

“The Family of God” Continues

Study in Ephesians—Class 5

Ephesians 1:7-14

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Jeff: Let’s turn to Ephesians 1 and we’ll get started. When Don cited the passage that he did, (*Romans 8:35-39*), I was thinking to myself of one that you find in 1 Chronicles chapter 21. In 1 Chronicles chapter 21 David sins before the Lord, and he takes a census. He numbers the men of Israel. And the Lord says to him through the prophet, “Choose your punishment.” And He gives him three choices. He gives him three years, three months and three days. And one of the choices is being pursued by his enemies for three months. And the other two choices have to do with something that the Lord will send, either a famine on the land or pestilence, with the angel of the Lord going through and destroying for three days.

And it’s interesting what David says. He says, “Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, because the Lord is merciful.” And I thought to myself, you know, whatever we may be experiencing with the virus, we have fallen into the hands of the Lord, right, unless you’re a conspiracy theorist and believe that this is manmade. (*Jeff laughs*) And that our own government is trying to kill us all, then that’s another matter. But the virus is of the hand of the Lord, and that’s the best of all places to be, because He’s merciful. And so it’s sort of—well, it’s not sort of; it is a refreshing thought.

Brave Man: Amen.

Jeff: Well, why don’t we get started? And today we are at *the work of the Son*, starting at verse 7 of Ephesians chapter 1. It’s the same outline. And I want us to get started here.

But I’m going to refresh your memory for just a second. But Kirk’s prayer really struck me because I was thinking about what he said in relation to what we’re doing. And one of the things that he said was “Let us not go away from here simply knowing more.” And then he said that knowledge isn’t a bad thing, right? “But let us be changed by it so that we live different lives.” And that’s right.

But I want you to think about the importance of knowledge in terms of what you do with your life. The prayer was right. But think about the importance of what we’re doing.

I know I read a book a year or two ago by Bob Goff. Maybe you’ve read that. It was a book which had about twenty chapters and they were each snippets of his life. It was almost like a biography of Bob Goff told in anecdotes.

Don Maurer: How do you spell that last name?

Jeff: I think it’s g-o-o-f. No, I’m just kidding. (*Laughter*) I think it’s G-o-f-f. But the interesting thing about that book was that he talked about his view of Bible study, and how he couldn’t stand a Bible study that just gave him more knowledge. And so he didn’t have Bible studies anymore. He had something like Bible doings, or something like that, where they got together and talked about what to do.

And I understand the point of that. But let me just give you an anecdote that might help you with what I’m saying. Let’s say this, for instance. Go back in your mind’s eye to the time wherein you saw your wife across the crowded room. And you said to yourself,

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(quiet now!) *(Laughter)* No, not to her; you didn't say it to her! *(Laughter)* You said to yourself, “I have to have her. That's the most beautiful woman I've ever laid eyes on.”

And then you went up to her and you said, “Can we go out?”

And she said, “Why, of course!”

And you went out. *(Laughter)* And you sat across from her at the table and she said, “Let me tell you a little about me.”

And you said, “I don't want to know.” *(Laughter)* “I don't care. I just want to do for you. And so I bought you a sports car.”

“Oh, well that's nice, that's nice.” *(Laughter)* And then in your first anniversary, “I bought you a set of tools.” *(Laughter)* I mean, we need to know in order to do; it's just that simple.

And what we're learning is, we're learning about the God who loved us so that we can do. And I think it's important to remember that. It's a right way to think. We don't just fill our heads, because Paul says, “*Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.*” So obviously we don't want to learn just to learn. We want to learn in order to be different. And so that's the important distinction.

Now the last time we were together we talked about how the Father accommodates. Sorry.

Brave Man: Allocates.

Jeff: Thank you. It's an early morning; it takes me a minute here. The Father allocates.

Transcriber's Note: Jeff forgets to write r at the end of Father on the board.

Jeff: Oh, there's an r on Father. *(Laughter)* And the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies. And right now we are with the Son in verses 7-10. So Don,. Do you have that?

Don: Yes.

Jeff: Would you just read starting in verse 7? And right now we'll just read through verse 14, please.

Don: Okay.

Jeff: Thank you.

Don: “*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us, in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, in Him.*”

“*In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, having believed, You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*” This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

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Jeff: Okay. So here we’re going to talk for a minute about *the accomplishment of the Son*. Now what are we thinking? Well, what we’re thinking is that those that the Father allocates, those whom the Father sets apart by election, the Son then what? He accomplishes their salvation.

So I want you to think about this in terms of our view of Calvinism for just a minute. Our view of Calvinism goes something like this. It starts with what?

Brave Man: T. Total—

Jeff: Total—

Ted Wood: Depravity.

Jeff: Depravity. Now that total depravity means what? It means that man is a sinner, and that he is pervasively affected by his sin. Now remember the last time we talked about this. It is out of a sinful humanity that God elects some to salvation, that He allocates some to salvation. Now that’s an important thing to understand.

Now we ask, why not elect all? And we talked about that last time as well. And the answer to that is this. “*What if God, desiring to show mercy to the objects of His mercy, bore with great patience the objects of His wrath.*” Why? He did this to show you, the objects of His mercy, His mercy. And so you have total depravity. And it is out of this mass of sinfulness that God chooses. And so the Son accomplishes the redemption of those God elects.

Now how does He do that? Well, He does that by the shedding of His own blood. And we see that in the text. It’s interesting that that’s the point of the text that Paul chooses to bring into view at this point. He talks about how the Son sheds His own blood.

And all you have to do is think about how that coalesces with the rest of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament what do you have? At the very beginning, when Adam sins against God, you have God showing up and clothing Adam and Eve with skins. I happen to think that’s the first sacrifice that ever takes place.

And then they begin to sacrifice. And that’s an informal way, according to God’s specifications. And there is not a formality that comes to the offering of sacrifice until the Mosaic period, wherein there are seven different animal sacrifices that are offered for the sins of the people.

Now it’s a long tradition of bloodshed that culminates in Jesus Christ because, as Hebrews says, “*without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sins.*”

Now I want you to think about what we’re told in this text. It says that “we have the forgiveness of sins through the shedding of blood.” Now we think of two words when we think of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. We think about *expiation* and we think about *propitiation*.

Expiation and propitiation. Now let’s think about expiation and propitiation and the difference between them, in terms of our own experience.

Let’s say, for instance, that Don gets in his car after the study, and backs up—

Ted: Trouble! (*Laughter*)

Jeff: And backs up, and hits Roger’s car. Okay?

Don: That will never happen. (*Laughter*)

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Jeff: Well, let’s say Sig. All right, we’ll make it realistic. *(Laughter)* We’ll say that Sig gets in his car, backs up and hits Roger’s car. Well this isn’t realistic either, because I don’t think Roger is going to stay mad at Sig. *(Laughter)* But we’ll work with it.

Ted: I’ll stay mad at Sig. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Okay, all right. *(Laughter)* So Sig gets out and gives Ted all of his insurance information. And Ted goes and gets his car fixed. And the next time they show up at Bible study Ted won’t talk to Sig.

And so Sig walks up to him and says, “What’s the matter? Isn’t your car fixed?”

And Ted says, “Yes, my car is fixed.” That’s expiation. “But I’m still angry with you.”

Ted: And rightfully so.

Jeff: And rightfully so. *(Laughter)* And so what needs to happen is that Sig needs to give Ted a back massage during the whole of Bible study.

Ted: That’ll be the day. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: In order to take away Ted’s wrath. He needs to propitiate His wrath, take the wrath away. So the one is a fix of the problem itself. The other one is a disposition toward. And so the cross of Christ gives us a sacrifice that is a substitute, and He takes away God’s wrath from us.

And so the ideas go together. In Jesus Christ not only is there a Substitute for us, but that Substitute has it’s effect that God’s wrath is now removed from us.

Now I think that is what’s in the text. And so when it talks about the mystery that’s revealed that culminates in Christ, well what is that mystery? That mystery was, for instance, bound up in the animal sacrifices, which now comes to fruition and climax in Christ. So in part that’s what Paul brings before us when we think about the accomplishment of our salvation. Let me pause there and ask if there are any questions or things that you want to wrestle through. Yes?

Ted: So propitiation takes away God’s adverse disposition toward us.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: So that even though sins were covered over by expiation, we’re not guaranteed that God is not ill-disposed to us. But in the propitiation we know that He is not ill-disposed to us.

Jeff: Yes. Yes?

Bishop Rodgers: I always thought that the difference was that propitiation covered over our sin. I mean expiation. But propitiation dealt with the righteousness of God, that He had to be satisfied in His righteousness that sin was atoned for.

Jeff: Yes. And I think that being satisfied that sin was atoned for goes back to expiation, the covering of the sin or the dealing with the sin.

Bishop: Really? I would have located this under propitiation.

Jeff: I think the two have overlapping ideas, which is why, for instance, I think the argument was that some—I think the reason why, for instance, that C. H. Dodd and others like him wanted to do away with propitiation was because they wanted—

Ron Baling: Who?

Jeff: Dodd.

Ron: Oh, Dodd.

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Jeff: Yes. He was more of a 20th-century liberal. He was in the late 1800s as well. But he wanted to do away with the idea of propitiation because he didn't like the idea of a wrathful God.

Bishop: Oh, that's right.

Jeff: So he was willing to say that sin was covered in the expiation, but he wasn't willing to say or admit that there was a wrath that needed to be propitiated.

Bishop: What is the ground of the wrath? Why is He wrathful?

Jeff: He's wrathful because of the curse in Adam. *“In Adam all die.”* The death brings the curse and the wrath of God. At root is the transgression of the commandment, right?

Bishop: I think it's the other. One deals more with God's punishment, and the other deals with the guilt, it seems to me. Anyway,--

Ted: Bishop John, does this mean that Jeff might be a heretic? *(Laughter)*

Jeff: He's not going to say anything now that you've said that. *(Laughter)* Yes?

Don: A denomination a few years ago came out with a hymnal.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: And it had the song “In Christ Alone,” which you may or may not have heard of. But anyway,--

Jeff: Is that Boice?

Don: No.

Jeff: Okay.

Don: But anyway, one of the lines in there, in the original, is “the wrath of God was satisfied.” But they wanted to change it to “the love of God was magnified.” And the authors of the hymn would not let them do that.

Jeff: Yes. Anything else?

Ed Young: I think from our perspective that if we had regret for sin, it would be expiation. But if we had remorse it would be propitiation, because we understand or feel how we've offended God.

Jeff: I understand what you're saying. I think, though, that these terms are more along the lines of God toward man.

Ron: Yes; that's right.

Jeff: And not our sense of our sin. So this is in relationship to the Substitute for sin. This is in relationship to the disposition related to the Substitute.

Bishop: The liberal tradition doesn't like propitiation because they say, “Well, why would the Father require that of His Son?”

Jeff: Yes, right; that's right.

Bishop: Their model leaves out the holiness of God, the righteousness of God. It's all just kind of relational.

Jeff: If I'm right, (and you can correct me), I think the RSV changed everything—

Bishop: Oh, they did. That's why it's weak.

Jeff: Yes. There is no propitiation in the RSV.

Bishop: That's right.

Jeff: It's just expiation. So the fix is there.

Bishop: That's why I use the ESV.

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Matt Reichart: Okay. This is something that you might want to talk about later. This might be a different category. Last night I saw a movie which said that in the Past Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. So in regard to that, my question is in that is that I know that’s not right, obviously. That’s irresponsible thinking in regard to God.. But they’re teaching that false teaching. Maybe you want to address that now.

Jeff: They’re teaching what?

Matt: They’re speculating that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene.

Jeff: What’s the problem with that?

Matt: Yes.

Jeff: Well, I think in one sense we have to realize that there’s not a problem with marriage itself. So had Jesus been married, that wouldn’t be a problem, right?, because marriage is a good thing. But I think that where the impulse of that arises is that Mary and Jesus had some sort of illicit relationship prior to their marriage. And I think that was the movie “The Last Temptation of Christ,” wherein Jesus was tempted by Mary who had been a harlot, and that sort of thing. So I don’t think that we can say that if Jesus was married that would have been inherently wrong or sinful or problematic. I think that if we believe that marriage is a good thing, that wouldn’t have been a problem.

But He wasn’t. And then to say that He was compounds the problem, because what you’re doing is that you’re adding to the Scriptures by saying something about Jesus. It’s sort of like saying, “Well, we don’t know where Jesus went from the time He was twelve to the time He was thirty. So we elaborate on where He must have gone and fill in the gaps. And I think that’s along the same kind of lines.

Bishop Rodgers: The Orthodox tradition does not let bishops get married on the grounds that their work and travel is such that they really can’t handle both jobs. And you might really wonder whether if Jesus was going to have a traveling ministry the way He did, if it would make a whole lot of sense for Him to get married and try to have a family.

Jeff: Mm-hmm, yeah. And you know, if you think about it too, He comes to accomplish our redemption for men and women.

Bishop: Right.

Jeff: He doesn’t come to establish the family, right? The family is already established. He comes to save. That’s His purpose: to seek and to save the lost.

Brave Man: A lot of that information comes out of the Gnostic Gospels.

Jeff: Sure.

Brave Man: And once you start preaching out of the Gnostic Gospels you’re in big trouble, in bad territory.

Jeff: Yes; that’s right.

Bishop: It takes the bishop to dismiss the preacher. *(Laughter)* You’ll want to take that off of the tape.

Jeff: That’s right.

Ron: With propitiation, someone already mentioned this. Why would you be angry with your children? I think you would be. We need propitiation because sin offends God. He is angry because we have offended Him.

Jeff: Yes. Wait a minute. Sig has been up and down a few times.

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Sig Tragard: I’m invisible. *(Laughter)* Oh, what are you doing here? *(Laughter)* Early on, when you defined these two terms, expiation and propitiation, which I believe was in the version that Don read where those words were specifically used, but in the ESV—

Jeff: I don’t think they’re used.

Don: No, they’re not in that chapter.

Jeff: No, I don’t think they’re used in that chapter.

Sig: Well, one of them was. Maybe it wasn’t propitiation. Anyway, my question is, when you defined those two, it sounds to me like God in Christ satisfied His wrath.

Brave Man: He did.

Sig: Which would then open up the gates of heaven for anyone that would read this passage, right?

Jeff: Yes, but in John—and you know, I packed my glasses case today, but I didn’t pack my glasses. *(Laughter)* So it’s John 3, I think; it’s in the last verse there. And it says, *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”* And the idea is that the one who believes has the wrath of God satisfied, right?

Bishop Rodgers: Right.

Jeff: But on the one who does not believe, the wrath of God remains.

Bishop: Right.

Jeff: Now we know, because we’re going to talk about this in a minute, that the ones who believe believe because they have been elected by the Father, their salvation has been accomplished by the Son, and that accomplishment will be applied by the Spirit. Their believing is part of that gift.

Sig: I understand that and I wouldn’t argue it. I’m just saying that for the gates of heaven, everything has been satisfied in Christ by what you just defined in these two terms.

Jeff: For those elected, yes.

Sig: Well, that’s the point. Where do you read “for those elected?” In the Ephesians passage?

Jeff: Yes. Go back to Ephesians. You know, if you would show up once in a while, *(Laughter)*

Sig: That’s why we record them. *(Laughter)* It doesn’t mean I listen to them, but—*(Laughter)*

Jeff: Come on, now; I’m just heckling you.

Sig: Yeah, right.

Jeff: “Yeah, right,” he says. All right. So go back to Ephesians and look again at verse 4. This is the end of verse 4. Oh well, go back to the beginning. *“Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.”*

Transcriber’s Note: ESV.

Jeff: And remember, what we’re going to look at is Ephesians chapter 2. And Ephesians chapter 2 says that there was deadness in sin before God brought resurrection.

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But not everyone is resurrected, right? Not everyone is chosen, because some remain in their dead state. They’re not elect, not chosen. Do you want to follow up?

Sig: Well, I don’t think that it says that not everyone is elected. You’re saying that it does say that not everyone is elected.

Jeff: Well, I think that once you say—

Sig: It’s for all that he’s talking. Would that mean that everyone who reads this knows that? I mean—

Ted: No, it’s written to Christians. This is the assumption. We always start off with the assumption that people who are in the assembly who are there by God’s election. This was not written to the town of Ephesus.

Jeff: No, but I actually think that you’re saying something different.

Sig: I am.

Jeff: You’re talking about reading it to the congregation. And you’re saying that this doesn’t say that there are only some who are elect.

Sig: Right.

Jeff: You’re saying that all are elect.

Sig: But Christ has satisfied it for everyone.

Jeff: No, he satisfied it for the elect.

Sig: I don’t think the text says that. I think you’re putting something in there.

Jeff: So you’re saying—

Sig: That’s why I think Ted was right. You might be a heretic. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: All right. Let me go back to Romans 9, okay? And in Romans 9 it says, (and I’ll just start in verse 6), *“But it is not as though the word of God has failed.”* He’s talking about Israel at this point. *“For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. And not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring. But ‘through Isaac shall your offspring be named.’ And this means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.”*

Now who are the children of the promise? *“For this is what the promise said: ‘About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.’ And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God’s purpose in election might continue, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ As it is written: ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.’”*

Now that’s election, choosing one and not another. And so when we look at Ephesians we read it with that in mind. God chose some and not others. And that’s the whole presupposition of what election means. Election in Scripture never means “I’m electing and choose all.” And I can prove to you that that’s what’s happening here. When the people heard him, they said, “Wait a minute! Whoa! Why did He only choose some?” And the way that I can prove that is that he answers an objection.

And the objection is *“What shall we say, then? Is there injustice on God’s part?”* Why? Because He only chooses one and not the other. And Paul says, *“By no means! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion*

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on whom I have compassion. 'So then, it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth.' So then, He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever He wills.”

And then the question is going to arise. Well if that's the way that God acts, if He chose these to show mercy to and not these, and these remain under His wrath, then I guess I'm just a puppet. And Paul answers that. He says, *“You will say to me, then, 'Why does He still find fault?'”*, right? If He's going to do what He's going to do, why does He still find fault with me? He did it to me. *“For who can resist His will?”*

And then his answer. *“But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have You made me like this?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?”*

That's His answer. His answer is, *“I'll do with the clay what I want to do with the clay.”* And then he gives us the closest we come to any explanation as to why. He says, *“What if God, desiring to show His wrath and make known His power, has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction?”* And here's the reason. *“In order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He has called?”*

And so I think that your assumption that He elects all is not the assumption the Scriptures make.

Sig: But my point in what you've read today is this. I think it's a wonderful discussion. But anyway, God has made it possible for everyone to be in His kingdom, even if He says, *“I could have chosen this piece of clay for noble use and this piece for ignoble use.”* What you just read in Ephesians makes it sound like the possibility for everyone to be in His kingdom is not something He is blocking, but we are blocking.

Jeff: No.

Sig: We have the choice of whether or not to take God at His word, or say, *“No, thanks.”*

Jeff: He has already delineated in Ephesians that there are elect who have the floodgates of heaven opened. And it's for you to show that the Scriptures mean everyone when they talk about the elect.

Sig: Okay. But let's say, for instance, that I'm not as smart as you, which most people here would probably agree with, right?

Jeff: I think every man has his Bible. And I think that every man with a Bible in his hand is adequate to answer these questions.

Brave Man: Amen.

Jeff: Here's the point that I would say to you. The point I would say to you is that I have more time to give to this study than—

Sig: You're getting paid for it. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: There's not a person in this room who can't come to the same answers given that they study.

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Sig: But in that same sense, you’re putting a lot of burden on us to figure it all out.

Jeff: No, I’m telling you what it says. *(Laughter)*

Sig: Well, I know you are. But the whole premise of election is that I’m going to figure it out, me the man.

Brave Men: No.

Sig: Hold on here! Humans are going to be able to understand it all, as opposed to— Say I was at a meeting and I didn’t have the word of God at the time this was written. And I went on and I said, “Did you hear that today? God made it possible for all of us to be in His kingdom!” And the next day I’m dead. There’s no time for me to understand Romans. Maybe Romans was written—

Jeff: See, Sig, I would say to you that what I described at the very beginning really summarizes what we’re talking about now, and that is this. When I was first converted I didn’t have any knowledge of this at all. Christ brought me to life, right? And all of a sudden I loved Him, and He was the delight of my eyes. But I can tell you that my theology was not good at that point. My theology was—

Sig: I’d agree with you.

Jeff: And so I wasn’t thinking right. But I was as saved then as I am today. I just understand my salvation more today than I did then. That’s just part of the sanctification process.

Sig: I agree with you.

Jeff: So it’s not that the person has to leave the meeting and figure it out. If the person has heard savingly what he has heard, then he leaves rejoicing, skipping. And he gets hit by a car because he’s not looking when he’s skipping, and he’s dead.

Sig: Or Don backs up and runs him over. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Or Don backs up and runs him over. But the point is that if he leaps and gets hit by a car and doesn’t have his theology worked out, is he still saved? And the answer is yes.

Sig: Yes, because God has made it possible. If I would have not known Bill’s distinction between maturity and sanctification, I would still have gone to heaven, right?

Sig: But Jeff, all I’m saying is that God has made it possible for all of us to be saved, because it’s not dependent on our theology, our Ph.D., our ability.

Jeff: Let me say this before we go, because this is really important. Think about it this way. When we think about it this way, we think that here’s an individual, and he’s then the elect of God, right? And he’s elect, and because he’s elect the blood of Christ has atoned for him. It has taken away God’s wrath. And now he begins to experience the salvation that has been accomplished for him by the power of the Spirit.

Ted: In the Spirit.

Jeff: In the Spirit; that’s right. Now what you’re advocating is something that was advocated by the Wesleys and by Jacob Arminius. And what they said was this. They said that there is such a thing as *prevenient grace*. And what prevenient grace does—and I see that you’re taking it down,—is that prevenient grace neutralizes the effects of original sin in man. So original sin, guess what? This is the detergent that washes it away. Now every person is as if they were in the garden of Eden again, like Adam.

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Don: That’s Pelagianism, isn’t it?

Jeff: No, it’s not Pelagianism. And so the effect of original sin is neutralized. It’s as if they were in the Garden again, and able to choose or reject Christ.

Sig: So there is no free will.

Ted: Oh, gosh!

Jeff: Wait a second. That’s really a whole ‘nother discussion, because I believe in free will, and so does the Westminster Confession. In fact, chapter 9 is given to free will and the affirmation of it. So what the point is here, though, is that Wesley believed in original sin as we’re talking about it—dead in sin, can’t come to God, that sort of thing. He believed all that. So he said, “We have to deal with original sin so that we can make grace universal.”

Now that’s what they did. They said that there is such a thing as prevenient grace. Now here’s what I would challenge you to do. Show me prevenient grace in the Bible. It’s not there. Show it to me. If you can show it to me I’ll believe it, but it’s not there.

Let me say one thing before these two guys. But here’s the deal: the free offer of the gospel. There are some in the Reformed world who say that the offer of the gospel is dependent upon election. And so you can’t offer the gospel freely. That’s not what the free offer of the gospel is based upon. In other words, when I stand up and say that this message is for everyone, that’s because I’m basing the free offer on the Son who says to the world, “*Come unto Me, you who are wearied and burdened, and I will give you rest.*” And so Paul says, “I labor under all of this for the sake of the elect.” In other words, I know that God has His elect. But I offer the Son to everyone I come across, because it’s up to God who believes and who doesn’t, not to me. And it’s not for me to know. And it’s not for me to preach on the basis of election. It’s for me to preach on the basis of the free offer of the Son.

And so I can believe Ezekiel 37; in fact, I do. When I’m preaching to a crowd that I don’t know, guess what? I’m standing in a valley of dry bones, saying, “Lord, make them live under the preaching of the Word. Make them live.” And that’s what I’m trusting Him to do, to make them live. Okay, these two guys.

Bishop Rodgers: All grace is prevenient in that it precedes our response.

Jeff: Yeah, well thanks. (*Unclear. Laughter*) But you know what this is.

Bishop: That’s Wesley’s approach.

Jeff: That’s right.

Bishop: It’s not about getting neutral. Actually, the prevenient grace is in the Articles. It is God’s sovereign work in the Spirit leading you to the Son.

Jeff: I got you. I didn’t know that. I didn’t know it was in the Articles. The word *prevenient* is always used cautiously.

Jeff: Yes, but I didn’t know it was used in the Articles that way, though. I do know that it’s used positively.

Bishop: Grace precedes our response.

Jeff: It’s used positively in other places, right.

Bishop: But as sinners we cannot respond unless the Spirit of God woos us and breaks us.

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Jeff: Yes. But as I understand it, the 39 Articles can be read in a very Calvinistic way.

Bishop: Ooh, they are.

Jeff: So the provenience is not the same as—

Bishop: Oh, absolutely not.

Matt: And so, you know, as an evangelist I realize that though we’re to come to Christ that only God can open their eyes and ears.

Jeff: Yes.

Matt: God has to work in their hearts. They don’t realize that. So *“whosoever will.” God is not willing that any should perish. God so loved the world.*” So I appreciate you saying that. So my job is to scatter the seed. My job is to make it clear and tell them what the gospel is. And then the reality is, for Sig’s sake, is that if everybody in the world has to hear the gospel from being elected or predestined. But everyone will stand accountable. Everyone will have to give an account and become accountable for eternity for their decisions, even if some accept it or reject it. I think where we get hung up on is that we say that Christ died for the elect. No, Christ died for everyone.

Don: Whoa!

Matt: But the reason they’re going to give account is because they’ve rejected that.

Jeff: See, I think that people are going to go to hell because Romans 1:18 says that they’re going to go to hell because of their suppression of the truth that the Father reveals about Himself in general revelation. So even the people who don’t hear the gospel are going to go to hell not because they have rejected the gospel, but because of the sin of Adam that causes them to suppress the knowledge of God even revealed in creation.

Matt: We can say that creation is a powerful preacher that no man can deny. So if they respond to that natural revelation then God will give them specific revelation. But you’re right; they all stand accountable. Yes; go ahead.

Jim O’Brien: Look, the fundamental issue you raised is, did Jesus die for every person? You have to think about this. When Jesus dies, the Scripture teaches us that our sins were laid on Him. And that’s the doctrine of imputation. Adam’s sin was laid on us, and the punishment of Adam was as well. Our sins were laid on Christ. If the sin of every person who ever lived was laid on Christ, then Christ died for them and those sins have been paid, and there is no double jeopardy. The point is that, in the Biblical view Jesus didn’t just sort of die in a general way. Jim O’Brien’s sins—and they are many and grievous!—were laid on Jesus Christ, and He paid for my sins. But He didn’t pay for everybody’s sins, because if everybody’s sins were laid on Him everybody would go to heaven, because it’s really paid. And that’s where people don’t like the idea that not all the sins of all people were laid on Him. But that’s essential that specific sins were laid on Jesus. And so Don’s sins, which were few in number,—

Jeff: Many. *(Laughter)*

Jim: And that’s really the point. So you don’t want to say that Jesus died for everyone. What we want to say is that Jesus died. And He died to save many. *“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me.”* He said that to the Pharisees. *“You’re not My sheep, because My sheep hear My voice.”* He’s telling the Pharisees right then that they are not elect, that

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He is not dying for them. They’re not going to heaven. They’ve gotten the judgment of the final day in time.

Don: *“Not for the world do I pray,”* Jesus said.

Jim: And so I think that changes things for us. It shows us the very specific character of God’s love. And I frankly am overwhelmed by that, that He would choose a wretch like me and save me. So we don’t say to people that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. We say that God loves people. But who may come? Those who are weary and heavy-laden, those who feel their need of Christ. And you’re welcome to come—those who are broken, those who are thirsty, those who are hungry. You’re free to come if you want to. But of course most of you don’t really want to. And how do they get to want to? The Spirit of God blows where He wills; He comes in the new birth. And so He’s heading to somebody else, and you don’t know where He’s going. So the issue of prevenient grace is the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

And I was dead in sin. And then I’m sitting there in this church which was with about a thousand black people and about seven or eight little white teenagers. And I heard that gospel, and I had to celebrate. (*Unclear*) So I’m free to do what I want. But as a sinner all I want to do is hate God. I can hate Him politely, but I can hate Him. But then the Spirit of God infuses love in my heart.

Bill McCoy: We have to understand the nature of man, and I’m including myself. You have to ask. The mystery of election is why would God choose anyone?

Jeff: Yes, absolutely. I’m not going to go on, but I’m going to say this. The question might be asked because it’s a good one. And that is, well then, why does it say that He wishes, or *“is not willing that any should perish?”* Why does he say that?

Well, I want you to think about that in relation to God’s will. And we talk about God’s will as one, and rightfully so. But we talk about there being a couple of aspects to God’s will. For instance, in Deuteronomy 29:29 we find the idea of their being a revealed aspect of His will and an unrevealed aspect of His will.

Transcriber’s Note: Deuteronomy 29:29, ESV. *“The secret things belong to the LORD our God. But the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever.”*

Jeff: And we sometimes call the revealed aspect the *prescriptive will*, and we call the other revealed aspect the *secretive will of God*, or the *decretive will of God*. And what we talk about when we talk about those aspects is how to understand what happens in life.

For instance, when we talk about God’s Ten Commandments, one of the things that we realize is that God says, *“Thou shalt not steal.”* That’s a revealed aspect of His will. Men are not to steal. Do men steal? Yes, they certainly do. Does that mean that the will of God is thwarted? No. Well yes, but no. In one sense the revealed aspect is thwarted. God says, *“Thou shalt not steal,”* but men steal.

But the decretive aspect, in other words, the unrevealed aspect, the secret aspect of God’s will as to why a person does what he does is never thwarted, because God’s purposes are brought to pass even in the sins of men—by secondary causation of course, because no impurity can be imputed to God. But the point is that God in His secret will, in His decretive will, permits all sorts of activities that are included in His purposes.

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And so the idea then is that when God says that He desires that none should perish, that’s a revealed aspect of His will. And it drives the gospel so that preachers go and preach the gospel to all men, women and children, right? But not all men come. So why? That’s part of the secretive or the decretive will of God. So it’s a parallel in thinking about the two. Go ahead.

Bishop Rodgers: Jeff, what do you do with 1 John 2:2? *“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”*

Jeff: Yes. I turn to Revelation, another book written by the same author, I think.

Bishop: Right.

Jeff: And then I say that you have this in verse 9. *“After this I looked. And behold, a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all the tribes, the peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands.”* And I think that *“the whole world”* there doesn’t mean every individual, but it means from all the peoples, tribes, nations from the whole world.

Ed: I just have a quick question. If Christ died on the cross for our sins or for my sins, did He know who the elect were?

Ted: What do you think?

Bishop: To get inside the mind of the eternal God Incarnate is dubious at best.

Jeff: I think that in eternity that the Father and Son entered into a covenant of redemption. And I think that the Deity of the Son obviously knew who the elect were.

Bill Obaker: It was the work of the Spirit to get that done. *(Unclear)*

Jeff: Okay, we’ll start next time on the Holy Spirit. We’re going to skip a few slides. You know what? I think this is turning into quite a humorous little thing. We used to get through thirty slides in a sitting, and now we get through two. *(Laughter)*

Jim: I just have one thought for that passage about God not being willing. You offered one thing. But if you look at that passage, it’s about why history continues, why Jesus delays. And the answer is that God *“is not willing that any should perish.”* Who is he saying this to? Those He has given to the Son. And so history continues so that you and I, assuming you are all believers and assuming I am, so that history would have been cut short, and so we wouldn’t have been saved. God is not willing that any of His chosen people would perish. That passage is not about the world in general. It’s about the elect through the corridors of history. Take a look at that, and I’ll think you’ll see that all in that passage, or any in that passage, is about us and the people that are still being born who are elect, so that they can be saved.

Jeff: Sure, yes.

Jim: It’s just a thought; you can ponder it.

Jeff: You know what? I’ll let you start the next one. Rich is going to read a passage, and then we’re going to pray and get you guys out of here. *(Laughter)*

Rich Clark: Okay, brothers. Acts 13, when Paul is preaching to the Gentiles. Acts 13:48, at the conclusion of his preaching. The Lord says, *“When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to receive eternal life believed.”*

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Jeff: All right. Let us pray. Father in heaven, thank You for this day and the time You’ve given to us. We pray, Father, that You’ll bless us and strengthen us, not just in the knowledge that we glean. But Father, impress upon us Your love and Your desire for us. And impress upon us Your desire not just to help us to know that love but to help us live in it, that we might live out that love to others. Father, we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen. (*Applause*)