

Colossians -June Class

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

- [0 : 0 0] Well, gentlemen, if you will look at your sheet, we are on page 523, down in the lower left-hand corner of that right-hand page.
- And we gave some consideration, and I apologize for the superficiality of it, but we just treated the issue of Calvinism and eternal life.
- And we told you that verse 48 is a terribly unfortunate translation as it reads, as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.
- And we pointed out how that this is a favorite proof text of Calvinists. And I am content on just moving on and leaving that behind, but I don't want to do so if there are still significant questions or areas that need to be treated.
- We will revisit it and take however long it does take in order to get some satisfaction from it. So, what is your thinking? Anybody? Roger?
- [1 : 0 6] Yeah. I thought about Adam and his choice in his garden. And evidently Satan decided that he didn't want to be under God's rule.
- So, there's always been free will involved, and I don't see how God could change and shift gears that radical. Yeah. Well, as far as I'm concerned, this is the key to understanding the issue.
- It is human volition. And that means God created man with a capacity and a responsibility to make choices.
- Life is made up of choices. And making the right choice tends to produce a more positive outcome than making the wrong choice.
- But when God gifted us with volition, he did so because he considered the alternative unacceptable. And what was the alternative?
- [2 : 1 5] It would be to create beings, both angels and humans, without a will. Without volition. So that in a puppet-like robotic way, you always do the right thing.
- Because you can't do the wrong thing. You don't have the ability to do the wrong thing. And frankly, this gives me questions about the eternal state.
- Because in the eternal state, when we have glorified bodies, and Paul says that the time is coming when this body, he refers to it as this vile body, it's a weakened body, will be fashioned like unto the body of Jesus Christ.
- That is, we'll have the same kind of glorified body that Christ had when he came out of that grave. That means we will not have a capacity to sin. But will we still have some kind of volition or ability to choose then?
- I'm talking about in heaven. So there won't be any sin in heaven because there won't be any infractions of the righteousness of God. But does that mean then that we no longer have that ability or volition that's taken from us?
- [3 : 3 1] But now, we have this thing called volition. It's the word from which we get the word, of course, volunteer. And it means when you are confronted with a decision, you have opportunity to make a choice.

When you chose misright, you made a choice. You exercised your will. In fact, as you stood before the minister or the justice of the peace or whatever, they asked those words, you know, will you?

Or do you? And you responded, I will. You, with your volition, made a commitment to that woman.

You exercised your will. You didn't have to do that. But you chose to do that. So we are responsible for the decisions we make. And the alternative to creating creatures with a volition is to create them without a volition.

So they don't have the power of choice. Man can't screw up if he doesn't have a choice to make. But he gave us choices because only obedience that is voluntary is worth anything.

[4 : 41] Only love that is voluntary is worth anything. If you love because you have to love and you don't have any choice, what good is that? And if you obey because you cannot disobey, what choice is that?

There is no choice. So, Don, what were you going to say? Well, I was just thinking, you know, in our life, the old Soviet Republic and so forth, where you're raised from the beginning all the way up to do one thing or obey the law, or not the law, but the government and so forth, that takes away the volition, does it?

No, it doesn't take away the volition. It just increases the penalty for noncompliance. You still, in other words, volition always remains intact, even if a greater force overpowers it.

I remember one time reading about this little two or three year old in his high chair. He was standing up in his high chair and his mother said, sit down.

Well, he wasn't going to sit down. Here we've got a classic power struggle, you know, between mama and child. And a couple minutes later, she turned again and he's still standing up.

[5 : 56] And she said, you sit down in that high chair. Of course, she was afraid the kid was going to fall and bang his head on the floor and all the rest, you know. And he wouldn't sit down. And finally, she had enough. And she walked over.

She grabbed that little tight by the shoulders. And she crammed him down in that high chair. Made him sit down. Forced him to sit down. And he started bawling, you know, because he didn't get his way.

And she turned around and returned to her chores there at the sink. And she turned around and checked on him again. And he was wiping away his tears. And he said, mommy, I'm sitting down on the outside.

But on the inside, I'm standing up. You know what that was? A greater force than his made him sit down. But where was his volition?

It was still standing up. That's the rebel nature in all of us. And that's what God created when he gave us a choice. He gave us a volition.

[6 : 59] That means you don't have to obey, even though you should. John. The free will that Adam had is different than the volition we have because his will wasn't tainted by sin.

The fallen nature that we have. Our will has been affected. You're right. And in order for us to believe, we have to have hell. Yeah. Yeah. We have to have the Holy Spirit.

Or we wouldn't believe. Yeah. Yeah. Well, Luther wrote a book on that called The Bondage of the Will. There's a lot in it that I agree with and some that I don't agree with.

But he was a great mind. And he wrote a valuable book that's got a lot of worthy things in it. Dan? The Calvinism believes in predestination.

Oh, absolutely. All right. Oh, yeah. All right. The predestination here was an act of faith. Is this correct? Or am I getting this skewed here? Because point of what he was saying back here, this was the Gentiles, and they were, you know, as long as they accepted Jesus, it was an act of faith.

[8 : 08] Now, is there some kind of a rub here between predestination and this? I mean, is there a deviation from the interpretation? Predestination means simply to determine beforehand.

Pre means before. And destiny. So, a Calvinist would say this means that your eternal destiny was determined beforehand.

And that God determined it. And that you really didn't have anything to do with it. You believed because you didn't have any choice. You had to believe because you were predestined to believe. That's essentially their position.

And that really came out of Augustine in the fourth century. And then Calvin was a great student of Augustine almost a thousand years later. And he continued to echo that.

And it became the party line for many. And I am satisfied that the reason that they go that way is because there are a number of passages that do seem to teach that.

[9 : 08] And this is one of them. This is one of their favorite passages. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Well, what about those who were not ordained to eternal life?

Well, they didn't believe. And we gave you a brief explanation of our interpretation of that verse. But they have, I think, a very legitimate, honest, commendable motive.

In that they want to extol and highlight the absolute sovereignty of God.

And when they make God even in charge of the individual's salvation so that the individual had nothing to do with it.

But God elected them or selected them to believe. And that's the only reason they could believe. Then that places an even greater emphasis upon the sovereignty of God.

[10 : 05] He is totally sovereign. And man doesn't even have a will. He only imagines that he has a will. It's almost like you are pre-programmed to believe or to not believe.

And this not only means, of course, that bottom line is that God has pre-programmed some to believe and eternal life. And those whom he did not pre-programmed for heaven and eternal life, the only conclusion left is they are pre-programmed by being omitted to an eternal hell.

And there's no way of escaping that conclusion. Wow, we've got a lot of Don and then Richard and then Dana. How do they explain the way that Christ died on the cross for all?

Well, they don't believe that Christ died on the cross for all. Their classic position is the L in the tulip. We talked about the tulip, which sets forth the basic tenets of Calvinism.

The T is the total depravity. And the U is unconditional election. And the L is limited atonement. And their contention is Christ did not die for the sins of the world.

[11 : 21] He died only for those whom he elected. And you say, well, what about John 3.16? God so loved the world.

They would say, yes, but that means the elect world. But the problem they have with that is the text doesn't say the elect world. It just says the world.

And the world is comprised of human beings. It's not talking about God loving earth, the planet. It's talking about God loving people. That's why he sent his son.

And he is the propitiation for our sins and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. What do they do with that? Same thing. They say, well, that means the elect world.

But again, the major problem they have is the text doesn't say that. And it isn't honest to make it say that. You cannot read that into it. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

[12 : 21] What do you do with that? Well, I just take it at face value. It means what it says. And this, without getting too far, well, maybe we're already too far afield. But this means that the death of Christ was just as sufficient in a positive way as was Adam's sin in a negative way.

In other words, Christ died on that cross to cancel out Adam's transgression. This text in Romans 5 says, as in Adam, all die.

Who is that all? I don't know how to take that other than all means all. Everybody. As in Adam, all die. Who came under the effects of Adam's sin?

Do you think you escaped it? Well, if you did escape it, you won't die. Physically, you won't die.

You'll just live forever. But the older we get, the more we recognize our mortality. We know we're not going to live forever. So, as in Adam, all die.

[13 : 40] Even so, in Christ shall all be made alive. And that means that when Christ died on that cross, he effectively canceled out Adam's transgression.

And this is why each of us is on our own to answer for our own sin. You can't blame this on Adam. Because Christ died and canceled Adam's transgression.

And we are accountable to God, not for Adam's sin, but for ours. For mine, personally. And you for yours. So, this means that the totality of the world was redeemed, bought back through the death of Christ.

And this means there is worldwide redemption for everyone. Now, follow me closely because this is where some really go astray.

What Christ's death accomplished was not the salvation of the entire human race, but it was the redemption of the entire human race.

[14 : 58] Those terms are not the same. And that simply means that Christ's death rendered every human being savable.

It doesn't render them saved. It means they are savable. That means no one is outside the grace of God. Because Christ died for you.

And when he did, he opened the way of access to God through himself. This is why he said he is the way, the truth, and the life.

And there is no other way. Because Jesus Christ is the only way that God provided as a way back to him. So, there is universal redemption.

There is not universal salvation. That really is a heresy, but it's a popular thing to teach. In a lot of places, it's taught. And that is, all paths and all roads lead to heaven.

[15 : 59] And when the final analysis is tallied up, we're going to see that everybody's there. I mean, everybody. Because didn't Christ die for everybody?

Yes, he did. But here comes that volition thing again. How is the death of Christ for all humanity applied to the individual? It is by grace through faith.

It is through the individual exercising their faith. Because human faith is nothing more than a response from your will to what God did through Christ on that cross.

That is called justification by faith. As an individual, you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you use your will to do that.

You call it accepting Christ, believing on Christ, becoming a Christian, becoming born again, whatever you want to call it. It results in the regeneration of the real person, which is internal.

[17 : 05] This is the human spirit. That is made new. God, in a way we do not understand, God reaches into the individual and he quickens you on the inside.

This is what Titus was talking about when he said, Not by works, not by works that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

And when you believe on Jesus Christ as your Savior, God the Holy Spirit comes in and quickens you and makes you alive inside. Makes you a new man on the inside.

Doesn't do a thing for the body. Doesn't change the body in any way, but it changes the real you. And it's the real you that is separated from the body when you die.

And absent from the body, present with Christ. That's the real you that is regenerated. And the body goes to the ground and awaits the resurrection. And the spirit returns to God who gave it.

[18 : 12] This is a really complex thing and very involved. But it's very, very important. Richard? If you're saved by grace through faith, why would you need grace if you're saved through faith?

That's my first point. Okay. I wanted to know, at what point, after you had been teaching the doctrine of Calvinism, at what point were you convinced that that wasn't correct?

Okay, that's another thing I wanted to say. And then, at a point in my spiritual life, I feel that God opened my heart and my eyes to see what I'm about ready to say to you.

And I never understood it this way until God opened my eyes. Now, I'll explain that here in a second.

But, I know, I think the Bible teaches both. I think it teaches in the belief, as well.

[19 : 32] I think it teaches that we are preordained. Now, I'd like to show your attention back to, there's a whole bunch of scripture.

Whether it's in 1 Peter, Thessalonians, Corinthians, John, you know, the point to being, having this predestination.

But there is a thing. I go to John 3. John 3 talks about when Nicodemus went to Christ. And Christ told him this.

I tell you the truth. No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh is birth of flesh, and the Spirit is birth of Spirit.

You should not be surprised at my saying. You must be born again. So, you can't get to heaven unless you're born again. And then verse 8 says, The wind blows wherever it pleases.

[20 : 35] You hear its sound, but you can't tell what it is, and what it comes from, or what it's going. And that is with everyone born of the Spirit.

My point is, is this. You cannot decide to have the Holy Spirit. You can't decide that. It's impossible. And that's what, it just came clear to me.

And as a result of that, that's the reason my faith goes that direction. And I'm not saying you're wrong, but I don't think I am either.

I think the Bible teaches both. I'll give you another example. The children of Israel were disciplined by nations that were pagan and ungodly.

And what did God do? He said, I'm bringing you against my people, but I am going to judge you for doing that. Yeah. Okay?

[21 : 38] Yeah. So, there is where God, I mean, we can't thwart God's plan. It's impossible. I'll go back to Romans 9, where both of the swims were born.

And he said, one I loved and one I hated. And what the Scripture says is, that's before either one of them were born.

Yeah. Well, Richard, I hate to interrupt you. Well, the problem is, your comments are good, but they're not getting on the thing because you're too far away from the mic. You know, so people are not hearing what you're saying when they listen to this.

However, I will say this, and I'll do the best I can to answer his questions. And I came to this conclusion about, probably about five years ago, maybe four years ago.

And the tragedy of it, as I saw it, was I had taught the opposite. I had taught the Calvinist party line regarding election, predestination, the whole nine yards, although I never did teach and never could get into the limited atonement.

[22 : 50] And most of my Calvinist friends say, if you don't buy limited atonement, you are not a Calvinist, because the whole package stands or falls together. You've got to take the limited atonement, which means that Christ died only for the elect.

I never did buy that. So I guess I was a four-point Calvinist for years. And then, as time went on, I just, as a result of having studied the Scriptures and presented messages at Grace for the previous 35 years, most of which were verse by verse.

And we went through every book in the New Testament, verse by verse by verse. We spent five years in the Gospel of John alone and three or four years in Romans. And after all of that teaching, I just could no longer sustain my position of Calvinism.

It just would not fly. But my problem was, I had come to the end of my pastorate, and I felt badly about that. But I did make some modifications when we went through John, and that was the last thing that I taught at Grace before I retired the first time.

And after Barbara and I retired in December of 2006, three months later, she passed away quite unexpectedly.

[24 : 14] So the church asked if I would come back on an interim basis until they could find somebody to replace me, and I agreed to do so.

And after a few months, they asked if I would just come back, period. So I did. And that's been, what, I don't know, five years ago, something like that.

But anyway, I thought, well, you know what? The Lord has called me back to these same people at Grace. They obviously hadn't had enough yet after 35 years.

So now I believe I need to take advantage of this opportunity and straighten out something and just tell them up front, this is what I taught you 20, 25 years ago.

I was wrong. And I want to correct that now. And I'm sorry that I taught this. But I did, and that was my best understanding at the time. And I no longer believe that.

[25 : 10] Here is what I believe, and here is where I think I was wrong, and you ought to know. So the unfortunate problem is a number of people had passed on, a number of people had left, a number of people had moved away, and they didn't get my correction.

But I felt obligated on the basis of intellectual honesty to tell them, I think I taught you wrong, and this is what I believe now. And somebody could come back and say, well, what else have you taught us that was wrong?

Good question. My answer is, I don't know. But if I find it, I'll fess up and tell you about it.

We ought to always, how many times have I told you guys, no preacher, no preacher teaches 100% truth. That capability is not in us.

In order to teach 100% truth, you have to have 100% knowledge. There's only one person who ever had that, and we put him on a cross.

[26 : 14] So all you can do is look for errors, and when you find one, and you know that you've gone wrong, and you've taught wrong, you just need to admit it. And let me tell you, it's a humbling thing to do.

It does not make your ego feel good to say, I'm sorry, I was mistaken. This is what I taught, and this is what I sincerely believe. But I am confident that God reads the heart.

Now back to your first question. You say, why do we need faith because of grace? Grace is... Well, the reason we need both is because we are not saved by faith.

We are saved by grace. Through faith. Someone may say, well, that's just semantics. What's the difference? A lot of difference. Grace is the basis. Grace is the foundation for salvation to even be available.

Grace is that which God has provided because apart from grace, we're sunk. Grace means that salvation is a gift.

[27 : 23] It is not earned. It is not a reward. And fellas, Christianity has been around 2,000 years. And we still have not made this clear.

Everybody in their fallenness wants to operate on the merit system. Grace means you get something you do not deserve.

You get it because of the nature and character of God. You do not get it because of your performance. You do not get it because you've earned it and you were good enough. And this is exactly what most people think.

They think that heaven is a reward that God gives you for living a good life. That is total lie. Total lie.

Heaven is a gift of God. Not earned. Not deserved. Not worked for. It is a gift because Jesus Christ purchased the right for you to go to heaven by taking your sin upon himself and paying the penalty for it.

[28 : 31] So grace is the foundation. Grace is the motivation of God. The love of God, the grace of God, provided a salvation for us that we could not provide for ourselves.

So it is by grace we are saved through faith. That means faith, which is nothing more than belief, trust, reliance, commitment.

That's what faith is. Faith is the pipeline through which God's grace gets to you. The grace of God is applied to the human heart when the human being exercises faith, belief, trust as an act of the will in who Jesus Christ is, what he did, and why it matters.

So that Christ is your Savior. You accept him by faith. That means you accept him by believing, by trusting. It is an act of the will.

It may or may not have anything to do with emotion because you are not saved on the basis of how you feel. You are saved on the basis of what you believe. And our belief is rooted in who Christ is.

[29 : 48] Paul said, That's the gospel in a nutshell.

And the way that God's grace gets to you is by exercising faith. So it is by grace through faith. And those two terms are important. This is Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. I'm sure you're all familiar.

Then he goes on to say, Not by works. Why isn't it by works? Lest any man should boast. And all that means, guys, is that there will not be any braggarts in heaven.

Nobody is going to be saying, Well, how did you get here? Well, I gave a million dollars to the building fund. That's how I got here. And somebody else is going to say, Well, I went to Sunday school for seven years in a row and didn't miss a Sunday.

And that's how I got here. And there won't be any of that nonsense. Won't be any of that. Everybody who is in heaven is going to be there for the same reason. I am here because of him.

[30 : 52] And we'll point to Christ. That's why he is the only one who is eligible to wear the title Savior. That's what he does. And there isn't any other.

But we ought to just be so grateful that there is one. Roger? Is this not a faithful saying to believe that God foreknew the creation?

Who would believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Who would not? Instead of foreknew, foreknew? Well, his foreknowledge and his omniscience requires him to know.

If there's anything that God doesn't know, then God learns as we go along. Then God is deficient in knowledge. And he doesn't know what's going to happen until it happens any more than you do.

And that's called open theology. And that's popular among some people today, too. But let me just make this point. So many times Paul uses the phrase, in Christ, in Christ, in Christ. We are elect in Christ.

[31 : 52] We are called in Christ, in Christ. And what this means is, in my understanding, we are, Paul said, we are crucified with Christ.

We are buried with Christ. We are raised with Christ in the newness of life. We are even seated with Christ in the heavenlies. How does that all play out? In Christ, we are elect.

We share everything that he is. We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And this means we share in Christ's love, in Christ's life, in Christ's forgiveness, in Christ's election.

Christ is the principal one who is elect by the Father. This is why he has the title Messiah. Messiah. Yeshua HaMashiach.

That means everything to the Jew. And being the Messiah, the word Messiah means the anointed one, the chosen one, the selected one.

[32 : 53] The Father chose the Son and sent him to be the Savior of the world. So, Christ is elect. He is elect and select by the Father.

And if you are in Christ, guess what you share? You share. You share his election. You are elect. Not by yourself. You are elect in Christ.

You share his election. You share his life. You share his everything. That's a glorious truth of those two little words being in Christ. Guys, we could continue this.

And I will for a moment. But go right ahead and eat. Don't let your food get cold. Richard? Well, I'm just going to share one other scripture here in John. John 17.

Down there, verse 9, where Jesus is praying. Yep. And he's praying and he's saying, I pray for them. I am not praying for the Lord. Mm-hmm. For they are yours.

[33 : 51] In other words, my understanding is that we as believers are God's strength to Jesus for his obedience and coming to the earth to die for us.

Yeah. And so, if you believe that, which I do, then finish this thought.

Welcome to the club. I don't think he did. I don't believe he died for the whole world. Like you said, I believe he did die. We all could.

But, you know, just like Pharaoh, as you said, his relation was not to believe. But there are places in the Bible where God says, don't go and tell them about the good news.

Because if you do, they won't believe. Yep. I've hardened their hearts. Yep. You know, different things like that. And I will say one more thing. I promise.

[34 : 53] I won't say any more. And that is, if God isn't in charge of everything, then I don't believe him. He isn't in charge of anything.

That's the way I believe. Okay. Well, thank you. And I appreciate your comments. And I dealt with these passages and many more from John's Gospel and from Romans 9, 10, and 11.

And if anybody's interested, I'll find out how many there are and which ones they are. And they are all available on CD. And I think it's, I don't know how many.

We spent probably 10 or 12 weeks on this subject, on these passages, dealing with them. And if anybody's interested, I can have a set made up for you and have them here.

Would anybody like them? Absolutely. Yeah. Okay. Okay. I saw three or four hands. I'll bring a half a dozen sets then next week. And we'll get them made up.

[35 : 52] And maybe that will answer some of the questions. Because your points are valid. And they are points that I was concerned with, too. And I dealt with them. But I came to different conclusions that I did before.

And I think you'll see why. That's what I was wanting to know. How did you come to those conclusions? Yeah. To me, truth is truth. Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah.

But it's also possible to believe that something is true and you later discover that it isn't. You don't believe that it is. So that's where I'm coming from.

I just can see why you would need to come back and apologize because you taught what you called the Bible said to you. Yeah, well, I did. You know, I taught it sincerely.

But here's the point, Richard. You can say and I can say, God opened my eyes to see this. Well, somebody else can say exactly the same thing, but they've reached the opposite conclusion.

[36 : 50] Which one did God open their eyes? Because God doesn't open one man's eyes to see truth and open another man's eyes to see error. So it's a...

Well, let me close with this. And I promise I'm going to quit with this. P.B. Fiswater, who taught theology at Moody Bible Institute for like 50 years, took the position and said, I believe when we get to heaven, when we get to heaven and we are facing the portal on the outside, we're going to see subscribed over the arch, whosoever will may come.

And you walk through the arch and turn around and look back and it says on the other side, the elect of God. So go figure.

I'm satisfied that whoever is teaching and whatever he's teaching, he has to have some error mixed in with it because no teacher is infallible.

Not the Catholic Pope, not a Protestant Pope. Well, we don't, Protestants don't have a Pope. But we've got a lot of men who would be a Pope if the Protestants had one.

[38 : 11] And the Jewish rabbis and whatnot, every one of us is flawed. But I'll tell you what, the man who is the most dangerous is the man who believes he is incapable of teaching error.

And if you ever sit under a Bible teacher who says, I know I have the absolute truth of God containing no error, whatever, then that's the time to head for the exit.

That's the time to head for the exit. All right, guys. Thanks a lot. Enjoy your breakfast. And I'll try to remember to bring, I'll bring this morning's session and last week's, plus all of the others that we were talking about.

And you'll have more sprain in your brain food than you can imagine.