

Election

Sunday, November 3rd, 1985

I Thessalonians 1:4

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

There is a good possibility that I will get your attention, right off the bat today. I’m going to speak on the subject: “ELECTION.”

Let me read several verses of Scripture. The Scripture mentions the word “*elect*,” “*God’s elect*,” “*election*” and “*elected*” several times in the Bible. This is what I am going to deal with through my whole message, the Bible doctrine of election. Let me read them to you in these scriptures:

In 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Paul says; “*Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God.*” In Romans 9:11, the Scripture says; “*That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him that calleth, it was said to her; the elder shall serve the younger that the purpose of God according to election might stand.*”

In Romans 11:5 Paul wrote, “*At this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*” In 2 Peter 1:10, the apostle says; “*Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*” 1 Peter 1:2 says, “*We are elect according to the foreknowledge (or foreordination) of God.*”

There always seems to be so much resentment and misunderstanding in regard to the subject of election or if we preach on the sovereignty of God or the free grace of God. When a preacher announces that he is going to preach on the subject “Election,” “Sovereignty,” or “Sovereign grace,” we usually get some of the following objections; this is usually what people often say.

They will say, “Why preach on such a profound and controversial subject; why preach it at all?” The main reason is because it is in the Word of God. That is the first reason. When the apostle Paul was leaving the elders from Ephesus, said; “*I have not shunned to declare unto you all the council of God.*”

So, why preach on election? Election is in the Bible dozens and dozens of times. Actually, “*you must be born again*,” is written one time in the 3rd chapter of John. The subject and doctrine of election is all the way through the Bible.

Someone else usually will say, “Granted that election is the truth of Scripture; shouldn’t we keep these deep, doctrines, back from the people? Let’s just not give these things to

the people and let's keep them back from the people. Let's leave all of these issues to the theologians and scholars and let them settle these things."

Well, again, the apostle Paul said to the elders of Ephesus; "*I have kept back nothing profitable unto you.*" My friends, this is the religion of the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages. This is when the common people were not allowed to have Bibles.

The Bibles stayed in some library or monastery. The people just had to take whatever the priest or the preacher or whoever was in charge said to do. They didn't have a Bible and they couldn't just read the Bible. They didn't know anything about what the Bible said. So, what he said was fact, (they thought). He may be a crook but they didn't have Bibles to read.

When they first started printing the Bible in the English language, they burned the presses, arrested the men who printed it and put them in jail. They didn't want the common people to have a Bible.

This is evil to keep back anything from people. "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof and for instruction in righteousness.*"

Some people would ask, "Aren't some doctrines dangerous?" My friends; truth is never dangerous; the truth will set you free. Christ said, "*You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.*"

It is error that is dangerous! It certainly is not truth that is dangerous. Some people think that if you preach on election and sovereignty, particular redemption and doctrines like these, people will take these things and abuse them. They will misuse them; they will misuse the doctrine of free grace and election. I think that they do misuse it now, (of course they do).

Natural men abuse and misuse all good things. What do you think perversion is? Perversion is a misuse of good things. For example: Homosexuality is a misuse of good things. Intemperance is a misuse of good things. If you would destroy all the good things that men misuse and abuse, you wouldn't have anything left.

You can't do away with a ropes because men hang themselves can you? You can't do away with knives because some man cuts his wrist. You can't do away with water because some men drown themselves. You can't do away with all drugs because some

nut becomes a drug-addict. So, you can't do away with something good because some fool misuses it.

Some people think that men have taken the doctrine of election to the point of becoming careless and indifferent to holiness. Of course they have done this. Men always find an excuse for sin. People are going to find an excuse and an alibi for sin; they are going to justify themselves one way or another.

You will have people who say that they are elected to salvation and they are saved no matter what they do. They feel like they can do whatever they want to do.

The sun that shines in the sky will ripen a smelly, old weed as well as ripen a tomato vine. The fault is not in the sun it is in the nature of the vine. The nature of that smelly, old weed is to be evil and the nature of that tomato on the vine is to produce a sweet fruit. The same sun makes both of them grow.

I've heard people say "Well; if you believe and preach election, it will kill missionary zeal; it will kill evangelism, and it will kill soul-winning." You hold on! The Lord Jesus Christ taught election; He said, "*All that My Father giveth me will come to me and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.*"

Our Lord came down here to die for sinners. You have never died for a sinner. Our Lord said, in John 17: "*I pray not for the world; I pray for them whom thou hast given me.*" He said, "*The Father hath given me all power over all flesh that I should give Eternal life to as many as He gave Me.*" That is election; but yet, He died for sinners. He loved sinners.

The apostle Paul was the greatest missionary whoever lived. He preached election. Paul said; "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath chose us in Christ from the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*"

Paul said, "*Brethren, beloved; I thank God for you because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. I endure all things for the elect's sake. I have been imprisoned, beaten, scourged, and ship-wrecked. I do all these things for the elect's sake that they might come to the knowledge of God.*" That's a sovereign grace preacher who was the greatest missionary who ever lived.

I could go on telling you about the missionary, William Carey, a grace man from the top of his head to the soul of his feet. There was Judson, Spurgeon, Whitfield, Luther,

Calvin, Zwingli, Huss, and Knox. I can keep naming them; they all preached the same message that I am preaching to you.

Can you preach election too much? I don't hear it preached at all. You can preach election too much, but I don't hear it preached at all. I know that proportion is beauty; we preach the Word proportionately and we preach it as we come to it.

I never apologize for preaching the Word of God. I never apologize for preaching the truth. People can get angry and quit; they can do what they want to do. I'm not a man-pleaser. I wasn't sent by men; I was sent by God.

I wasn't sent to preach what men want to hear; I was sent to preach what God has written in this Book. Election is in the Word of God and I am going to preach it. If you will listen to me preach, you are going to hear it.

I am going to preach God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. I am going to preach election and I am going to preach the duty of every sinner to come to Christ. I am going to preach that the Gospel is a command. God commands men to repent. "*He commandeth all men everywhere to repent.*" This is a commandment of Almighty God.

What exactly is the doctrine of election? You take your Bible and turn with me to the book of 2nd Thessalonians chapter 2:13. I am going to take one verse of Scripture and talk to you about what is the doctrine of election?

Here, in this one verse, the apostle Paul says, "*But; we are bound to give thanks to God, always for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*"

First of all: Election is a cause for praise. Election is not a hated doctrine it is a beloved doctrine, a doctrine of praise. When you find one of the apostles or writers of the Scripture, even our Master, speaking about election it is usually preceded by a word of praise.

In Ephesians, Paul said; "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus who hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world.*" In other words, praise God who chose us! Here, in this verse He says, "*We are bound to give thank; thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.*"

If He had not chosen us we would have never chosen Him. Isn't this correct? If He had not chosen us we would have never chosen Him. I am thankful; I praise God and I thank

God for the doctrine of election. I thank God for the truth of election. I thank God for the fact that God chose some people; had He not chosen some people there would be no one in glory.

Secondly: Election is not only a cause for praise, but election is based on love. Listen to what Paul says; *“I am bound to give thanks to God.”* He is bound to give thanks to whom? Election originates with God. *“I am bound to give thanks to God for you, beloved of the Lord.”*

You know; when those two sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to the Lord Jesus that Lazarus was sick. What did they say unto the Lord? I want you to think for a moment. They didn't say to the Lord, “He who loves you is sick.” They said, *“Lord; He whom Thou lovest is sick.”*

Here, Paul is wording this right; the Holy Spirit is inspiring him to write this like it ought to be said. Paul says, *“I am bound to give thanks to God for you, beloved of the Lord. Herein is love, not that we love God but He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love Him because He loved us.”*

He doesn't love us because we love Him. *“We love Him because He first loved us.”* It is not that we love God but that He loved us. Election is based on love, God's Everlasting love. Our Lord said, *“I have drawn you with an everlasting love.”*

Thirdly: Election is Eternal. In this same verse He says, *“I am bound to give thanks to God for you, beloved of the Lord, because He hath from the beginning chosen you.”* Let me ask you a question; “Did you choose God or did God choose you? I want you to think about this for a moment; “Did you choose God or did God choose you?”

Christ said to His disciples, *“You didn't choose me; I chosen you.”* When did God choose you? The Bible says, *“He chose us from the beginning. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning. He declares the end from the beginning.”* Do you see what I am saying?

This thing of election is not only a doctrine of praise and a doctrine of love but it is an everlasting doctrine. This covenant of grace is an everlasting covenant. *“The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. The Book was written before the foundation of the world;”* that is what the Word of God says. This is what God's Word declares.

Why did God choose you? Have you ever thought about that? Are you better than someone else? The Scripture says, *“All have sinned. All we like sheep have gone astray.”*

We have turned everyone to his own way. There is none good, no not one.” The Scripture says, *“He chose us according to the good pleasure of His own will.”* That is the only answer you can give.

Fourthly: Election is *“unto salvation.”* Watch that verse again; *“We are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning, (from all eternity) chosen you to salvation.”*

Election is *“unto salvation.”* Election is not salvation; it is *“unto salvation.”* He chose us to save us, *“by grace are you saved through faith,”* (not apart from it or without it). *“We are kept by the power of God through faith. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”*

“He that believeth on the Son hath life but he that believeth not the Son of God shall never see life.” A man is not saved simply because he is elected. Christ was elected to be our Surety and our Saviour. Is this right? He is called in Isaiah 42:1, *“Mine elect.”*

When God speaks of Christ in the Old Testament He says, *“My Servant, mine elect.”* He still had to die. Even though He was the *“Lamb slain before the foundation of the world,”* in the mind and purpose of God Almighty, in God’s decree; He still had to die for our sins.

Even though we are chosen *“unto salvation”* and we are elected by God to be redeemed, we have to believe. We have to hear the Gospel and believe.

Fifthly: This brings me to the next point; election looks to the means of grace. Paul says, *“We are bound to give thanks to God always for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you, (individually) to salvation.”*

Some people think that God chooses nations. Nations are made up of people and individuals. *“He hath chosen you to salvation, (through or by the means) of sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”*

You see, God ordained the end and declared the end from the beginning. God also ordained the means. Those means are the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel. *“It is the Holy Spirit that quickeneth.”*

We are born of the Spirit of God and we are begotten of the Spirit of God; *“You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sin.”* We are called by the Spirit of God but the Word of God is the seed of life. He said, *“Of His own will begat He us.”*

Do you know what the word “*begat*” is? To “*begat*” is to bring forth a son; He is begetting or siring a son, making life to be there. God hath begotten us; “*of His own will He begat us.*” This is mentioned in James 1:18, “*Of His own will, begat he us, with the Word of Truth.*”

You see; in 1 Peter 1:23, the Scripture says; “*We are born again, not of corruptible seed, (that which is born of the flesh is flesh) but of incorruptible seed by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.*”

The Holy Spirit quickens or regenerates and it is the Word that gives life. “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned.*”

You might say, “Will the elect come?” Yes, they will come; “*My sheep hear my voice. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; they follow me.*”

Psalm 110:3 says, “*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*” John 6:37, our Lord says; “*All that My Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me; I will in no wise cast out: For, I came down from heaven not to do my will but the will of Him that sent me.*”

The Son does not act independently of the Father; they are one. “*I came to do the will of Him that sent me and this is the will of Him that sent me that all of which He hath given Me; I will lose nothing but raise it up at the last day.*”

“*And this is the will of Him that sent me that everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him hath everlasting life.*” So; “*It is through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*” This doctrine of election always looks to the means.

Our election is known by our calling. He said, “*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.*” That is how a man knows his election; it is by his calling. I can’t know something that doesn’t exist. If God’s Spirit lives in me; I know that He is there and I know that God sent Him.

I know that God sent Him on purpose. I know that God sent Him on purpose because He decreed to do it. If I love Christ I know that He loved me first.

You see; the Bible does not say, “Ho, everyone that is elected, come to the water;” it says, “*Ho, everyone that thirsteth.*” The Bible does not say, “Come unto me all ye who are elect; it says, “*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden.*”

If a man is laboring and is heavy laden under sin and sees that there is no salvation in himself or no power or ability in him to redeem him, he comes to Christ. He knows he is one of God’s elect because he came.

The Bible does not say, “He that is elected hath eternal life.” The Scripture says, “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*” The Bible doesn’t say, “Whosoever is elected shall be saved;” it says; “*Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*”

We know our election by our calling. The apostle Paul wrote two epistles to this church at Thessalonica, 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In the first epistle, in the first Chapter, the apostle said this; “*Knowing brethren, beloved, your election of God.*”

He knew of their election in God. He knew that they were the sons of God’s elect. He knew that the people in that church were the elect of God. He then tells us how he knows that they are the elect of God; do you know what he says?

Read this yourself; take your Bible and turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 1:4, Paul says; “*Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God.*” In verse 5 he says; “*For, (because) our Gospel came not to you in Word only.*”

This was not just an essay, theory, written creed or a bad sermon; “*It came to you in power;*” *our Gospel came to you in power in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance.*” This is how my Gospel came.

In your hearts, you believed it; it broke your heart, convinced you of sin and brought you to know Christ. Look at verse 6; “*And you became followers of us and the Lord.*” You became followers; that is how I know that you are one of God’s elect.

Look at verse 7; “*And you became examples to people at Achaia, Macedonia and all around there.*” They looked at your lives and saw that you had been with the Lord. Verse 8 says, “*You became missionaries and witnesses; from you sounded forth the Word of God into all areas.*”

Some say that election will kill missionary zeal; it didn’t kill it these people. Paul said, “*I know that you are one of God’s elect because you are out preaching the Gospel. You*

have witnesses and you are telling men about Christ.” That is how you know you are one of God’s elect.

He says in verse 9; *“And you turned to God from your idols to serve the living and true God.”* Verse 10 says, *“You are waiting for His Son from heaven.”*

Let me close this with a question: What are some of the effects of the doctrine of election? What effect does it have on me and you as you see it and the Scripture teaches it, if you believe it as the Word of God presents it? What if you believe it in such a way that God will get all the glory in salvation from Alpha to Omega?

I will tell you what effects it has on me and you and what it will do. First of all: The doctrine of election will bring joy to your heart. Our Lord Jesus said, *“I thank Thee Father, Lord of Heaven and earth; you hid these things from the wise and prudent but you revealed it to babes.”*

In Psalm 65:4, David says; *“Blessed and happy, (twice happy) is the man whom Thou choosest. Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and causest to approach unto Thee, that that he may dwell in Thy house and in Thy courts.”* He is happy!

Second: This doctrine glorifies God. Look at 1 Corinthians 1:26; *“Do you see your calling, brethren? Not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise are called. God hath chosen the foolish to bring to naught the things that are, to confound the wise.”*

“God hath chosen the base thing, the despised things, yea, the things that are not to bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.”

This doctrine brings glory to God. Moses said, *“Lord; show me your glory.”* He said, *“I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”*

This doctrine promotes humility. In 1 Corinthians 4:7, Paul said; *“Who made you to differ? What do you have that you didn’t receive? If you received it, why do you glory as if you didn’t receive it? Who made you to differ?”*

Then, the doctrine gives comfort in hard trials. The Word says, *“All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*

The doctrine also gives you confidence and assurance. Read Romans 8: 29 through 31; *“Whom He foreknew; He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. Whom He predestinated He called; whom He called He justified; whom He justified; He glorified. What shall we say to these things; If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God that justifies.”*

That gives us assurance, comfort, and confidence in hard trials. It gives you a comfort to die by. Do you know what David’s last words were before He died? *“God made with me an everlasting covenant. This is all my salvation and all my desire.”*

I will tell you another thing; to know that God loved me when I was unlovely, will help me to love those who are also unlovely. I will show mercy as I have received mercy. God has been gracious to me!