise the speakers who would declare the truth, and they go and they declare the truth to people who have not heard. Now, they've heard about Christ. Now, they're in a position to believe. God does not bypass, God does not go around the very means that He has established for people to be saved. They are to be saved through the proclamation of the Gospel. They are to call upon the One on whom they have heard. And if that doesn't happen, people will not be saved. And so, God uses evangelism to save the men that He set apart before time began.

Now, with our shoes still off on the holy ground of God, I want you to think about what this means when we preach on Sunday morning, when you share the Gospel with family, with friends, in your own area of relationships and responsibilities. Paul talks about this treasure has been given in earthen vessels. God has deposited this rich saving truth in a clay pot. What we should start to see, if you think honestly about your own limitations, your own human limitations, your own weaknesses, your sinful tendencies, your reluctance to share the Gospel, the sense of intimidation that you have when you're speaking to someone who is hostile to Christ, and you realize, if we we're really honest, we realize how weak we are. And yet, to realize that God works through that human weakness to achieve purposes that He had established before the foundation of the world. He uses words of men who will one day be gone. We're all mortal. We're all going to be gone, some of us sooner rather than later. And in our weakness, in our sinful tendencies, in our utter imperfections, in our lack of knowledge, in our lack of courage, somehow, God through the invisible powerful hand, so to speak, of the Holy Spirit works through our weakness and accomplishes eternal salvation and works a work in a human heart that we could never have done on our own. And so, we're left with the realization, we're left with the reality that a glorious holy God works through our weak means to achieve an eternal perfect salvation in the hearts of those who hear and believe. Do you know what that does among other things? That glorifies God. That glorifies His power. It glorifies His wisdom. It glorifies His ability. He is so strong, so mighty, so powerful in salvation that He can work through someone like you and like me to bring it to pass. And by using weak, fallible, broken vessels to accomplish His purposes, God shows how mighty He is to save. I just want to say, "Wow! Praise God." For some of us, myself included, He used the words of men with whose philosophy of ministry we would disagree and saved us through their ministry. That doesn't mean that we replicate their philosophy of ministry because of that, but it just goes to show God is so strong and mighty to save that He can work through such a seemingly impossible, weak, fallible, clumsy, method of human messengers. Wow! And what it does when we're true, and we're actually opening the Bible and showing verses is this. What it does is it brings us as the human messenger

down, and kind of like it's on a pulley, as the human messenger and the human will of those being preached to and our inabilities, as we're bringing all of that down to the level of reality outside of our silly puffed up pride, like on a pulley when we diminish the power of the human messenger, the power of the Word of God is just lifted higher and higher and higher, because the Word of God works through weak human messengers to accomplish a powerful result in those who hear.

So, the Holy Spirit empowers our communication, which otherwise has no power of its own, to awaken sinners to eternal life. There's a realm that I don't move in, but once in a while I intersect with it, of people who will come and they'll tell you how many souls they saved over the weekend. "I saved 43 souls last week." I had conversations like that in the early days of our church right in this room of people who came and visited. Look, that's just so repugnant. I didn't save anybody's soul. God does the saving and He does it despite me, not because of me. He does it through the power of His Spirit, through the power of His Word, because He is the one who has chosen to establish evangelism to accomplish His purposes, but I can't go out and make anybody get saved. You as parents who desperately want your children to get saved, aren't you the living example of this? You would save them if you could. You would lay down your life for them if you could. You would reach into their heart and convert it yourself if you could, but you know what? You don't have that power. And it weakens you, and it humbles you, and it makes you weep, and mourn, and pray, and your own household becomes a living illustration of your impotence to convert people on your timetable.

So, what you're seeing in your private life is just a reflection, it's an illustration, it's a sample of what's true in the totality of reality in the work of God through the church. We are humbled and we are dependent upon Him to do it. And when He does do it, when He does save, rightly understood, the man of God, the woman of God, the young person of God says, "Glory to God! His powerful Word did it again. It wasn't from me, because I know how weak I am. I know how inconsistent my prayers are. I know how many times I turned away when there was an opportunity to speak." You can relate, can't you? Every one of you can relate to that. And so, what this does, when we properly understand it, as I see it, is it doesn't cause us to collapse into despair and introspection. It just turns our eyes back to God and the God of the Word and say, "Wow! He must really be powerful to save if He works through someone like me." And thus, He gets the praise. Thus, He gets the glory. Thus, Paul says three times in verses 6, 12, and 14, "to the praise of His glory."

So, we're not to think about election or evangelism in isolation from each other. They are different aspects of God's one great plan of salvation. We reject the foolish idea, we see through the straw man, the false argument, that evangelism isn't necessary because God's already determined what's going to happen. No, no, we respect God. We respect His Word. We say, "No, Jesus told us to go. He commanded us to go. Scripture says that this is how God saves. They can't believe unless they hear, and they can't hear, and they won't hear, unless I or someone tells them." And so, we do away with all of that speculative foolishness asking questions that were never meant to be seriously entertained, and we say, "Oh, of course! I got saved, because someone told me!" You know, that person in the

corner is only going to be saved if someone tells them. And so, it doesn't reduce us to irrelevance. It does not make us inactive in evangelism. The saving purposes of God animate everything that we do, and we gladly obey. We gladly go out. We gladly share Christ. If for no other reason, we want to tell one more person about our glorious Lord. "One more needs to hear, Lord. One more needs to hear about Your glory. One more needs to hear about Your love, and mercy, and kindness. One more needs to hear about Your sovereign hidden power. One more needs to see Christ lifted up, even if they turn away, Lord. I want the air to be animated with sound waves that are echoing Your glory, because I love you that much, O God, for who You are and for what You've done for me." The child of God who really values His salvation could never be silent. It would never entertain the thought that election gives me the pass to be silent. "I don't want to be silent! I want to tell everybody that will listen!" Because your heart is so full of love for God that your mouth has to speak to let it out. You can't help but say it. You can't help but declare it. You can't help but glorify God with your tongue. And so, out, out, out on the emergency exits to your left and to your right. Out with all, by whatever exit necessary, out with all of the foolishness that says that God's electing purposes would silence His children in evangelism. Not possible. Not true. Not God's purpose.

Let's look at one final thing in the remaining time that we have here this morning. I think I've gone over 50 minutes, so you all won't have to worry about my health now. Let's talk about the conviction of evangelism. The conviction of evangelism. What I mean by that is what are the attitudes that move us and motivate us in evangelism? The conviction of evangelism. I'm just going to give you six bullet points, one right after the other here. As we've already seen, and as I hope that you have embraced and understood, the doctrine of election does not make us cold and indifferent to sharing the Gospel. It does not make our preaching cold and lifeless. It does not make your heart indifferent to those whom you know and love that are outside of Christ. Quite to the contrary. Quite to the contrary. The greatest power in the history of the church has been shown when it most embraced these doctrines and acted upon them. Scripture models a multifaceted spirit that animates our interactions with the lost, and this is going to end up being kind of a repeat of some the things I've already said. Election does not make us cold and indifferent. I want to reiterate that. Scripture models a multifaceted spirit that energizes our attitudes, our thinking, our relationships outside the church.

What can we say? I'm going to give you six, and they're going to be really quick, so write fast. First of all, we gladly evangelize. We gladly evangelize. Look over at Romans chapter 1. We gladly evangelize. We gladly proclaim Christ. Romans chapter 1 verse 14. The Apostle Paul is speaking. Romans 1 verse 14. Paul says, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." Verse 15. "So, for my part, I am eager to preach the Gospel to you also who are in Rome." "I'm eager. I'm glad to evangelize," the Apostle Paul says. The biblical pattern is to anticipate gladly the opportunity to open our mouth on behalf of Christ. That's one of the convictions of evangelism. We're glad to do it. We're glad to have one more opportunity to obey Christ who told us to go and to teach. We're glad to have one more opportunity to use our fallen lips and tongue to declare the glory of our Redeemer. "Oh, just, I've got one more! I'd better make it good! I want to make it good! I want to tell one more about Christ. I'm

eager to do that, because it all flows out of the purposes of God." So, we gladly evangelize.

Secondly, what do we think about the lost? Secondly, we grieve for them. We grieve for them. The plight and the eternal peril of the lost consumes our hearts. Those of you that are in here today who are not Christians, I want you to understand something. What we're about to talk about is the way that I think about you. This is the way that I feel about you right now. Those of you who are not Christians, what we're about to see, this is how I feel about you as I speak and share the Gospel with you once more. This is the biblical model. Romans chapter 9 verse 1. The Apostle Paul says, as he talks about the Jews, as a converted Jew speaking about unconverted Jews. He says, "I am telling the truth in Christ, I'm not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." He is so overwhelmed with the thought of their lostness that it just sorrows his heart. It saddens him. It grieves him so much that he's at the point of saying, "If it were possible for me to give up my own salvation, so that you could be saved, I would do it." Look, that is not the spirit of a man who has been rendered cold by the doctrine of election. And I speak to you parents because I know that you can identify with this: the way that you look at your children in their unsaved state, you identify with this, don't you? Or you can remember it before your kids were converted. You can identify with this. Those of you who are truly Christians would be happy to see your children have a mediocre employment career, but you would rejoice if you knew that they were in Christ. And when they're not, there's always a dark shade of gray in the overall canvas of the painting of your life that you're waiting for the Lord to turn to a bright color of joy, right? I'm not making this up, am I? I'm not manipulating you with emotion. I'm just speaking the utter Gospel truth.

What I want you to see is that this is the attitude, this is the conviction of evangelism, this is one aspect of our attitude toward the lost. It grieves us. It's sorrowful to think that people whom we have shared air with, people that we go to events with, people that we have walked through life with, it's so sad and sorrowful to think that in the end there's going to be such a divergence of destinies, me to glory in heaven with Christ, and as I'm going up, I reach back, and I can't grab you to bring you with me, because by heart conviction, by heart affection, we would have everyone in our sphere of influence saved, if only we could. And the fact that they're cold and indifferent grieves us. The day will come, beloved, you young people especially, the day will come when this human voice will be silenced, and I'll be taken up, and I'm not going to be able to grab hold of you and pull you up. You must believe in Christ yourself. You must turn to Christ to be saved, and until you do, while you continue in your stubborn rebellion, you engage your sinful lives and love your stubborn self-centered deception of life, while you're doing that, I and the Christians around you grieve, sorrow, plead with God for you. We're not indifferent to it. It breaks our heart, and so election doesn't make us cold. The doctrine of election doesn't produce cold-hearted believers. We believe the fullness of God, and His love for sinners animates us and our natural human affections for you take on a vertical dimension, because we want you to be saved. We want you to be with us as well. You're

not an accounting abstraction to us. We want you to be saved. There's that rain again, right? You hear that rain falling on the roof just like it did a couple three weeks ago? Even the weather, going outside of Scripture here, even the weather is weeping over your soul right now, those of you that resist.

Now, what else do we do? Thirdly, we said, we gladly evangelize. We grieve over the lost. Thirdly, we reason with them. We reason with them. We graciously explain truth and uphold our faith to them. Look over at 1 Peter chapter 3. 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 15. Peter says, "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." We gladly give an account. We gladly explain. We're not angry and vindictive because someone disagrees with us. We do it with gentleness, with reverence. We reason with them. "You need to think about this. Look at this Scripture. You need to think about that. Look at this which shows that your worldview is wrong." We reason with them, and we do it with kindness, not with hostility.

Fourthly, we appeal to them. Turn back to 2 Corinthians, and as you're turning, we appeal to them. Our hearts are so engaged for the souls of the lost with a desire for their spiritual well-being that we humble ourselves for the sake of their soul. We're glad to be accounted a fool. We're glad to be mocked and rejected, if only some would be saved. And we appeal to such a level that we beg. We even beg! 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 20. How do we appeal to those who are outside? We are ambassadors for Christ. As though God were making an appeal through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. We appeal. We beg. "Oh, please listen! Please don't walk away. Please don't harden your heart again! Please don't stick your fingers in your ears like that and stop up your ears, so that you don't hear. Please don't do that! Please listen! Please hear me! Don't you understand that this is the love of God? That this is your only possible means of conversion? I beg you, listen! Hear me! Listen! Don't look away. Don't turn away the eye contact. Don't look at the back of your hand. I'm giving you the words of eternal life, and I beg you to listen and to turn your heart to Christ." We appeal to them. And you know, you read some of the great evangelists in times gone by. You read about George Whitefield and others. There were literal tears that were wetting the pages of their Bible. They were weeping for their audience, because their affection was so genuine and so real. I don't know where the buckets of my tears are. I feel it in my heart, but they never seem to come out in the pulpit. But we beg. We plead. We appeal to you, "Be converted to Christ."

We command them. Number five, we command them. We have a divine message to which they are accountable. The spirit is not so much that I command you, but that God commands you. This is not merely an emotional appeal. You must understand that this message comes to you with divine authority, and you will be held to account for how you respond. Mark chapter 1 verse 15. Mark chapter 1 verse 15. Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." An imperative, in fact, two of them in that verse. "You repent. I command you," Christ says. "You believe. I command you, I say." So that your refusal to believe, your refusal to turn,

your refusal to submit to Christ, mark his, is an act of disobedience to the command of God Himself. The Gospel isn't simply an appeal. It is also a command to be believed.

Finally, last thing, just a quick review. We gladly evangelize. We grieve for them. We reason with them. We appeal to them. We command them. Finally, point number six of this conviction of evangelism: we pray for them. We pray for them. Turn back to Romans 10 as I close. Romans chapter 10. Paul, again speaking of those unconverted Jews, says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."

Let me wrap it all up in a bow here. The great realities of election and evangelism humble us, so that we depend on God for the results. Even people who think they believe in the power of the human will in salvation, they show on their knees that they don't really believe what they say they believe, because they too pray, "God save them." They appeal to the sovereignty of God to do a work that they can't do on their own. And so in all of this, in the doctrine of election, in the doctrine of evangelism, in the way that they interrelate, we're humbled under all of it to such a point that we say, "God, we are dependent upon you to do anything with our meager words to accomplish your purposes. Oh, God, won't you give power to your Word? Oh, God, won't you do a work in their hearts? Oh God, won't you save them, because, oh God, I can't. I can't." All I can do is stand up here as a weak, imbecilic speaker and point you to the Word of God and pray for God to do in your heart what I can't do, because I'd do it if I can, but I can't.

So how does election relate to evangelism? You should see that our love for God's truth so engages the totality of our being at an intellectual, emotional, volitional level that the totality of our person embraces the responsibility, the opportunity, and the privilege to evangelize, and with humble pleading voices of authority based on Scripture, we call men to Christ. The doctrine of election has never made an understanding Christian cold and indifferent. It has engaged him with the power, with the saving purposes, with the compulsions of mercy, kindness and love that animated God to send Christ in the first place. And so, it glorifies God all the more that He would use us to accomplish His purpose. And so, brothers and sisters in Christ, share the Gospel freely. Somehow, in ways that we can't understand, and in ways that we can't predict, God will use His Word, and He will turn sinners through our faithful ministry to Christ. And they may turn and thank us for what we have done, but, glory to God, they'll quickly forget the human messenger, and their eyes like ours will be lifted up and say, "All glory to this saving God."

Bow with me in prayer.

Father, two things. Make us effective in evangelism, and secondly, save those in this room who are outside of Christ and pull all of that together, Father, for Your glory. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

You have been listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church. For more information about our ministry including Pastor Don's blog and our location and service

times, please visit us at truthcommunitychurch.com. You will also find Don's sermon library where you can download free messages on many biblical passages and topics. This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.