The Doctrine of Election

Divine Election

S. LEWIS JOHNSON, PHD

2 Thessalonians 2



[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the privilege of the study of Thy word. We're grateful to Thee for all of the blessings that are ours by virtue of the fact that in ages past that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit entered into a compact to elect and bring to, the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, those whom Thou does desire to have fellowship with throughout eternity.

We praise Thee that Thou didst include us, and we, Lord, acknowledge there is nothing in us that would, in any way, suggest that we are worthy of the blessing of election, irresistible grace, calling, and justification. We know that it is all of grace, and we give Thee praise and thanksgiving as we study tonight in the Scriptures. Give us understanding. Enable us to profit from our time together. Teach us the things that are important in our Christian faith, and enable us to walk in submission to the word of God. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

S. LEWIS JOHNSON GIVES AN OVERVIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

[Message] Now I'd like for you to turn in your bibles to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and would you listen as I read verses 13 through 17? In which, the apostle has some very important words to say about the Doctrine of Election, which is the next of the topics in our series of Basic Bible Doctrine. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13 through verse 17, the apostle writes,

> "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Unto whom he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or by our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope

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through grace, Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work."

It's always helpful to review the foundation of our faith, and when we speak about the Doctrine of Election, we are speaking about something that is right at the foundation of our faith. It's always good to review, also. Remember Paul spoke in his second epistle to young Timothy and said, "And the things which thou has heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." So in the Christian faith, we do review the foundations of our faith, and we teach these things to others in order that the faith may continue to be propagated.

There is an old story which I have liked about a woman who lived in Glasgow, an old woman of covenanting stock. Her minister was Dr. Norman McLeod, of The Barony, and he used to visit her. And she was deaf, and she had one of those ear trumpets that you have often seen people who are hard of hearing use. And she used to confront him and demand, "Gang or the fundamentals, Dr., gang or the fundamentals." In which she would plead with him to go over the fundamentals of the faith because she enjoyed them. Today we turn to this passage here in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and we're going to gang or some of the fundamentals.

In fact, these verses are a kind of theology of Paul in miniature, particularly verses 13 and 14. In fact, one of the commentators, James Denny has said, "The 13th and 14th verses of this chapter are a system of theology in miniature." These verses form part of an apostolic thanksgiving meant to encourage the Thessalonians who were agitated by reports mentioned in verses 1 and 2 and by the knowledge of the work of evil that was going on in the world. Looking in the preceding verses, you will notice the 7th verse says, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder, until he be taken out of the way." Now what Paul wants them to realize is, that there is a work of God going on as well. So what we are seeing in our society is a work of God and a work of Satan, and they are both going on at the same time. The mystery of inequity is at work, but God also is working. And this work of God is grounded in a loving election. It has its triumphs too, as the apostle will point out.

Now the section that I've chosen, verses 13 through 17 may be divided into three parts. There is the thanksgiving for the work of God in verse 13 and verse 14. Now you can tell, of course, from the reading of this passage that this particular passage is one that is thoroughly tied into the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. In fact, I don't think we would be wrong at all to say it is a thoroughly Calvinistic thanksgiving.

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Now we must, of course, define an expression like that I guess. When we talk about Calvinism we are simply saying that that one word sums up a number of doctrines that might be called the doctrines of the grace of God, and that's the only reason, incidentally, that I use the term Calvinism because, after all, if there is anyone that believes that we ought to base our faith on the Bible itself, alone, more than I, I have not run across that individual. So when I use the term it's simply an easy way to say, well, these are certain things that the New Testament teaches concerning the sovereignty of God. And you can use the one term and everybody who's knowledgeable knows you believe one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, those doctrines that have to do with it and you don't have to name them every time.

You've all heard the memorable and classical definition of a crab, in which, the crab is said to be a red fish which crawls backwards. Now, that has been upon good authority pronounced to be a highly scientific, and essentially correct, definition with three incidental corrections. However, first, the crab is not a fish. And second, it's not red. And third, it doesn't crawl backwards. Now I'm afraid that there is not a little which passes for Calvinism in the world today which calls for just such incidental criticisms as this learned and scientific definition of the crab.

The principium, or the principle, of Calvin's Theology is not simply the sovereignty of God, but God who is sovereign. In other words, the stress in all that Calvin taught was upon God, but a sovereign God. Now when we look at what we have before us there, this thanksgiving, I'm sure that you will see, because it's very plain, it seems to me, that the passage teaches that God is sovereign in our salvation.

Now, we've come to this passage, and I want you to notice as we go through it that the Apostle Paul, here, deals with seven great anchors of the faith, and that's one of the things that we want to stress. But they all serve to stress the fundamental fact that salvation is of the Lord. In verse 13, we have what could be called the eternal purpose of God, and then in verse 13 and verse 14, we have the historical outworking of it. Now let's look at these seven facts, or great anchors of the faith in these two verses, first of all.

Now, the first of them that is mentioned is that these Thessalonians have been loved. Notice what he says, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord." That's the ultimate basis of our salvation. We are the product of the love of God. You'll notice also in verse 16, there is a reference of this too, "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us." When we talk about the basis of our salvation, we say, "It is grounded in the love of God." Now that love is a sovereign love. No one can say, "I will love so and so." A young man doesn't say, within his heart, I will fall in love with Joan or Martha, or whatever it will be, because

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love is a sovereign thing. You cannot make yourself fall in love. It is something that is sovereign in its very nature. So when God says in the word of God that he has loved us, it is a sovereign activity of God. It is, therefore, not grounded in any merit that is in us.

Now you can see that also in human love. When two people fall in love, the chances are you could probably think up ten reasons yourself why he should not love her, and particularly twenty why she should not love him. But those who are in love don't notice those things. They fall in love sovereignly, and they don't see anything often that's bad, but they sometimes don't see anything in the person who is the object of their affection. Love is a sovereign thing. When we read in the Bible that God has loved us, it's not because of anything that he saw in us, not one single thing. That's why our salvation is truly of grace. But the first step is that we have been loved.

And the second step is also referred to in verse 13, we have been elected. He says, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." That word choice here is a word that means to take to oneself. The stress is upon the sovereignty activity of God, who has loved us and taken us to himself. If you want a good illustration of it, you could turn to Deuteronomy chapter 7, and, there, read of God's love for Israel, in which he said it was not because of anything that was in them, but simply because he fell in love with them. So they have been elected. So right in the beginning of the apostle's statement here of this little miniature in theology, he's stressing the fact that God is sovereign in our salvation. He has sovereignly loved us, and he has elected us.

Now if we had time, we could talk about many of the aspects of election that people think about as problems, but I'll just, as we go along, mention a few of them and hope I will be able to answer some of the questions that trouble you. One of the things that you will often hear from people, in order to object to the biblical Doctrine of Election is this, they will say, "God does not elect individuals, he elects peoples." And when you turn to Romans chapter 9, 10, and 11 where we have a great deal of stress upon the sovereign activity of God in election and the sovereign activity of God in reprobation, frequently people will say, "But that is not individual election, that is corporate election. God does not," and it's amazing, but many contemporary theologians try to make this case, "God does not love individually. He doesn't select individuals, but he selects peoples. He selects a corporate group." As if, of course, that's supposed to tone down the notion of election.

Why, the same principle is involved in the choosing of a whole people that is found in the choosing of an individual. And if you choose a whole people, such as the Jews or the Gentiles, you have exercised the same sovereign right that you do when you save one

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person, and in fact, to save a whole people in the sense of electing a whole people, if there is something wrong in electing an individual, there is something much more wrong in electing a company of people. But all you have to do if someone say's to you, "Election is not individual, but corporate," is to turn to this passage. It says, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," and it is clear that he's talking about the Thessalonians. He's not talking about the Jews. He's not talking about the Gentiles. He's not talking about a corporate group. He's talking about those people that were in the church in Thessalonica.

Now, on what basis does God elect? It might surprise you to know that Arminians believe in election. Calvinists believe in election. In fact, anyone who believes in the Bible believes in election. It's not enough for a person to say, "I believe in election." You must ask, "What kind of election do you believe in?" There are only three alternatives when you come down to the simplicities of it. One, God elects the good people. Well, now the Bible speaks plainly against that. Anyone who is a believing man, or a Christian man, would know that God does not elect the good people, for the Bible tells us it's not by works of righteousness that we have done, that we are saved. We're not saved by good works. We're not good people. The Bible says we are sinners, all of us. So that's wrong, we know that. So that eliminates any idea by an individual, who believes in salvation by works, that God elects the good.

Among those who are believing people, there are, generally speaking, two competing views. One, God elects those that he foresees will believe. In other words, God, from ages past, looked down through the years and saw who would, of their own free will, make a decision for him. And then, having that foresight and seeing the faith that they would exercise, and then, he chooses that individual. That is the Arminian concept of biblical election, that God looked down through the years, saw who would believe of their own free will, that is, unmoved by the Holy Spirit, of their own free will and then he choose, long before they came into existence, those who would believe. That's the Arminian doctrine of election.

Now, if you'll just think about that for a moment, who is really doing the choosing? Well, you can see that it is man who has done the choosing. It is man who, of his own free will, believes the message that is preached to him. God merely ratifies the choice of man, according to that system. That's very popular. You'll find it even in the Scofield Bible. So it's a very popular system of election which is wide spread in our evangelical circles. That is conditional election. That's what's meant by conditional election. Election conditioned upon the faith, or the free will of men.

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Now if you'll think about it again, it raises some other questions too. Does not the Bible teach that God is all knowing? Does not the Bible teach that God is omniscient? Well then how can we believe that God is omniscient if he looked down through the years and came to the knowledge of who would believe, of their own free will, and then chose them? It's obvious, according to that system, that there was a time, at least logically; there was a time that he did not know. If he looked down through the years to find out who would believe, there was a time when he didn't have that information. So if he gained in knowledge, then logically, he was not omniscient in ages past.

So it is clear that that is not only a doctrine which suggests that it is man who does the choosing after all, but it's a doctrine that is a slander upon one of the fundamental attributes of our God, his omniscience. And even if we say, "Well, he has known that eternally." We still have the logical problem. And if you don't want to respond to that, then I ask you, "What's the point of looking down through the years?" What's the point of choosing according to foreknowledge if it's just as certain that that individual was to be saved because it's an eternal knowledge? Then there is no difference in certainty between the Calvinistic doctrine and the Arminian doctrine. So, the second system, the Arminian system, has fundamental weakness, aside from the fact that we don't have free will because we are sinners. We've already discussed that in this series of messages. Aside from the fact, other facts, this is just not biblical teaching.

The other alternative, the only other one, is that God elects those that he has purpose to save by faith. In other words, God chooses according to his own good pleasure. So he sovereignly elects. So he does not elect the good. He does not elect those whom he foresees would believe. He elects those who he has purpose to save by faith. In other words, his purpose is carried out in his election. Now is the reason for our salvation in man or in God? Well I know that most of you in this room would answer, "The reason for our salvation is in God." And those of you that didn't even know anything about this that I'm talking about now, you would want to say, if you're a believer, "The reason must be in God." And that's what you would say before you thought. And that's right because it is the fundamental response of a believing man to say, "My salvation is of the Lord."

Often his mind gets in the way, and he thinks things rather than listening to the word of God. Our salvation, and the reason for it, is in God. It's grounded, the Bible says, not in man's will, Paul says, Romans 9:16, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." "It is not of him that willeth." So, how can our election be based upon a foreseen faith arising out of free will, when Paul says, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy?" Our salvation is not of man's will. It is surely not of man's good works. In 2 Timothy chapter 1, the apostle says in the 9th verse, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not

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according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." It is not of our choice, it is of God's choice. It is of according to God's good pleasure. As Paul says in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 5 and verse 11, it is of grace, as he said in that passage I've just read, and it is also based upon his foreknowledge, not his foreknowledge of what we would do, but of his foreknowledge of what he would do for us. In other words, all human merit is gone in the divine method of election.

That reminds me of the black, hope you'll pardon this, who stood up in a meeting and said, "My salvation was accomplished by myself and by the Lord." He said, "I did everything I possibly could to escape him and he did the rest." [Laughter] Salvation is of the Lord. Isn't it a sad thing that men love God everywhere but when he is on the throne? When he becomes sovereign, then we think of all kinds of objections to the plain statements of the word of God.

You know this past weekend I was in Colorado speaking to the young people who are students at the Western Bible College in their retreat. It was impressed upon me; again, the fact that when we talk about some of these great doctrines, we are talking about that which is the fundamental pure wisdom of God. When we say that God is sovereign and when we recognize his sovereignty, even in matters that we don't fully understand, we are saying, when we say that God is sovereign, that this is his fundamentally pure wisdom. He is sovereign.

Now a Christian believer must, ultimately, come to the place where he recognizes that there are things that are beyond him, but are, nevertheless, plainly taught in the Bible, and he must come to the place where he can say, "That is the pure wisdom of God, and I don't fully understand it yet, but when I get to heaven, perhaps some further light will be thrown upon it." But we accept it because it is plainly taught in the word of God. So God elects, not the good, not those whom he looked down through the years to see would believe of their own free will, but he elects those whom he has purpose to save from ages past through faith.

Now the third of the steps of salvation is referred to in verse 13 when he says, "Because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The "sanctification of the spirit" here is the pre-salvation ministry of the Holy Spirit. We'll talk about that next Tuesday night, the Lord willing. This is infallible grace, it's the spiritual counterpart of the familiar proverb, "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink." When the gospel is preached, you can preach the gospel to them, but you cannot make men respond. I could preach the gospel just as plainly as it can be preached; incidentally, I think I can do that. I think I can preach it just

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as plainly as it can be preached, but preaching a plain gospel does not mean that men will respond.

Sometimes young people will put little badges on their coats and they get excited over little things without reading the Bible. I remember, I've spoken about this before, but I'm repeating it in this series because this is basic Bible doctrine. I remember one group of young men, they got real excited, and they had written all over their coats, and they put little pins on it and said, "The message is heard when love is felt." I think they turned it around, "When love is felt the message is heard, and everybody got all excited over that. Until some of us said, "Well, wait a minute, what does the Bible say?" The Bible doesn't say that at all. The Bible doesn't say when love is felt the message is heard. Oh I'm not against a person loving individuals, and hoping they will be saved. But let me ask you to think for a moment. You're really being very unscriptural when you do something like that. If that's so, then the Lord Jesus Christ should have had absolutely perfect one hundred percent response because no one ever loved more pure than our Lord, but they crucified him.

And if you're not satisfied with that, think of the Apostle Paul, he did a pretty good job of loving too, and a pretty good job of preaching a plain gospel. He preached an accurate word, and he preached it out of love, and they did everything but stone him to death. They stoned him. They put him in prison. When love is felt the message might be heard, and it certainly is more likely to be heard if it's accompanied by the love of God in the individual. But in the final analysis, salvation is of the Lord. It's God the Holy Spirit who brings men to Christ. So when the apostle says here, "He hath chosen you salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," and that sanctification here means simply the setting apart work of the Holy Spirit in infallible grace so that when an individual hears there is responsiveness to it.

Jim Boyce, who is the Pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse preaches, likes to say he feels like he's the kind of man who is tossing matches out into a congregation with the hope and occasionally the experience that they will land in some gun powder there, and there will be an explosion and a responsiveness. And that is expressive, I think, of what we do when we preach. We preach the word of God as plainly and as accurately as we can, but salvation is something that God performs. So they have been set apart. They have been called. They have been loved. They have been elected. They have been set apart. It's true, you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. You can bring a man to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaim the gospel to him, but you cannot bring him to the possession of salvation. Only God can do that.

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Now this is worked out in history, Paul says, and it is done by evangelism. Notice verse 14, "Unto whom he called you by our gospel." Now that has, I think, bearing on another objection that some people raise to the question of election. They will say, "Well if it's really true that God has elected from ages past certain people, what's the point of preaching the gospel? Those that are going to be saved are going to be saved." Well let me tell you something, those that are going to be saved are going to be saved. That's right. They are going to be saved, but when God determined in his purpose, in his good pleasure, that Lewis Johnson, that Howard Prier, that Charles Howard, etcetera and that Dee Cox, in order that we have a feminine name here, that Dee Cox should be saved, when he determined that we should be saved, he determined that we should be saved through means. And the means are, upon occasion, prayer, witnessing, and preaching of the word. These are the means which are just as much determined as the end. So that's why we preach the gospel, even though we know that those who have been elected by God shall come.

If I don't preach the gospel, if I sit back and say, "Well, those that are going to be saved are going to be saved, by so doing, I'll not keep anybody from going to heaven because God will lay his hand upon some other preacher and bring them to the knowledge of Christ through them." But when we stand at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, God will remind me of a few things. So we preach the gospel because the end and the means to that end are determined by him. It's enough, of course, that he tells us to preach the gospel. This is the pure wisdom of God. When we get to heaven, we're going to say, "It couldn't have been done in any other better way than this." So they have been evangelized. The gospel of truth here, that's the means of the calling. There is no salvation without the gospel. That's why it's necessary.

Now the fifth step is also mentioned in verse 13, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Everything is passive up to this point, but this is active. This is something that we do. We believe. But when we say that we believe, we don't mean that we believe of ourselves, we mean, simply, that we are responsible for the act of faith initiated by God because he gives us faith. The Bible teaches that he gives faith. Augustine said he came to the knowledge that faith was a gift because the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4 and verse 7 that everything we have is a gift of God. He said, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" That was the text from which Augustine came to understand that faith was the gift of God and that the Semi-pelagians, who taught that faith was the means by which men were saved, a work of man, and

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meritorious, that's why he came to understand their doctrine was false. So God does not believe. Man believes, but the faith that we exercise is given us by God.

Now the sixth step is we have been saved. He says, "Hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Now it's sometimes said election is not for salvation. It's rather interesting, that's why I chose this text tonight, and it's rather interesting that many people are saying that today. Election is not individual. Election is not for salvation. Election doesn't determine your eternal destiny. It's for service. But you can see from this text, it's also for salvation. "He has you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." It is for service, but it's fundamentally first for salvation. The proximate, or the near aim, of the work of God in God's election is our salvation. The intermediate aim is a holy life. He chose us that we should be saved. He chose us that we should live a holy life.

And incidentally, we're not elect if there's no holiness in our life. Does that surprise you? The Bible makes that very plain, that when a man comes to faith in Christ, his nature is changed. In fact, some men call it a definitive change. We pass from death to life. It has to be manifested, has to be. Now it doesn't have to be manifested to me. I may look at Tom and say, "Tom looks like the same old guy to me, says he's saved." Sooner or later, I expect to see something, of course, but it may be that he's doing something I don't see, and furthermore, my mind and my will are touched by sin still, and I don't always see things correctly. You knew that. I don't always see things correctly, none of us do. We pass judgment on things that, when we get to heaven, we'll probably find out we were wrong once or twice [laughter]. But the Scriptures make very plain that if a man has been born again, there will be some holiness appearing in his life. There has to be. It will be manifested in a transformed life. There will be some works there.

The ultimate goal of our salvation is the glory of God. Now he says here that we are chosen for that. In the 14th verse, this is the seventh of these steps, "Unto which he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." So, we have been loved. We have been elected right on down the line, and we shall be glorified. This is the last stage in Paul's magnificent mini-theology here. One of the commentators on the Greek says, "Paul lets his religious imagination range from everlasting to everlasting." How true it is.

I remember a story, which I read a long time ago, about a student who was attending a theological seminary where they taught the Ordo Salutis. Ordo means "order" in Latin, and salutis is the genitive case of the word that means "salvation." So, ordo salutis means "the order of salvation." It's the study of the steps in our salvation. It's the study of the order in which God brings a man to the knowledge of Christ. And this young student

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was taught that God foreordained us. He elected us. He foreknew us. He called us. He sanctified us. He glorified us. There were seven steps: foreordained, elected, foreknow, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified. And so when the exam came he studied very carefully the ordo salutis, among his other questions, hoping he'd get that one on the exam, and sure enough, he walked in the room, and there it was. Name the steps of the ordo salutis. And so, he waited until the end of the hour because he thought he knew that one so well, and he started writing down, and he wrote down and when he got down to glorified he counted back, and he only had six, and he knew there were seven. And so he racked his mind; the first bell rang. He still couldn't think of it. And finally the second bell rang. The professor said, "I'll have to have your papers." And he knew there were seven and so he wrote down after glorified, more glory. [Laughter] Well, of course, he was right, the professor undoubtedly graded him down, but he was right because glorified is followed by more glory on throughout all eternity.

Now, you know, if you were to read something like this and read it as a natural man, you would say, "Well, Paul says that we are elected because we're loved. We're culled by the Holy Spirit. We are set apart by the Holy Spirit. We believe as a gift of God, and we're chose unto salvation. Well, then what motive have we for living a Christian life? Let's just sit back and do nothing." Now there's no question that Paul has taught exactly what I told you. I just defy you to find anything but what I've taught you there. I'd be glad to argue with you, have a little disputation, like they use to have in reform times. You stand up, present your case, and I'll stand up and present Paul's case [laughter]. I know what will happen. I'll win. But now did you notice what Paul says after this? He says in verse 15, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or by our epistle," so then, stand firm.

People say, "Calvinism, believing that God saves us from beginning to end, that destroys motive for action," just the reverse. Listen, if I were saved by the grace of God because I do not have power to save myself that is the most tremendous motive for serving God, not simply out of gratitude. Let's turn it around the other way. Let's just, in order to point it out, say, "We were saved by my partially doing the work and God doing the work as well, maybe more than I, but nevertheless both of us working." Knowing my heart, I would despair of pleasing him. I know my heart well enough to know that I often fail him. Every day I fail him. If I don't fail him in some specific act, I fail him in something that I think. Listen if the Christian life were left to me, I would despair. But I thank God that the Bible says that I am saved by the grace of God. Salvation is of the Lord, and even my Christian life is the responsibility of the Lord God.

So then, stand firm, these traditions, incidentally, are not bad. They are apostolic traditions. They are not contained in the Bible. So you see the kind of doctrine that says

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salvation is of the Lord is an encouragement to Christian life. That's why he can exhort us to stand firm because God's going to stand with us. That's why, that's why it's so great to have a sovereign God. That's why it's so encouraging to preach the word because you know in the midst of difficulty, and lack of response, and even antipathy and hatred, and opposition, God is going to have that little match that you throw out, land on some gunpowder somewhere and there is going to be response.

I wish I had time to read some of the things. I brought a letter here from a young lady who listened to some preaching like this, and she spoke about how it had meant so much to her. Your message on predestination reached my heart in a special way. I have never been worried in any way about this subject but did not feel fully settled in my mind one way or the other. After hearing the verses, particularly the verse in Romans 8, gone over word by word as you did, although I probably would not be able to explain it to anyone else, the matter was settled for me. She spoke about how it had meant so much to her in her Christian life.

Now the passage concludes, I must stop with a prayer for encouragement and enablement. All of the work that God lays upon us is called forth and supported by God. Notice what Paul says in verse 16 and 17. He says stand firm, "Now the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work." That's the work of God. The work of God from beginning to end is: to elect us, to call us, to save us, to sanctify us, to glorify us, and in the mean time, to establish us, "in every good word and work," so that when we get to heaven, we'll say, "Salvation is of the Lord."

We don't have time to talk about the details. But listen, election doesn't make an individual proud. It makes an individual humble, fearless, humble, holy, above all, grateful. Now that's something to rejoice about. Isn't it striking that the Lord Jesus Christ urged us to rejoice over the Doctrine of Election? Of all the doctrines in the Bible, the one doctrine that men most cavil over, most object to, say they have such great difficulty with is this doctrine that the Lord Jesus called us to rejoice over. Listen, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." That means to rejoice because you're elected. That's something to rejoice over, the election.

Now you can only know that you're elected when you have been brought by the Holy Spirit to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know that? Have you believed the message? Has the Holy Spirit brought you to knowledge of Christ? Do you know you

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have that salvation? That's evidence you were elected. Now rejoice that he's written your name in heaven. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this wonderful truth. We thank Thee for the assurance that salvation is of the Lord. The very fact, Lord, that we bow our heads in prayer is an acknowledgement that we cannot do anything ourselves. We need Thee. And we pray that if there should be some one person who has heard this message who does not yet know Jesus Christ that they may flee to the cross where there is forgiveness for sins. O God, bring enlightenment, and then through the Holy Spirit bring salvation…

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]

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