

# The Ability of Belief II

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     The Apostle is making an unmistakable contrast between the behavior of the individual prior to their conversion to Jesus Christ, as opposed to the behavior of the individual after their conversion to Jesus Christ, and what really makes the difference.

It is Jesus Christ. When he comes into the life as a result of having trusted him for one's personal salvation, he brings with him not only his forgiveness, his love, his grace, his eternal life, but he brings with him an incredible new capacity or empowerment that is given to you as a believer through the Holy Spirit.

And this indwelling Holy Spirit enables us to enjoy a victorious Christian life whereby we honor God.

We saw at the outset of this series, when we were speaking on the subject of the inability of unbelief, how that all unbelievers are in the flesh.

And being in the flesh, as opposed to being in the spirit, they cannot please God. They can please each other in numerous ways and to different extents, but they cannot please God.

[ 1 : 3 4 ]     Because everything about the human flesh, and when we talk about the human flesh, we are talking about our innate Adamic nature with which we were all born.

Everything about that is contaminated. It is morally unacceptable to a righteous and a holy God. Once, however, we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and we receive his salvation, we are transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son.

And we have not only a new destiny, which is heaven, and a new life, new ambitions, new goals, new objectives, new interests, new everything.

Because if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. And this impacts what we refer to as our position in Christ.

And we're talking about the difference between position and practice. Our position is in Christ.

[ 2 : 5 1 ]     And it is one that is fixed, secure, solid, permanent, immovable, eternal.

That which determines it and that which guarantees it and solidifies it is the person of Christ himself. This is the basis for your eternal life.

You are in Christ. His destiny is your destiny. His righteousness becomes your righteousness. It is your righteousness in Christ that is referred to as imputation.

Whereby God imputes into you the very righteousness of Christ so that he looks upon you and accepts you as he does his own Son.

You cannot get any better than that. That is absolutely perfect. And it cannot change. God himself cannot add to that. Because in Christ, there is nothing to be added to it.

[ 3 : 5 9 ]     And God does not and cannot take away from it. Because grace being what it is by its very nature comes with that degree of permanence.

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. That is your position. Can't be improved upon. You had nothing to do with creating the position.

All you did was put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and God took it from there. And he made you a new creation in Christ. And this is true of all believers everywhere.

Even those who are nasty and out of sorts and sometimes don't even act like they are believers. It is true of them as well.

That is your position. But what we are talking about and what this passage in Romans 6 is talking about is our practice.

[ 5 : 07 ] And who is in charge of that? You are. And that is partly what this chapter is all about.

You are in charge of your practice. God has given you all of the divine operating assets that you need in order to live a life that is well-pleasing to him.

It is up to you whether or not you implement it. God does not make you do that. God does not force you to be a spiritual Christian. He does not force you to grow spiritually.

He does not make you live a life that pleases him. But he gives you everything you need in order to do that. So what is the one obstacle?

What is the one impediment then that keeps believers from living this kind of life that is pleasing to God? And there is only one thing that I can think of.

[ 6 : 07 ] And that is the human will. We talked a little bit about that last week. We will investigate it some more today. It is a very, very complex issue.

God created our first parents with a will, with volition. Along with that is the potential to rebel against the one who imparted that volition to his creation.

That's exactly what Adam and Eve did. They exercised the will that God gave them in a negative way. And it brought down the whole of humanity.

All of humanity was in the loins of Adam. And all our offspring of Adam. And all became, by virtue of procreation, all became what Adam was.

Including the death sentence that was settled on him as a result of his sin. So this will or volition with which we are born is the basis on which God holds us accountable and responsible as human beings.

[ 7 : 30 ] It is a very, very serious thing to be a human being made in the image and likeness of God. It is not a small thing.

It is a great thing. This will that we have is something in which you are in charge.

It is your call for right or wrong. Now the great distinction between believers and unbelievers is this.

Well, let me, rather than a distinction, let me say the great commonality. And what I am giving you now is, as best as I can understand this, this is my perception of the issue that we are dealing with.

I cannot claim any kind of infallibility for it. I cannot give you chapter and verse that spells it out and says that this is exactly the way it is. This is simply a conclusion that I have reached having studied the subject for many, many years and trying to take into consideration all of the factors involved.

[ 8 : 46 ] Realizing fully that I don't have all of the information that none of us do. But this is the best understanding that I've been able to arrive at. And I'll summarize it for you as best I can.

It does not appear to me that the human will undergoes any significant change at the point of salvation or conversion.

Now I want to make some very careful distinctions here because there is a lot that does undergo a change. When one is converted to Jesus Christ, it is not at all unusual.

In fact, it is rather ordinary, rather anticipated that there will be a dramatic change in attitude, in desires, in interests, in ambition, in goals and objectives and all of those things.

It is hard to conceive of someone coming to faith in Christ and not experiencing changes in those ways.

[ 10 : 01 ] But, I do not have any basis for believing that the human will undergoes such a change.

For lack of a better term, it appears to me that the human will is in a state of neutrality, both in the mind and heart of the unregenerate as well as the regenerate.

In other words, whether you are saved or unsaved, you are still in charge of you, insofar as your decisions, your behavior, etc. is concerned.

The will, the volition, is not converted at salvation. If it were, then it would appear to me that it would come under the purview of your position and you would always do that right and godly thing and say that right and godly thing, but you don't.

Do you? No, you don't. And neither do I. It isn't automatic. The ability to behave Christianly is automatic.

[ 11 : 35 ] I say the ability to behave Christianly is automatic. The potential is automatic.

And it is there for every believer. But the doing of it, the performance, is not automatic. That, again, is where your will comes into play.

Each time a believer in Christ is confronted with a decision, some kind of moral decision. Do I do this or not? Do I engage in this or not?

The Holy Spirit does not override your volition and make you do the right thing. He does not do that. You can do the wrong thing.

We have numerous examples throughout Scripture of those whom we would describe as godly individuals on one hand. And on the other hand, completely lost it and behaved in a very ungodly manner.

[ 12 : 41 ] And you're all familiar with David, who is the only man in Scripture who is described as a man after God's own heart.

Adultery? That's not exactly after God's own heart. Murder? Neither is that. Then lying to cover it up?

Neither is that. How is it possible that David, a man after God's own heart, how is it possible that someone of that spiritual magnitude and stature could stoop to adulterating his marriage and committing murder?

How could he do that? He could do that because he had a will that was very much intact. He had a volition.

He had a choice to make. And he made the wrong choice. Scripture is filled with incidents like that.

[ 13 : 53 ] We all know about Peter and his betrayal of the Lord and his denial that he knew him and etc. What do you attribute that to?

It's just humanness. Because the human will, which seems to be pretty much synonymous with the concept of the flesh, is pretty much self-centered.

And we have to commandeer our will. Well, what is it that commandeers the will? You see what I mean when I say we're getting into a really complex issue here?

I have struggled with this thing particularly for about the last four years. We've been devoting studies to heart, mind, will, spirit.

And it is a very complex issue. And I tell you, when that scripture says we are fearfully and wonderfully made, that's not the half of it. We really are. We are very complex beings.

[ 15 : 04 ] We've got this thing called a volition and a will. And it is that, the exercise of that for right or wrong, for which God holds us accountable and responsible. And this is the burden that Paul is expressing here in Romans chapter 6 when he is trying to inform these people at Rome that they no longer have any excuse.

Now that you are in Christ, you have no excuse for living like you are not in Christ. So let's begin. Romans chapter 6 and verse 11.

Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves. And by the way, you have a sheet perhaps from the 26th translation New Testament that was given to you.

It's part of your bulletin. You will find the text there. And we will just be reading and commenting on some of the other translations. But this, which is printed in the bold print in the sheet, is from the King James Version.

And then there are collateral translations listed following each of those. And at the top of the page in the left-hand column, verse 11.

[ 16 : 24 ] Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. Then right under that, we have another rendering. And it says TCNT.

That's the 20th century New Testament. That's just an abbreviation. So let it be with you. Regard yourselves as dead to sin, but as living for God. What does this mean, being dead to sin?

Being dead to sin. It is using this kind of analogy. And what Paul is saying is, insofar as you having to commit sin, you don't have to commit sin because you're dead.

Dead people can't sin. So, well, now wait a minute. I'm very much alive. But you are positionally, theologically, doctrinally, you are dead to sin.

That means he breaks the power of canceled sin. He sets the prisoner free. That's what Isaac Watts was talking about. You are dead to sin.

[ 17 : 34 ] Just one problem with that. Sin is not dead to you. Let's read on. You are alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let not, verse 12, let not sin therefore reign. Montgomery translates it, therefore, let not sin rule as king.

In your life. In your life. Somebody is calling the shots. Every time you make a decision. For right or wrong.

You have, as a believer, you have the indwelling spirit of God. As a believer, you still have with you. The flesh. The flesh. The flesh.

The flesh. The flesh is the human ego. The human self. The human Adamic nature fallenness. That self.

[ 18 : 40 ] Is very much intact. After salvation. Just as it was before salvation. Your human nature. Is not altered in that you no longer have the capacity to sin.

The flesh is what you used to sin with before you became a Christian. After you become a Christian. The flesh is still what you used to sin with.

That hasn't changed one bit. The flesh has not been improved. It has not been altered. It is just as vile and despicable in a Christian as it was in a non-Christian.

There are many things about you that are changed as a believer. The flesh is not one of them. It is still with us. It is what enables us to do the wrong thing.

And to say the wrong thing. And to excuse ourselves for doing it. And to try to lie out of it. And to shift the blame. And to find something or someone else to blame.

[ 19 : 49 ] That is all the flesh. As opposed to the spirit. When we are functioning and walking in the spirit. I have often said the greatest asset. The greatest asset that Jesus Christ has here on this earth.

Is a believer. Who is walking in the spirit. The greatest liability he has. Is a believer. Who is walking in the flesh.

We are capable of either. And I am satisfied. This is just a personal. A Wiseman personal opinion. But I am satisfied. That the greatest single reason.

Why the church of Jesus Christ. Made up. I am talking about. Made up of true born again believers. Does not make. A more significant. And sustained impact.

On our culture. Is that too many. Of us. Who are Christians. Are walking. After the flesh. Not after the spirit. We just kind of behave. Like the culture around us.

[ 20 : 50 ] We just kind of. Fit and slip right into the mold. Without skipping a beat. And the world looks at us. And they don't see it all that much difference. We're pretty much like them.

In many of our standards. And values. And interests. And things in which we engage. The believer ought to stand out. By virtue.

Of his position in Christ. Christ. And living that out. In his practice. We ought to be. More noticed. Than we are. And very often.

They can't tell all that much difference. Many believers. Live. Christ. In such a way. That they do not. Make him all that compelling. Or attractive.

To others. And what's the problem? It's the flesh. It's the flesh. It's the ego.

[ 21 : 49 ] It's the human will. Because. In our heart of hearts. We may be able to say. And mean it. And be very sincere about it.

I really love God. And want to please him. More than anything else. Yes. And yet. At the same time. We can have our own agenda.

And want to do our own thing. And go our own way. And make our own decisions. And all the rest of it. That's just part of the enigma. Of the flesh. Paul goes on to say.

Do not let sin therefore reign. In your mortal body. That you should obey it. In the lust thereof. If you would. Obey sin. And allow sin to reign.

In your mortal body. What would you be using. In order to do that? Your will. Your will. This is why I say.

[ 22 : 51 ] This will. Is in a position of neutrality. In the unbeliever. As well as the believer. And this is also. By the way. What makes the unbeliever. Accountable for his actions.

He has a will. A volition. This is what makes the believer. Accountable for his actions. He has a will. A capacity to obey.

Or disobey. And by the way. It is the Christian. Who is far more culpable. And far more responsible.

Than the unbeliever. Because the unbeliever. Is just bouncing through life. Thinks he is dumb and happy. And doesn't know from anything. Doesn't know which way is up.

Spiritually speaking. And he just. Thinks that life is just. For. For. For no other purpose. Than to just. Have a bang. And do what I want to do. And do my own thing.

[ 23 : 46 ] And step on whoever I have to step on. To get where I want to go. And. And that is life. And you just grab all the gusto. You can get. Because when it is over. It is over. And that is it. So. Just live for today.

And forget about tomorrow. And all the rest of it. That is all he knows. That is all he can do. But the believer. Who has brought. Had been brought into union.

With Jesus Christ. Not only has. A new potential. A new capacity. A new ability. But he has a new. Responsibility. A new accountability.

Because the principle remains. And to whom much is given. Shall. From him. Shall much be required. So the believer. With more light. Stands in.

Far more accountability. With that light. And in verse 13. Neither yield ye. Your members. As instruments. Of unrighteousness. Unto sin.

[ 24 : 41 ] Do you realize. That what Paul. Is admitting here. Is that. You can do that. You can do that. You can yield your members.

As instruments. Of unrighteousness. To sin. You can do that. But there is. No way in the world. That you can justify. Doing it. Oh you can do it.

Yeah. You can do it. You have a will. You have a volition. You can go your own way. But you can't justify it. You have no excuse for it. And if you do that.

What is it that you use. To do it with. Your will. Your volition. Your decider. Don't think for a moment. That the spirit of God.

Is going to come in. And just invade your life. And prevent you. From doing. Sinful stupid things. He doesn't do that. When God gives you.

[ 25 : 38 ] A volition. He does not. Overwrite it. That's. Something. To think about. Very seriously. So if you are.

Ever tempted. To say. Now God. If you don't want me. To do this. If you don't want me. To say this. If you don't want me.

To go there. Put an obstacle. In my way. So that I can't. That's cop out. Forget it. Forget.

Reminds me. Of the lady. Who had been. Ordered. To go on. The strict diet. And she was going. To really. Reel in. Her willpower. And she was. Going to follow.

This. Dietitians. Diet. To the. Nth degree. And she had. Developed this. Little ritual.

[ 26 : 36 ] Every morning. Stopping by. Her favorite. Bakery. And picking up. A couple of those. Scrumptious. Eclairs.

Just filled. With goodies. You know. About eight. Eight thousand. Calories each. And. She made up. Her mind. That she is. Going to drive. Right on.

By that place. She is not going to stop. And the first morning. She did. She drove. Right on by. And didn't even. Look over. And was so proud. Of herself. And did so. The second morning.

Did so. The third morning. And she thought. Well I am doing. Pretty good on this. Maybe I ought to. Maybe God. Wants to reward me. So.

I am going to drive. By the bakery. And. God. If you don't mind. My stopping.

[ 27 : 34 ] And getting my eclairs. I am going to trust you. To have an empty parking place. Right in front of the bakery.

For me. Then I will know. That is a sign from you. That it is okay. So. She drove. Slowly past the bakery.

No parking place. Everything is filled up. What does she do? She says. God. I am going to go around the block.

One time. And give you another chance. See. This is all rationalizing. And you know something. We are pros.

At rationalizing. You can rationalize. Just about anything. You want to do. You can rationalize yourself. Into. Crawling into bed.

- [ 28 : 34 ] With someone. That you shouldn't. You can rationalize. With. Putting something. In your body. That you know. You shouldn't. Rationalism.
- Comes so easily. And. It works. The same way. In Christians. As it works. In non-Christians. We can be guilty. Of the same thing. So.
- Paul is telling us. Don't. Don't. Yield. Your members. As instruments. Of unrighteousness. To sin. And. Montgomery says.
- Do not continue. To present. Any. Part. Of your body. To sin. To be used. As a weapon. Of unrighteousness.
- What would those. Instruments be. What would those. Members be. They are your body parts. Arms. And legs. And eyes. Your body parts.
- [ 29 : 29 ] Are what you utilize. To look at things. Fellows. That you shouldn't. Be looking at. The pornography.
- That's available. On the internet. Your members. Are your eyes. Or your ears.
- These are things. We use. To sin with. And Paul is saying. You may do that. As a Christian. Don't. Oh.
- But I can't help it. Because. I'm weak. Paul says. No you aren't. Don't. Don't. Insult. The grace.
- Of God. Like that. Don't. You dare. Suggest. That God. Has shortchanged. You. And didn't. Give you. The spiritual. Equipment.
- [ 30 : 24 ] That you need. To withstand. Against that. Don't. You dare. Say that. You have. Everything. That you need. As pertains. To righteousness.
- And godliness. You are not. Short. Shift. In any wise. But.
- Yield yourselves. Unto God. As those. That are alive. From the dead. And your members. As instruments. Of righteousness. Unto God. How do you do that?
- Same way. With your will. With your volition. You make godly decisions. Godly choices. You choose. To do the right thing. And you exercise.
- Your will. In doing it. Now granted. The will. Is being exercised. Hopefully. Out of a background. Or a base. Of. Knowledge.
- [ 31 : 23 ] Information. Experiences. Standards. And values. Those things. Help. You. To decide. What is the right thing. To do. And most of us know.
- Most of us know. In most cases. What is the right thing. To do. But it often. Is not. The most appealing.
- Thing to do. Or the easiest. Thing to do. But we know. Usually. The right thing. To do. And then it comes down.
- To this. Will I. Or will I not. Who is going to make that decision. You are. You are. Don't charge God. With that.
- God is saying. Hey. Buster. I gave you a will. I gave you a volition. And I also gave you. The capacity. To use it. Correctly. The ball is in your court. For sin.
- [ 32 : 22 ] Shall not. Have dominion. Over you. It shall not. Have dominion. Over you. Well. What if it does. Have dominion.
- Over you. How does it. Get dominion. Over you. You. Let it. You.
- Invite it. You. Welcome it. You don't have to. But you may. You do not. Have to give in.
- You do not. Have to yield. To temptation. We may say. Well. I'm just. You know. I'm. Actually. I think I have a weakness gene. And I think that it's.

You know. Part. I was probably born this way. So that I don't have any. Other ability. I just have to do this thing. No. You don't. No. You don't. There is no. Weakness gene like that.

[ 33 : 17 ] It is just. Our. Own. Decision. That enables us. To do that. And. Whatever it might be. And you know. The beautiful thing.

About this is. Once. You discover. The truth of this. You can do something. About that. That. But.

If you put yourself. In the position. Of a victim. I'm helpless. It's not my fault. I was born this way.

Or. I don't have any say. In the matter. Because. I am so weak. Once you put yourself. In that mode. You're sunk. You're sunk. You get into.

Victimology. And there's no hope. For you. But. Once you realize. You. Can. Do it. You can. Once you realize.

[ 34 : 13 ] That. And understand. That. You are then. In a position. To make some changes. You can take control. You can take charge. Because you are in charge. God has put you in charge.

With the will. He gave you. You. This does not. In any way. Shape. Or form. Detract from. The power. Of the Holy Spirit. And.

Let me address that. For just a moment. When Paul said. I am crucified. With Christ. Nevertheless. I live.

Yet. Not I. But Christ. Lives in me. And the life. Which I now live. In the flesh. As opposed to before. I live. By the faith. Or by the faithfulness.

Of the Son of God. Who loved me. And gave himself. For me. And I have used. This analogy. Before. It is the only one. I can think of. That is why. I do not use another one.

[ 35 : 06 ] And it. Expresses. I think. What I am trying to say. Someone has said. It is not difficult. To live the Christian life. It is impossible. And.

And in a sense. It is. Because. You cannot. Live the Christian life. Apart from. The indwelling Christ. And the power. Of the spirit of God.

And he is there. As a resource. And as. An enabler. But he is not there. As one. Who will. Veto. Your dumb decisions.

And make you do. The right thing. God just doesn't operate. That way. He doesn't give us. A volition. And then. Yank it away from us. When we are about to use it. To do something wrong.

No. No. You are not going to do that. You can do that to a child. You know. A parent. Will give a child. Certain parameters. Certain liberties. And. And. And. Will say. Now you can.

[ 36 : 01 ] You can go this far. But don't go any further. Don't get over close. To the stove. Because it's hot. And you're watching them. And they are getting closer.

And closer. To the stove. So what do you do? Well you go over. And grab them. You snatch them away. From that. I don't believe. God does that. Do you know what God does?

He lets you go right ahead. And get burned. Silly. Stupid. That's. That's the way we learn. And.

The power. Is God's. Not ours. I'm not talking about. Living a godly life. Through. Sheer. Willpower. That's not what we're talking about.

But your will. Is involved. The power. Is God's. The will. For that power. To be utilized. Is yours. And the illustration.

[ 36 : 59 ] That I've used. Is that. Of a weapon. Of a. Of a gun. When. You.



Pull. The trigger. Of a loaded gun. And that trigger. Activates. The hammer. And the hammer. Comes back. And it goes forward.

And the firing pin. Hits the center. Of that shell. There is an explosion. Explosion. And the explosion. Is so powerful. Within this.

Confined. Little space. That. It. Seeks. An outlet. And the outlet. Is through the barrel. Through the end. Of that gun. And the explosion.

Propels. That round. Through. The barrel. And out. into wherever it's going. The explosive power is what projects the projectile.

[ 38 : 00 ] But what started the whole process in motion? It was the trigger being pulled. If the trigger isn't pulled, nothing happens.

I liken that trigger to the human volition. You pull the trigger or you choose not to.

And when you do, you set in motion a series of consequences as a result of pulling that trigger. And when it comes to resisting temptation and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God rather than the opposite, it is your will that does that.

But it is not will power that provides the power. Who provides the power? God does. But can you believe this? God is waiting for you to give him permission to use it.

Does that sound right? No. It doesn't. But I think it is.

[ 39 : 22 ] I think it is. God has imbued us with this magnificent thing called human volition, the human will.

God has imbued us with this man. And he wants us to activate it by giving him permission to step in and do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. In other words, the power is his. The decision to do or not to do is not his. That's yours.

That's yours. But once we commit to him to do that, which we cannot do, Lord, I am facing this temptation. I don't want to do this thing.

I know I ought not to do this thing. I know that in my flesh I can't resist this thing. Would you please unleash your power on my behalf? That's what I'm counting on because I can't do it.

And all I know is this. Works for me. I can't speak for you, but it works for me.

[ 40 : 28 ] And I haven't found anything else that does. Let's continue on with the text. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

You are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know you not that to whom you yield, and what would you use to yield with?

Your will. You choose to yield or not to yield. To whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey.

Whether of sin unto death, that means you can engage in activities that are so un-Christ-like and so dangerous and so injurious that it could result in your death or of obedience unto righteousness.

But God be thanked, and here is this great contrast, God be thanked that you were the servants of sin. You were locked into that. That was all you could do and all you could be.

[ 41 : 43 ] You were the servants of sin, but you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. What's he talking about? The gospel.

You receive Christ as your personal Savior. That's when you believe that form of doctrine that was delivered unto you, and it made you a new person in Christ. Being then free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness.

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have in the past as an unbeliever yielded your members' servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members' servants to righteousness unto holiness because you can.

Don't say you can't. If you wish, you may say, you won't, but don't say you can't because you can.

When you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. And then Paul says, tell me now, what fruit did you have in those things whereof you are now ashamed?

[ 43 : 16 ] Wow, what a powerful, powerful position. And what a tremendously important and responsible position we are in because we are in Christ.

This is serious business. This is behavior-oriented and it is behavior that flows from our belief and it is that for which we are responsible.

But, let me hasten to add, God has equipped us with everything we need to make that right choice. If we do not utilize it, it isn't God's fault.

We are responsible. this is the key. As far as I can determine, it is the only key and it's the only key that's necessary or needed to live a victorious, triumphant life in Christ.

And it is all part of the package that every single believer has. Well, I'm going to consider this series of four messages concluded.

[ 44 : 23 ] But next Sunday, we're going to pursue this thing further regarding the will and what some believe is the complete inability of the will to do anything.

And they're speaking, of course, of the unbeliever and they, and when I say they, I'm talking about our Calvinist friends who believe that with the will of an unbeliever, he does not even have the ability to respond.

And that is a hot topic among Calvinists, Arminians, etc. And I confided in you earlier that there were days in my ministry as a younger man when I preached some of those things.

And I look back on it now with regret because some of them reflected positions that I feel are not tenable and cannot be supported by Scripture.

and we will look at the famous tulip next week and the Calvinist position regarding it and the ability or versus the inability of the will to respond to these issues.

[ 45 : 44 ] So, God has given us a capacity to respond whether unbelievers or believers. We still have the power of choice and I am confident that it is a wonderful responsibility we have and it is one for which we are all individually accountable before God.

Paul said in Romans 14, so then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Serious business.

But a business for which we are totally, completely equipped. May we pray. We're grateful, Father, for this revelation from Romans chapter 6.

We recognize that it still leaves a number of questions unanswered and we still have struggles with some of these issues because we do not understand them as fully as we would like.

But we do believe that you have made them sufficiently clear that we are able to respond with the information that we are given so as to make the kind of decisions that are honoring to you.

[ 46 : 59 ] We want to be reminded again that we are charged with that responsibility and thank you for the gracious equipment you have provided in and through the Lord Jesus.

Dismiss us now, we pray with your blessing in Christ's name. Amen.