

# Divine Sovereignty - The "U" in TULIP

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[ 0 : 00 ] And there is that possibility for some here at Grace, because it is a subject that even though, as the bulletin says, has been a theological debate raging for over 1,500 years, it yet remains mysterious and oblivious to most people.

And I'm talking about most Christian people. You do not even expect non-Christian people to pick up on something like this. It just completely escapes them. But for those who are in the body of Christ, there ought to be some familiarity.

The reason it is so vital is because it has been at the very heart of how God and man connects. Most think they already know, but they know very little about the weighty issues.

And that brings us to the subject of sovereignty and man's responsibility. Exactly what part does God play and exactly what part does man play?

And this brings us to the famous acrostic that is referred to as the tulip. Most people, even Christians, think that a theological tulip is a new variety of flower that's out in somebody's yard and they have little or no idea at all of what the tulip actually means.

[ 1 : 24 ] But it just so happened that it worked out acrostically into tulip. Each of these issues being a word that just seems to kind of line up with it.

So somewhere, somebody brilliant picked up on the idea that all of these events, the total inability, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints, the letter of each of them spells vertically tulip.

So it just became known as Calvinism's tulip. Actually, I'm confident that John Calvin, who lived in the 1500s, had never heard of the tulip, didn't have anything to do with it.

However, he did popularize the points behind the tulip that we are talking about. And he was enormously influenced by one whom he quoted hundreds of times in his writings.

John Calvin gave us numerous works, but probably none are so famous as Calvin's Institutes, a two-volume set that is a compendium of theology, much of which we believe is related to the Scripture, and much of which is not related to the Scripture.

[ 2 : 38 ] Because John Calvin was tremendously influenced by Augustine, who lived a thousand years before him. And it is reflected in Calvin's writings and in his philosophy.

And many people don't realize this, but Augustine was as much a philosopher as he was a commentator of Scripture and a preacher. He lived the life as a young man of considerable profligacy until he came to faith in Christ, and it completely revolutionized his life.

And it's safe to say that Augustine was an absolutely brilliant man. There's no doubt about that. But like all brilliant men, they can be really ignorant in some areas.

Nobody is brilliant across the board. Everybody has pockets of ignorance and stupidity sprinkled in there with a little bit of brilliance. And that's the way humanity is. So if you regard somebody as a real authority in one area, and they may be, that doesn't mean they are an authority in every area.

So all of us live a kind of intellectually compartmentalized life. Someone has said that we are all ignorant just about different things, and we need to keep that in mind.

[ 3 : 57 ] So the first T in this tulip has to do with total inability. And this was arrived at, I am satisfied, in an effort to highlight and exalt the sovereignty of God, the absolute ability of God to do his own will, and the absolute inability of man to respond to God.

And this is called total inability. Some have rendered it total depravity, which means that man, because of his fallenness, because we are not only mortal creatures, we are sinful creatures, not only do we not respond to God, we can't respond to God.

We are unable to respond to God. So that when the gospel is proclaimed, and men are called upon to believe, and they do not believe, it is because they cannot believe.

Now you may think it is just because they don't want to believe. But Calvin and Augustine would say, no, it isn't so much that they don't want to believe, it's that they can't believe. It is beyond them. It is out of their capability of complying. They just cannot believe. That means they are totally unable.

[ 5 : 26 ] Totally. Total inability. And if this is true, and there's a big if there, I don't believe that is true.

What I just shared with you, I don't believe that is true. I believe man not only has the ability to respond, he has the responsibility to respond. But I didn't always believe that.

And the reason I didn't always believe it was because I adopted the tulip, well, not all points, I adopted four points of the tulip as a young man, because I was tremendously influenced by the intellect and the stature of John Calvin and the books he had written and the reputation that he had earned for himself.

I was tremendously influenced by that. I was influenced by Augustine. I was influenced by the man who led me to Christ. I had an emotional attachment to that man and I shall forever be indebted to him for explaining the gospel to me and the day that Barbara and I were married was the day that I gave my heart and life to Christ.

So, as a young Christian, I began reading these things and absorbing them and I was understandably influenced by these great men who had gone on before and the positions that they had adopted.

[ 6 : 47 ] And I found myself believing what they believed primarily, and I'm ashamed to say this, but primarily I believed what they believed because that's what they believed.

Don't do that. Don't do that. Don't make your doctrine your doctrine because that's what Pastor Wiseman believes.

Don't do that. That's why we need to be Bereans. We need to go to the Scriptures. And the reason I am reversing myself on many of these things from what I taught you 25 years ago is because during those 25 years, we have spent time together in the Scriptures verse by verse, going through the New Testament.

And I just cannot support the concept of TULIP any longer. So out of the five points of Calvinism, T-U-L-I-P, total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints, out of those five, I never did have more than four because I never could buy the unlimited atonement.

But for years and years and years, I was a four-point Calvinist. Now I only have two points left. I'm a two-point Calvinist.

[ 8 : 17 ] The first and the last. So we'll explain a little bit more about these as we go on. But it's a very important concept because, and you know the thing that saddens me about American Christianity?

Is that American Christianity knows so little about this whole concept you couldn't even talk to them and carry on an intelligent conversation? You might as well be speaking a foreign language. And it may be that way with some of you this morning. The terms that I use and the things I'm going to say, you're going to scratch your head and say, what in the world is he talking about? Well, this should be on the front burner of everyone because this relates vitally to how man and God connect. Why there is a connection. And how the connection comes about. You cannot find a subject more important than this because the position you take on this and what you do about it will impact your eternal destiny.

Now that makes it pretty important. If only we could get more people to understand that. So, in my reversing myself on this, I am offering some retractions.

[ 9 : 38 ] And as I pointed out to you last week, it heartened me somewhat to realize that even Augustine had some retractions also. And I'll share those with you later. But he reversed himself on a few things.

So, based on this prospect of total inability, here's the issue. When our first parents fell and became spiritually separated from God so that there was a kind of spiritual death that resulted.

And when God said to them, don't eat of the tree that's in the middle of the garden for in the day that you eat thereof you will surely die.

We know they ate. The text says it very clearly in chapter 3. We also know they didn't drop dead. And that is our first clue to the reality that there is more than one kind of life.

And there's more than one kind of death. There are two. There's spiritual life and physical life. There's spiritual death and spiritual life.

[10:59] There is physical water and spiritual water. There is spiritual light and physical light. So, all of these things are contrasted throughout Scripture.

And if Adam and Eve took upon themselves this new nature of what did this new nature consist? Did they with the fall lose their volition? And my contention is they did not. Volition is that which God grants to every human being that encompasses the power to make a moral choice.

The power to choose between right and wrong. That is your volition. It's the word from which we get the word volunteer or voluntary.

A volitional being is one who is possessing a will and the ability to make decisions right or wrong.

[12:10] That is perhaps the most outstanding thing that God has given us. It is that moral ability. We are a free moral creature.

We are thus because we have a volition we are accountable. We are accountable for the decisions we make. and listen if we are held accountable for our decisions by the local authorities you can be sure we are held accountable by the authority.

The policeman on the corner holds you accountable when you run through that red light. You didn't have to run through that red light. You chose to run through that red light. That was your decision. You exercised your volition and you are going to be held responsible for it because we are accountable individuals. So that means if this is true and I believe it is that God did not eliminate Adam and Eve's volition when they fell spiritually.

What he did was he put a barrier between himself and them because of their disobedience and that barrier had to be removed and as a result of the barrier they became separated from God and this is really what spiritual death is.

[13:36] Spiritual death is separation from God. So when the gospel is preached which is the good news what we are saying is that man not only has a responsibility not only has the capability to respond to the message he has a responsibility to respond to the message and remember in Acts 17 when Paul was talking to the pagans on Mars Hill he says that now God commands all men everywhere to repent because he has fixed a day when he is going to judge the world by that man speaking of Christ God commands that all men everywhere repent what about the fellow who says well you know I might like to do that but I can't I just don't have that ability that's nonsense you do have that ability and the basis for repenting is the message that is received the information that is received man can respond God does not make demands of us that we cannot fulfill and if he does he fulfills them himself in other words

God made a demand for righteousness from us that we cannot fulfill but that doesn't make God unreasonable because God then turned right around and met the demand that he made from us in the person of his own son so we're still without excuse now if this is true if there is a total inability and I don't believe there is but this is what I used to preach and I by the way I have been too embarrassed to get out the old tapes and listen to them from the 1970s I don't want to hear that I don't want to hear maybe maybe I ought to do like the Nixon White House and some of the tapes come up mysteriously missing I wish I hadn't taught this but I did and you know all you can do is teach on the basis of what you know at the time but at the time I did not have the advantage of 30 years of verse by verse scripture that I got now and that's why I'm reversing this this is why I'm telling you why I've changed my mind the opposite of course of Calvinism is Arminianism and these two factions have gone back and forth for a long time and to just give you a little update on who are these people today who are these Calvinists today well let's start first of all with our

Presbyterian friends now most Presbyterians today don't even know they're Calvinists because they don't even know who John Calvin is the Presbyterian church like virtually all other Protestant churches have gone so far from their roots most of the people in the congregations today have little or no idea of the history and what's more most of them don't care all they care about is making the next month's mortgage payment you know so but but for the record most of these would be Presbyterians and they would be all of the reformed people Dutch reform Christian reform big headquarters in Grand Rapids Michigan have a heavy concentration of reformed people there and as far as personalities that you would identify with these John MacArthur I consider John MacArthur out in California one of the best Bible teachers around and he's got a dynamic radio program grace to you he's been responsible for edifying lots of believers but he's a five-point Calvinist and I just happen to think that he's wrong I love the man he's a great teacher but as

I've said somebody can be a great teacher in one area and that doesn't mean that they're great in every area another of my favorites is a man who probably knows more about philosophy than than anybody anybody I know of and that's R.C.

Sproul from Ligonier Ministries a tremendous teacher greatly gifted he did a series on the holiness of God that I think is just out of sight just just amazing it's wonderful stuff but he's a five-point Calvinist and D.

[ 17 : 39 ] James Kennedy that passed away recently Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in in Florida is a five-point Calvinist and the the opposite of the Calvinist fold of course are referred to as Arminians this is Jacobus Arminianus he was a Dutch theologian and he presented his spiritual his biblical content and opposition to Calvin and he simply disagrees with him on just about every point so who are the Arminians today as opposed to the Calvinists the Arminians today are virtually all of the Methodists all of the Church of God all of the Nazarene and by the way most of these didn't even come about until the early 1900s and those who were earlier were usually in the 1800s so you've got the Calvinist and the Arminians and it's a back and forth and where the Baptist fit Baptists are both really there are free will

Baptists and they of course are Arminians what does free will mean there's a free will Baptist church that's building a new building right up on 41 and they used to be down right across from McDonald's down on Upper Valley Pike these these are dear believers in Christ they know the Lord they are free will Baptists that means they are Baptists who believe in the freedom of the human will as opposed to the Baptists who do not the Baptists who are Calvinist so these folks would the free will Baptist would be considered Arminian and other Baptists would be considered Calvinistic so what what am I now I'm a Calvinian what a mess huh what a mess well anyway based upon the premise that if you take the position now I want you to understand this is not my position this was my position formerly but I no longer believe this so I want to make that clear but if you take the position and make the premise that man is totally in able unable or has an inability to respond then that given that premise that necessitates unconditional election because since man doesn't even have the ability to believe God has to give him that also and that's what he does when he elects someone to salvation what does that mean it simply means that God for reasons of his own that are not revealed has selected he has handpicked certain individuals to be recipients of salvation we do not know on what basis they are chosen that is never revealed in scripture it just seems to say that God selected beforehand certain individuals and appointed them to salvation while he refused to elect others and they are destined for damnation the destiny of one is just as certain as the other unconditional unconditional election becomes a necessity if you buy the premise of total depravity or total inability because if you don't have unconditional election then you have nobody being saved nobody at all period everyone is condemned and everyone goes to hell but through what is extended as God's grace and mercy he chose some so if you are one he chose you will be saved if you are not one he chose you will not be saved and it doesn't make any difference how much you pray or how much you read the Bible or anything else you're either elect in

Christ by God unconditionally or not well where does your will come in it doesn't you have a will remember that is inoperative you can't believe so it is as if God believes for you because you don't have the ability to believe that's what unconditional election is and it is predicated upon one's inability so unconditional election must be a reality in order for anyone to be saved man cannot only not take initiative to affect his salvation he cannot even respond to the salvation that has been provided for him through the death of Christ now you look at that and you say well that's crazy who believes that well only some of the greatest intellects who've ever lived believe that and one of the reasons they believe it is because they they are convinced that it is this view that elevates and dignifies the sovereignty of

God to its rightful place God is absolutely put in charge of everything everything now this of course presupposes presupposes as well that God has also neutralized your volition so your volition is not operative you cannot make choices regarding your eternal destiny but here's the rub and I've never had a Calvinist address this why isn't our volition neutralized in other areas as well don't we still have free moral agency to make all kinds of decisions about all kinds of things serious and non-serious why should we be exempt in just this one area that affects our eternal destiny so the argument is if it were not for

[ 24 : 13 ] God first taking complete initiative and making man live he could never respond to the gospel and believe you see as I pointed out to you this this means that through unconditional

election those whom God has elected he infuses in them his life he gives them eternal life even if they don't know it even if they are not aware of it and don't have a clue God makes you alive spiritually inside and as a result of your being made alive inside you are then able and willing to believe the gospel when you hear it so the Calvinist formula is pretty much this are you a believer in Jesus Christ well yes I am all right then that just proves you're one of the elect and if you are not a believer in

Christ you might not be one of the elect and this is why and I've heard these men say this and I remember R.C. Sproul saying it one time said you do not have the liberty you do not have the right to tell anyone Christ died for your sin because maybe he didn't maybe you're not one of the elect and if you are not one of the elect Christ didn't die for your sin you're going to die for your own Christ did not that's the next that's the L in tulip that is limited atonement and that's the one that I never was able to buy and still couldn't and some have taken the position that if you do not endorse all five points of Calvinism you're not a true Calvinist at all and I suppose that might be true of me maybe I never was a true Calvinist and just didn't know it but anyway if one were to respond that man did have something to do with his salvation when he believed the gospel and accepted Christ the Calvinist would respond that the man believed because God elected him to salvation and enabled him to believe otherwise man would not and could not believe all this is necessitated say the

Calvinist by the reality of man's total inability due to his being spiritually dead but when Adam and Eve fell their spiritual capacity and connection with God did not cease to exist it entered into a distancing or separation from God their wills or their volition had not been altered or destroyed they retained an ability for further obedience or disobedience and they are going to go on and manifest that and every generation from Adam and Eve on has demonstrated that they have the ability to be obedient to the dictates of scripture and also to be disobedient you see it is the fact of your volition that you are accountable that's how and why it is that God holds us accountable because he has given us that capacity if we did not have the ability to make moral choices the basis for judgment goes right out the window but there is a basis for judgment we are each responsible and even as believers we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ that we may give an account for the deeds done in the body whether they be good or bad that's because we've got a volition that's intact everybody does everybody does nobody's going to be able to stand before God and say I really wanted to believe but I just didn't have the ability I wasn't one of the elect can't I can't help it you can't blame me not my fault you didn't elect me nobody will be saying that everybody will be standing there as a morally accountable individual Adam's volition transferred to us was not destroyed or killed when he fell and it is not in us the effort and desire to account total sovereignty to God was commendable both for Augustine and Calvin but we must not allow God's sovereignty to disallow man's responsibility because God's sovereignty because God has not God's sovereignty now follow me closely with this statement God's sovereignty and God's by by by talking about God's sovereignty we mean God's God has the ability and the right to exercise total control over that which he has brought into existence he has the ability and the right that's what we we mean by God's sovereignty possesses ability and right his sovereignty does allow for his will to pervade every area of creation including the will and actions of men that is not the question the question is does it and my answer is no it does not it is true God could have exercised exercise his sovereignty in that way had he chosen to do so because he is God and sovereignty is his prerogity but he hasn't done that and the scriptures make it quite clear that he has not done that I am suggesting and of course this would just make Calvinist vibrate all over the place but I am suggesting that God opted for a limited partnership on behalf of men and angels think of that God has opted for a limited partnership I say limited partnership don't have any illusion that you're equal partners but don't have any illusion that you have no part you do you very definitely have a part God's willingness to allow for the involvement and partnership of men and angels in no way limits the ultimate intention of his will nor does it threaten the realization of his will what it does do is it allows the gracious participation of men and angels in a limited partnership with God and I think this is a very valid concept it begins in Genesis and it continues all the way through Revelation and we have literally hundreds of examples of it God partnered with Noah he didn't have to use human agency to build an ark he didn't even have to have an ark built he didn't have to use Noah to do it he could have provided for Noah any other way but he chose to involve

Noah Noah had a part to play God did the same thing after a fashion with Abraham he chose to involve Abraham God you see God can bring about the ends that he desires without utilizing any angels or any men God can do whatever he wants to do he did not have to use people he did not have to use angels he chose to do so and we are richly blessed and privileged and involved for just being involved it's an honor it's an honor to team up with the God of the universe to play a small infinitesimal role in your world in whatever capacity that is a gracious gift that God has given purely because he chose to do it that way so all through scripture we see God using human instrumentality and angelic instrumentality to affect his will when he could have bypassed all of them and still got done everything he wanted to get done so bear in mind that we are involved because God chose to use us not because he was somehow in a position where he had to there's a little ditty that goes around that says

[ 33 : 14 ] God has no hands but mine God has no eyes but mine God has no feet but mine well after a fashion that's kind of true but it's woefully inadequate too because the sovereign God can exercise his will in such a way that he will bring about whatever end he desires with or without human or angelic instrumentation so we need to keep that in mind and lastly I want you to consider this before I open it for Q&A; this morning it appears to me to be very inconsistent that God would bestow volition upon man and then remove volition from him in the very area that is most critical and vital to man's eternal well-being you see if and when a man perishes outside of Christ and absent from God forever it will be very clear to that individual that he is suffering the consequences of his decision solely because it is his decision no one will be consigned to an eternity absent from God because it was God's choice it will be because it was man's choice it might be reduced even to a simple formula as this there are people who say to God thy will be done and those people embrace the provision that God has made for them through Jesus Christ because God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and what did God do to demonstrate that he was not willing that any should perish

Christ died for all he made provision for all that's proof positive that God was not willing that any should perish he made a way for all and when someone comes and places their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their personal savior they are in effect saying to God your will be done and it is God's will that we believe and God has given us the ability to do so and for those who will not say to God thy will be done God says to them thy will be done it works both ways this is a really heavy concept and as I mentioned at the outset it isn't much discussed it is it's very little known even and appreciated but is there anything in the whole wide world more important than having a living loving connection relationship with the God who made you you and I are outfitted for eternity somewhere have you said to God thy will be done or are you one who is waiting on God to say to you thy will be done pretty heady stuff isn't it truly is and my great regret is that

Christianity in these United States has come to such such a low level of disinterest that most of what I've said this morning is just a yawner for most people ho hum what's on television who cares that's where we are today and you know something it is because of this massive ignorance that the church has little or no impact upon our society someone has said that the world doesn't love us and the world doesn't persecute us the world just puts up with us that's pretty pathetic that's not where we ought to be you know what that is that's not hot it's not cold it's that disgusting lukewarm that Christ said he hates that's where much of

Christendom is today well and by the way we haven't considered any of these scripture verses yet so this is going to go on for a while what I'm going to do is we're going to take the passages of scripture Ephesians and Romans Jacob have I loved Esau have I hated he chose the one over the other before they were even born how was that these are passages that that our Calvinist friends use and get a lot of mileage out of and they seem to be saying things that back their position on the surface and there's one in Acts I think it's Acts 13 and it says and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed wow that looks like it's open and shut and that is a favorite verse used by our Calvinist friends and used by me for years because I never really delved into that verse before I was confident if there's anything I know what it says

I know what that says it doesn't say that at all but that's exactly you see this is this is what this is what being a Berean will do for you it'll get you in all kinds of trouble and it'll cause you to throw out some positions of some of your favorite people because you just can't support them the scripture and it also enjoins us to investigation and study the scriptures in a way that probably wouldn't happen if it were not for these differences so I've benefited from this and I want you to benefit from

what I've learned to and we've got a few minutes left now and I'm deliberately trying to have some Q&A; this morning and by the way I've got some written questions very good ones and I'm just saving them I want to do them all at once maybe in one session but if you have written questions because you don't want to ask them publicly feel free to write them out drop them in the offering box and I'll do my best to treat them meanwhile we've got a roving microphone back there who has a comment or question anybody all right in the back Terry why is it that I could count on Terry to have a question you who are in the

[ 40 : 28 ] Sunday school hour know that Terry has an engaging inquisitive mind Terry because I'm not bashful and you just said that you're going to go over the verses and I'm thinking Romans 829 and 830 for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren and these whom he predestined he also called etc etc Ephesians 1 5 he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ so I mean there are several verses in the Bible that specifically say that he predestined yep and those are all on my list excellent excellent yeah they are all on my list as well as a number of others in Ephesians and Romans and the Thessalonian epistles and yeah yep these are great verses and they deserve a fair consideration they really do other comments or questions up here in front

Ron Gannon has a question I had a father-in-law who accepted Christ in his 90s it seems to me if God this was God's plan to choose for us why did he wait till he was 90 I would think that he would be at a very early age that he would predestine everybody yeah well that's a valid point I would agree there's no question about the ways of God are mysterious there's no doubt about that you know there's a song that says God works in mysterious ways and sometimes sometimes I've been given to think that's the only way he does work it's mysterious everything he does is mysterious Terry had another comment or question okay Roger yeah does a Calvinist then not preach the gospel of grace of God well they do they do yes they do they preach the gospel of the grace of God for by grace are you saved through faith and here's another place I don't want to get off on this but just a little bit of a little bit of Greek for you in Ephesians 2 8 and 9 that very familiar passage that says for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves most of our Calvinist friends say that the word that and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God is faith and that faith in Ephesians 2 faith is what that refers to that faith is the gift of God God gives you the gift of faith and if he didn't you wouldn't be able to believe so even your ability to believe is a gift from God he gives you the faith to believe but that's not what the verse is teaching at all it is teaching that the salvation is the gift of God not faith faith is something that every person has you cannot function without faith and faith is not necessarily a biblical word or concept at all although that's almost always the way it is used of what faith are you or what is your faith we mean what is your belief but faith is nothing more than believing anything from anybody about anything that's faith you have faith when you step on an airliner you have faith in the credentials of the pilot who's going to pilot that plane you don't know that he's a reputable pilot you don't know that but you have faith in American airlines that they're not going to let somebody in that cockpit that doesn't know how to fly a plane you're exercising faith that which distinguishes one faith from another is always the object of faith this is why

I've made clear so many times nobody is saved by faith in faith you are saved by faith in Jesus Christ faith is given its validity and its value dependent on the object of your faith make sure that that in which you are placing your faith faith is a worthy object and able to deliver that's why faith in Christ is important not faith in a church or a creed or a pastor but faith in Christ Terry how did God choose Saul certainly he didn't choose this man with well maybe he will believe or maybe he won't believe I mean the entire Gentile population is based upon the apostle Paul being able to tell us about the Lord Jesus Christ yeah well we are not told we are not told how or why God chose Saul of Tarsus he just chose him because he chose him we aren't given a rationale for it some have suggested and it's probably not a not too far afield I don't know because we're not given the details but but some someone has said that when when God wanted to provide this good news this gospel to propagate throughout the whole world and he and he was going to use somebody some human instrument to start it and he looked down upon the sea of humanity and he said no chapter and verse for this okay and it is as if God said who is the least likely individual in the whole world to take on this job of proclaiming

[ 46 : 36 ] Christ to the nations and it was a no brainer even for God Saul of Tarsus you couldn't get a more unlikely unwilling candidate than him and God says hmm I want him you know the old

banner we used to see outside well you don't remember you young pups don't remember but I remember seeing this old banner outside recruiting stations during world war ii and uncle sam was there in his red white and blue and top hat with pointing his bony fingers and said uncle sam wants you well God wanted Saul of Tarsus and he got out his two by four and used it on him on the road to damascus and Saul of Tarsus came to grips with the advantages of being obedient to the mind and will of

God what a what a story what a guy got a couple more another comment question Mike when Saul was struck down you know your reference to the two by four he also then entered basic training so to speak and three years later before he actually started yeah that's right and not only that but a lot of people don't realize it but but Saul of Tarsus who became Paul the apostle never took his first missionary journey until 15 years after he became a believer now all during those 15 years he was propagating the gospel and he was communicating the gospel particularly to Gentiles but also to Jews but it wasn't until he had been saved for about 15 years that he took that first missionary journey and then it was on his second one that he entered into Europe and because the gospel went all throughout

Europe then as a result of Paul that we have the gospel today because most of us are of European background and we benefited from that well our time was gone for this morning was there another comment or question Loretta do you have a comment okay okay may we stand please next week we'll look at at what at the opposite of limited atonement because it is not a limited atonement it is an unlimited atonement and if there is anything in the tulip that is so powerfully clear as this I don't know what it is because this L was one that I didn't even buy years and years ago because the scriptures just militate against it so much and you can just start with

John 3 16 for whom did Christ die God so loved the world our Calvinist friend says yes God did so love the world that what that means is God so loved the elect world but wait a minute wait a minute it doesn't say that but that is clearly what it means well we'll deal with that exegetically and philosophically and a few other ways next week father we are grateful for the salvation that you provided and we wholeheartedly agree that we are undeserving but we also agree that we have the innate ability to respond in a positive way to the most gracious provision that you have made for us through our Lord Jesus Christ and we do not want to be remiss in doing that or in telling people about it nothing is more vital nothing is more critical to our eternal destiny than how we relate to you through what you've provided and we are so grateful that you made this amazing gift and have extended it to us in a gracious proffer we trust that as we continue through these themes you will use them to enlighten and to strengthen and encourage and confirm those who are in Christ and for any who are not and perhaps do not even realize that they're not in Christ may it be a time of awakening for them to what you've provided for them we pray in Christ's name amen