



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

The Doctrine of Election, part V

TRANSCRIPT

We had better go ahead and make a beginning. So let's open our meeting with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee again for the opportunity to study Thy word, and we ask again that thou will enable us to think clearly under the direction of the Holy Spirit. And may the truths that we consider be useful in building us up in our faith. We pray Lord that in all of our thought concerning eternal truths that the Scriptures may be our guide and our authority. And may we always trace all of the things that we believe to them. We pray that they may always measure our lives in a practical way, as well. And tonight, we commit this hour to Thee and pray that Thou will guide and direct us. Enable us to understand the greatness of the truth of the election and not to be to go beyond that which stand written in Holy Scripture. And so we commit each one present to Thee and pray that this great truth that we have been considering may strengthen us for our daily life.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight is the fifth in our series of studies on the doctrine of election. And tonight, the subject is its practical values. In a sense, the next two messages or studies will also be concerned with the doctrine of election but the subject is worded a little differently because it has to do with a certain aspect of the atonement. So this is really the conclusion of our study of election proper but the next two will be related, as you will see. Tonight I would like to read three passages as a basis for the beginning of our study. And first, will you turn again with me to Romans chapter 11 and will you listen as I read verses 33 through 36. And I’m going to be translating from the Greek text and so if I should read something that is not in your text, you’ll understand that I am translating that which Paul wrote.

“O the depth of the riches and wisdom or both of wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his determinations, and his ways past finding out!” The word is very similar to unsearchable, it means untrackable. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or who has before him, given to him, and it shall be returned to him?” Now, notice particularly verse 36, “Because of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen.”

Now, let’s turn back a page or two to Romans chapter 8 in verse 28. We know this text. Do we really know it? Now we know or do we know? “We know that for them that love God all things work together for good, for them who are the called according to purpose.” Notice that last clause “called according to purpose.” And the final passage in 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 10, 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 10, Paul writes, “For this reason I endure all things on account of the elect that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Notice the expression “I endure all things because of the elect.”

Election its practical values. I think it is the time for a review of our study of the great doctrine of election so that we will be able to set our study tonight in its proper context. And so let me just sum up what we’ve been saying over the past month or so that we’ve been considering election.

In the first place, we turned to the Bible and we saw that the Bible taught election. We referred to passages like Romans chapter 9 verses 6 through 29. We referred to passages like Ephesians chapter 1 verses 3 through 14. In the latter passage of which, Paul says that “We were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.” We tried to point out that the words election, foreknowledge, and foreordination are really words that express the same thing but they look at this doctrine of election under different aspects. Foreknowledge, election, and foreordination, these words really comprise the doctrine of predestination. Predestination is a theological term. It really is biblically this word foreordination but from the standpoint and for the purpose of doctrine most theologians refer to the doctrine of predestination as a doctrine that includes foreknowledge, election and foreordination. We pointed out that foreknowledge means to choose before hand in the sense that one enters into a personal relationship with the one who has chosen. And when the Bible speaks about God’s foreknowledge of us, it does not refer to his knowledge of what we would do but it refers to his knowledge of what he would do for us.

Never do we read that God foreknew certain things. It’s that he foreknew us. That is, he entered into intimate relationship with us in his mind before we came into existence. We were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. We were foreknown by him. So that is a word that stresses the intimacy of God’s choice. Election expresses the same thing but stresses the fact that we were selected out of a company of lost individuals. Election, the same thing but under different aspect. And foreordination we attempted to show from the Bible is a word that looks onto the goal so that when the Bible speaks of our foreordination it speaks of our foreordination to a certain goal, which

is that we should be like Jesus Christ. So these three words really tell the story of the doctrine of predestination. And these three words are essentially the same, each having its own special stress.

We pointed out also that the ground of man’s election is not the will of man. We cannot really say that our salvation is due to our will. Martin Luther wrote a great book. It was called *The Bondage of the Will* and the essence of that book is a scriptural proof of the fact that man’s will is enslaved because of man’s sin, because of man’s Fall. Paul remember said “It is not of him that willeth nor or of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy.” We turned to John chapter 1 in which, we in speaking of the new birth, we read John’s words in which he said “As many as received him to them gave he power to become the children of God even to them which believe on his name which were born not of blood not of the will of man not of the will of the flesh but of God,” not of the will of man. We were not born of human will. We were born of God, so that the ground of election is not the will of man. The ground of our salvation and the election is not the works of man that is evident when in 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 9 the Apostle Paul writes these words, “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” So we are not chosen because of our will, that is not the foundation of our election. Our election is not grounded in our works. It is not grounded in our choice of God for we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, before we ever had an opportunity to exercise choice, we had been chosen by God. So we stressed these things.

Now, we could really stop at that and all of us should have at least the essence of the teaching of the Bible on the doctrine of election, but being human beings and being ourselves possessed of a will in bondage to sin we are enslaved our wills to sin because we are lost naturally. And even though we have now come to know Jesus Christ,

we still possess a nature that is touched and will be touched by the fall until we come into the presence of the Lord.

We then turn to the objections that men have raised against the doctrine of election. And some of them which we discussed were these. First of all, election is inconsistent with human freedom and responsibility. And I tried to answer that by pointing out first that man is not free. He is not completely free. The freedom that man possesses is a freedom that God gives him. And it is only a limited freedom at best. And I gave you illustrations of that. We also said, on the other hand, that man is not forced to act contrary to his will. He is a slave and thus he is not free, but he is responsible because of his inability. And his responsibility is related to the fact that it is self-acquired and it is self-approved. I want to stress this. No man will ever be lost who wants to be saved. In other words, we could never say a man is lost because he was not chosen. The Bible never says that. The reason men are lost is because they’re sinners. And men do not want to come to God. So we tried to point out then that men are not free, they are slaves but they are responsible because their inability is self-acquired. It is related to the fall.

Now, I would like tonight to illustrate this further so that we don’t have any undue problems over it. I think we all as long as we live shall be discussing things like this and asking ourselves what does the Bible mean in the light of these things. But let’s illustrate in this way. Let’s just imagine that a man has a wife and family. And let’s suppose that his wife and family are on a ship and they’re just getting ready to dock. Let’s just say for the sake of illustration that the man has just come into the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, on an ocean liner and he is ready to dock. And his family is on it and a man who is a businessman of Charleston is down at the dock to meet his family. And just as they come to in by Fort Sumter, where the tragedy began, just about there something happens, the ship runs aground and it begins to sink. And the man looks out and he sees the ship that is sinking with his wife and children upon it. And so because he knows

some people in Charleston he hastens down the dock, sees a friend, procures a boat, which is a sizeable boat, and goes out toward the ship in order to rescue his wife and children.

Now, that is his purpose. He wants to rescue his wife and children. And so he reaches the boat. He manages to make contact with his wife and children, put them on the boat, and then issues an invitation to all who wish to come to his boat. It’s big enough to contain everyone who’s a passenger, but then that let’s suppose that there are some there, in fact, let’s suppose that everyone on the boat expect his wife and children refuse to come. Some refuse to come because they say “After all we’re almost to Charleston and we can make it on our own.” Others say “We’re not in danger at all. We really don’t believe the boat is sinking. It just happened that we ran into a deep part of the harbor.” And still others know this man and they don’t like him and they say “I wouldn’t get on any boat in which that man was on the boat if my life depended upon it.” So they go down. Now, the invitation was a universal invitation but only certain ones responded, his wife and children. The boat was large enough to accept all. They were responsible. They refused.

Now, the same thing in essence is true with regard God’s universal invitation to come to Jesus Christ through whom there is an atonement that is broad enough and wide enough to save every human being, but it was designed by God for those whom the Father has given the Son.

Now, we could illustrate of a man whose family was in captivity and who paid a ransom which was large enough to release all of the captives. But when they refused, they are not lost because he did not specifically come to ransom them. They are lost because they refused because they are in sin in the theological sense. We could think of a man who made a feast for his friends but who invited all but again others refused because they didn’t like the man who was responsible for the feast. They are responsible

although the invitation is broad enough to include even though the banquet was specifically designed for the man’s friend.

Now, we’ve tried then to answer this question because this is a basic question that people have. Election is inconsistent with human freedom and responsibility. It is not.

Second question or objection that we considered was election is just fatalism. Now, that is a failure to understand what the Bible has to say about election and we discussed that.

Third, election prevents a sincere offer of salvation to the non-elect. And we dealt with that. The offer is sincerely made by God. The man who had a feast for his friends and who issued an invitation to all was certainly sincere in his offer even though no one responded. God is sincere in the offer of salvation. If any of the non-elect were to come to Jesus Christ, they should be saved you can be sure of that. God is absolutely sincere in his offer but men are adamantly opposed to him. And even though he knows that they will not come, his invitation is sincerely made to all. Just as if our friend in Charleston were to issue an invitation to all on the boat but sees a few of his mortal enemies on deck whom he knew would not accept his hospitality so the invitation is to all.

Of course, as we said all along, the doctrine of election is a secret decree. No one knows who the elect are. I don’t even know if Harry Hunsacker is one of the elect. And really he doesn’t even know if I’m one of the elect. I have a pretty good idea about him. I’m more worried about myself than I am about him. There are certain signs that mark out those who are elect. Number one, they love the Scriptures. They welcome the word of God. They believe in Jesus Christ. They are genuinely devoted to him. These are the things that mark out the elect. Further, they do good works, and so all of the things that are designed to be signs of a believer in Jesus Christ are signs of the elect. When Paul spoke to the Thessalonians, he said “Knowing brethren be loved of God your election because you welcome the word of God when we preached it to you. Paul did not have

any access into the throne room of God. He thought the Thessalonians were elect because he saw the evidences of salvation among them.

So we may give a universal invitation in the name of God to all and genuinely give it. And the invitation is sincerely given by God through his messengers. And the fact that I know that some are elect and some are not does not in any way affect the invitation, for the elect do not have a stripe down their backs. And so if we know that some are elect and some are not elect, it cannot reasonably affect our presentation of the gospel at all. As I said yesterday in the first message that I gave at 8:30, I didn’t repeat this at 11:00. George Whitfield was one of the greatest of the Calvinists and he was also one of the greatest of the Evangelists. In fact, I think it’s safe to say that the greatest evangelists have been men who believed in the doctrine of election.

The fourth objection that we considered was election involves the injustice of electing only some. And I pointed, in answer to this, that salvation is not a matter of justice at all. Salvation is a matter of grace. We cannot say that God is unjust because he in grace saved some and does not exercise his grace towards others. Salvation is not a matter of justice at all. It’s grace. If God were to save one person, he would still be gracious and completely just for everyone deserves separation from God forever. So the fact that all deserve hell means that if God were really to be just no one should be saved. And the fact that he, in mercy and grace, saves some is not a testimony to injustice; it’s a testimony to grace. And again election prevents no one from coming to heaven.

The fifth objection, election discourages the efforts of the lost. In other words, if I hear that some are elect and some are not elect, well then, I shall just sit in my seat and do nothing about any of this. As a matter of fact, I could just live as I please and if God intends that I should be saved then I should be saved. And if he intends that I should be lost and one of the non-elect then that won’t make any difference to me either. And I tried to point out to you that God, in his election, not only elects but he also determines the means of bringing to fruition his election. And so he not only elects me but he also

chooses the means whereby I shall be brought to the Lord. Not only did God elect me but he also determined that Donald Grey Barnhouse would be the instrumentality of my conversion. And so if Donald Grey Barnhouse had taken that attitude he would have lost his opportunity of being an instrument in my salvation. God would have brought me to himself through someone else, but it was his desire and his will, we talked about the distinction about the decretive will and the perceptive will of God last year, it was his will that my salvation should come through DGB. And he was responsive to the direction of the Holy Spirit. And not only was I brought to the Lord, but he was the instrumentality and whatever reward there is for that there may be objection in heaven to my getting there. I would not be surprised if they were not. But whatever reward there is Donald Gray Barnhouse shall have it.

I think, of course, in the final analysis if we look at our Lord we have a good illustration always. And he believed strongly in the doctrine of election but it did not affect his urgent desire to bring the lost to himself. In John 10 in verse 16, Jesus said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.” In other words, the compulsion of evangelism was so upon our Lord that he did not say I simply have other sheep and they shall be saved. He said “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring.” He felt under the necessity, because of the doctrine of election, to give himself ultimately, to give himself completely, to doing the work of God. I think, by the way, that is the attitude that the doctrine of election really produces in the saved. But if this is really true, if God does have some who are elect, then if I’m one of them I must give myself completely to be the instrumentality for the reaching of all of the sheep of our Lord.

Another objection we looked at was election makes Christians proud and careless. And I tried to point out that the greatest motivation for morality, true morality in the world is gratitude for that which Jesus Christ has done. And election does not make Christians proud and careless unless for other reasons they are out of fellowship with the Lord.

Listen to the Lord’s words in Luke chapter 10 in verse 20. We read this, “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” In other words, the proper response to election is rejoicing not carelessness, not pride, not indifference but rejoicing.

Now, listen if you have come to know Jesus Christ as your savior and you really know him and you understand what he has done for you, could you ever really be careless because you believe in the doctrine of election? I couldn’t. I could never be indifferent and proud because I am one of the elect. Why the feeling that I have within my heart when I realize what God has done for me is the feeling of a tremendous moving gratitude for what Christ has done. And it’s when a man really comes to understand that, what it means to be lost and what it means to be one of his, that his life is transformed. So I say a man who objects to the doctrine of election with an objection like that I sometime wonder if he understands what it is to be saved.

And finally, election implies reprobation. I think that is true, that man is still responsible. The fact that God has chosen some does logically mean that he has passed by others. And I think that we must face it, but men are responsible. And they are responsible because of their sin. They are lost not because they are not elect. They are lost because they do not want to be saved. And so if you are sitting in the audience and there’s something down in your heart that says “I do believe it. I don’t like it Dr Johnson. Don’t think its right. I think it’s unjust.” May I just simply say to you this, if you do not know Jesus Christ as your savior you can settle the matter of whether you belong to the elect or not by simply receiving Jesus Christ as your personal savior. You can simply say in your heart “Thank you Lord for dying for me. I don’t understand anything about this doctrine of election. In fact, it seems to make me mad, but I do want to be saved and I do receive Jesus Christ as my savior.” And you can be saved. But now if you sit in the audience and you say “I don’t understand this and I don’t want to be saved” then what am I going to say about your sincerity in your objections. So you see, God has made it

very simple for us to settle this matter and all we must do is simply come and believe. And if you won’t come and believe, all I can say is that your lostness and your continuation in that state presuming that your lost condition is a well-deserved condition.

Now, tonight we’re going to move on to a consideration of the practical values of the doctrine of election and what I’m going to say to you will not take too long. That’s why I’ve taken as long as I have in trying to review what we’ve been saying. We do live in a pragmatic age. Men do not ask as they ought to ask, “Is it true?” But they often ask and it seems to me they ask more than they ask that question they ask “Will it work?” And this question is a legitimate question. We always ask ourselves, first of all about the Bible and its doctrines are they true? Then will they work. Does the doctrine of election really work? What does it do for us? And I’m going to suggest four things that the doctrine of election does for us.

First of all, it elicits the praise of the believer for the sovereignty of God to the glory of God. Let me say it again for those of you that are taking notes. I didn’t put the outline on the board tonight. It elicits the praise of the believer for the sovereignty of God to the glory of God. As someone has said, “In this truth God is exalted, he is vindicated, and he is glorified. From the macrocosm to the microcosm, he is seen as the invincible sovereign potentate of the vast universe whose glory floods it and whose will is instantaneous indisputable independent and invaluable law. And the man who believes in election, as a result of that, there comes from his heart praise for the sovereignty of God which results in the glory of God.” Listen to Paul in Romans chapter 11. After all, he’s just finished one of the greatest expositions of the purpose of God. And whatever Paul said in Romans chapter 9, and it is difficult language, I’ll grant that. Whatever he says in chapter 10 and whatever he says in chapter 11, I know that’s a difficult passage too, but whatever it is, it resulted in the apostle’s glorification of God. For listen to what he says after he has expounded his great theocracy of God. He says, verse 33 Romans

chapter 11. Here I am, I’m looking at 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Just as I was ready to quote it, I had the wrong page.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?” Except Dr Johnson who had been telling us about election you might say. “Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to him be glory for ever. Amen.”

In other words, the great doctrines that he has been expounding have brought Paul to the place where he concludes on this gigantic expression of praise and thanksgiving to God because he’s sovereign over all. And so whatever we say about Paul’s doctrine, it brought him to the right conclusion, to the glorification of God. And I believe that those who really do believe in the electing grace of God will glorify his sovereignty to his own glory.

I’m going to read you a paragraph from a letter I got about five years ago from a young girl who was working in New York City at the time. I went to New Jersey to hold some meetings and in the course of these meetings I expounded Romans chapter 8. and especially laid a great deal of stress on Romans 8:28, 29, 30 and then 31 through 39, devoting two messages to those last sections. And I will never forget that week because it seemed to me, you know sometimes preachers sense the working of the Holy Spirit and at other times they do not, you could never really count on this. For often when I have thought I have made a complete mess of what I’ve been trying to get over, someone has come to me afterwards and said “Well you know, it was through such and such a message that I came to the knowledge of such and such a truth.” And I remembered that that was the time that I thought I had failed so. And there are times when you think that you have

done real well and you go out of the pulpit patting yourself on the back and you say “Well I really did do it up today,” and nothing really happens.

But it did seem to me that this week the Lord was really working. And when I got back to Dallas, I got a note from her in which she said “Dear Dr. Johnson, first of all I would like to say what a blessing the ministry you gave at the conference last weekend it was to me. It is evident that you are not only fully persuaded by the truths of the Scriptures but thrilled by them. Your message on predestination reached my heart in a special way. I’ve never been worried in any way about this subject but did not feel settled in my mind one way or the other. After hearing the verses or 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. It seemed that any question I had was only because I was holding on to the thought that we, or more particularly I, had some part in the decision. This, of course, meant that it was not quite all grace nor that the glory then all his.” So she came to an understanding though she didn’t understand everything that was said, perhaps that was a blessing, but she at least came to an understanding of the important thing and that is that salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end from the ages of eternity past when he chose us to the ages of eternity future when he shall demonstrate his wonderful grace in us all the glory is God’s because all the work is his.

Now, the second thing, election consoles and strengthens the believer. Election reminds us that there are no accidents with God and, therefore, the heavyhearted are consoled when they remember that God has chosen them from eternity past. The weak are strengthened. In fact, there is really nothing that can happen to us if we really accept that truth of the sovereign grace of God, his distinguishing grace exercised towards us, there is really nothing that can ultimately upset us. Oh we can fail the Lord. We all do that. But we now that the solution to our failure rests in coming to an understanding of what God has done for us. And when we do realize this great truth of election, what a

tremendous consolation to us in the midst of trial and how it strengthens the weak to know God’s hand is upon me through any experience of life.

Last year we had a young couple that graduated from the seminary that my wife and I really felt especially close too. I don’t know really why this was but they just seemed to be a young couple that we seemed to warm up to. And we liked not only the young man but we liked his wife. And they were over at our house more than once. And they used to come to Believers Chapel. For a time, he worked in another church as a youth director and then his last year he came back to Believers Chapel and spent his last year here. And when they left, she was expecting a new arrival, their first child. And they were really thrilled over it. And they went up to Canada. They got a position as a teacher in one of the Bible colleges in Canada. And then, I think it was along about in June or perhaps it was a little later than that, the baby was born and in just a few days or few hours, eleven hours, the baby died. And it was a tremendous disappointment to them and in fact, for several days a friend of ours wrote to us and said they were tremendously broken up over this.

But then, I got a letter from them around Christmas time and they said this “Dear Dr. and Ms. Johnson, thank you so much for your letter. Because we believe in God’s omnipotence, omniscience, and providence our loss was easier to accept. Your teaching was not in vain.” I liked that. [Laughter] Your teaching was not in vain. That was not my truth, of course, it was Paul’s truth but the point is that in the midst of the deepest sorrows of life and in the midst of the deepest disappointments the assurance of God’s hand upon us in all the affairs of our life, oh what a tremendous comfort that is. That’s why I like this doctrine of election. I know that if my life as a Christian is a Christian’s life I’m going to have difficulty and I’ve had very few difficulties I must say but no Christian can escape difficulty. And I know one of the truths that shall sustain each one of us in the trials of life is this truth that God’s hand has been upon me from eternity past. And so

I shall love forever the fact that God has chosen me in him before the foundation of the world.

And thirdly, the doctrine of election prepares the believer for the trials of life and service. And I want you to turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 2 in verse 10 and we’ll just look again at this text which seems to say this to me, the doctrine of election prepares the believer for trials of life and service. Here we read in 2 Timothy 2 verse 10 again, “Therefore” Paul says, by the way I guess we ought to really read beginning at verse 8. This is advice to Timothy, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” Sometime I’d like to speak to you on that verse and point out what Paul is emphasizing in that text but that’s not important now. Verse 9, “Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds,” but the word of God is not bound, “therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” Paul says “I endure all things for the elect’s sake.” In other words, no matter what the experiences of life were for Paul, he regarded them as being experiences that were in the line of his being an agent for the gathering of the elect for God. And all of the trials, all of the suffering, even when the apostle had to suffer as an evil doer, all of those things he regarded as steps along the way to the accomplishment of God’s will in his life because he believed that there were individuals who were elect and that God, therefore, was bringing them to himself. And so one of the reason that the apostle was able to stay under, to endure, that’s what that word means, to stay under in the midst of the difficulties that he experienced. One of the reason he was able to do that he was assured that God had his own that he was bringing to himself and that Paul was an instrument in that bringing. This is the teaching that stiffened the backbone of Augustine. It was the teaching that stiffened backbone of Calvin. It is the teaching that strengthened the backbone of Luther and Knox. It’s a stern creed but it leads to men who are afraid of no one. As someone has put it, the man who believes above all else in the will of God may turn the world upside down if only he is

convinced he is an instrument of God’s will. By the same token, however, he can be as unresistant to circumstances as butter to a knife, so long as he is convinced that the knife is God.

And one of the reason why the Christian church has succeeded down through the years is because at critical moments in the church’s history there have been men who had a backbone that had been stiffened by belief in the doctrine of election. Someone doesn’t want me to get this on tape. And I want to say one last thing about this before I come to the fourth point. Pelagians, generally speaking, are those who believe that it is possible for man to be something toward his salvation. Pelagians believe, for example, that man may choose and through his human volition come to faith in Christ. And B. Melman, one of our great church historians, said and said correctly “No Pelagian ever has or ever will work a religious revolution when the trends of Holy Scripture are seen clearly.” That is the grace of God is seen. “And when they are proclaimed things happen but when we preach a doctrine that is adulterated and mixed in with the free grace of God as a stress upon man’s heart in his salvation, you can be sure there is not going to be any deep work of God.”

Now fourthly, the doctrine of election undermines the self-sufficiency of men. It undermines the self-sufficiency of men. Foreordination removes the last props from the sinners. We may be vainly striving to rest upon one last thing. That is my volition has something to do with my salvation. For God looked down through the years and saw that I would believe and chose me because of something that was in me that was not in you. But foreordination removes the last props that we may be vainly striving to rest upon. The truth is men cannot believe except, as our Lord said, the Father which hath sent me draw him. Isn’t that an amazing text? “No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” You know what that says? No man “can” come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. You cannot come. You are a slave. You cannot come and you can only come if the Father initiates a work in you that brings

you to the place where you wish to come. And when you wish to come you can be sure you have already become the recipient of the work of God. We lie wholly in God’s hand, our destiny hangs wholly upon the will of God and the will of a God who we have angered and whom we have incensed by our sin. Spurgeon said “Does not this that is its truth does this make thy knees knock together and thy blood curdle? If it does so, I rejoice, in as much that this may be the first effect of the Spirit drawing in thy soul.”

There are some who because they have the wrong idea of the doctrine of election think that they can believe any time they wish. If there is one thing the doctrine of election tells us, it is that it is a very dangerous thing to presume upon the invitations of God. If the doctrine of election is sure and certain, and I believe it is, then my I’m going to flee to the cross the moment I realize that. Deathbed conversions are the exception and not the rule. And so I hope that as a result of our stress upon the doctrine of election, first of all, that you have been stirred to make that decision in your own heart definite and certain. And then also that if you know that you are one of the elect, and that there is a group of people who are the elect, you belong to them. That there are others still out there that you be willing like Paul to give yourself completely for the sake of the sheep who have not yet come. In the final analysis, we can let the ultimate disposition of the truth of election rest with our presence in the company of the apostles when we shall be taught more perfectly. But in the mean time, I don’t know of any better doctrine to believe than in the doctrine of election. And I hope it has its practical benefits in your life. Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for this wonderful truth, chosen in him before the foundation of the world. And, O God, may we never presume upon thy grace, but may it so grip us that our gratitude is boundless. And that our lives may become subject to Thee and useful to Thee in the accomplishing of all of Thy purposes. And, Father, if there

should be one in this audience who is not yet come to Jesus Christ. Oh, give them no rest nor peace until they come through the saving work of the Holy Spirit.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.