

# **Romans – The Crown Jewel of Salvation**

## **47- “The Biblical Balance We Cling To”**

### **Romans 9**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / March 15, 2015*

There are two doctrinal truths that are clearly taught in the Bible: God’s election and man’s responsibility.

There are two ends of this great theological rope we call salvation and it’s our job is to do everything we can to promote and maintain the biblical balance of both.

“The relationship of the sovereign will of God to the freedom and moral responsibility of people is one of those mysteries. Basil Manly, one of the founding fathers of the Southern Baptist Convention, while commenting on this difficult subject in one of his sermons, said, ‘The Scriptures do not undertake to explain mysteries. They leave them unexplained. There is a difference between difficulties and mysteries: difficulties may be removed; mysteries cannot, without a new revelation, or the bestowment of a higher intellect. ‘

“...There is no conflict in the Bible between His sovereignty and our responsibility. Both concepts are taught with equal force and with never an attempt to ‘reconcile’ them.” Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*, P. 67-68, 115-116

If you read your Bible, you’re going to run into some things you’re not exactly comfortable with and you’re going to have to decide what to do with that.

### **I. Keep All the Biblical Truths in Focus**

Don’t read your Bible selectively or randomly – turning a blind eye to things. Read it all, even the parts that don’t sit well with your personal theology.

As you’re reading, pay careful attention to THREE AREAS in particular:

#### **A. You Better Take Another Look at Man’s Spiritually Dead Condition**

The Bible clearly teaches that we’re dead in our trespasses and sins, but sometimes our theology would argue that we think we’re just weak, but that’s not severe enough!

The Gospel of God’s grace didn’t just revive us like some sort of smelling salts! The grace of God raised us from the dead! We were in the spiritual morgue. There was no spiritual pulse!

The Bible tells us we’re not just MOSTLY dead, we’re COMPLETELY dead in our trespasses and sins.

**Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-5** “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works among the sons of disobedience... But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved.)”

We were spiritually dead to the things of God and at the same time we were very much alive to sin and self. We loved darkness and were not seeking after God.

God found you. You were lost and completely dead in your sins but God who is rich in mercy – found you, saved you, and changed you! That’s what the Bible teaches.

## **B. Take Another Look At God’s Sovereign Grace**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

Even your faith is a gift from God!

That’s why **Eph. 2:8** says “By grace are you saved through faith, and THAT (that faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God...”

**2 Timothy 2:25-26** “In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

## **C. Take Another Look At Your Responsibility – to Embrace or Reject the Free Offer of the Gospel**

**Romans 10:9-13** “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation... for ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

**John 1:12** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

We need to keep all these truths in front of us and just let the Bible speak for itself in every verse!

**Acts 20:27** “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God...”

## **II. Keeping the Biblical Language in Place**

Don't give up biblical terms and exchange them for man-made words! Don't substitute the biblical language for other labels. When you do that you might not realize that the person listening is not really hearing you anymore.

The definitions of words change through the years and suffer abuse, so that a perfectly good word can begin to carry negative emotional baggage depending on what kind of experience someone has had when they encountered that word.

Let's lay aside all the negative, emotion-packed words and come back to the Bible whenever we talk about God's electing love.

### **A. Let's Avoid the Use of Man-Made Labels**

"Calvinist" – Taken from the reformer John Calvin

"Arminian" – Taken from the Dutch theologian, Jacobus Arminius

### **B. Let's Use Biblical Terms**

"Sovereign Grace"

"Doctrines of Grace"

## **III. Actively Promote Unity - and Not Allow this Great Doctrine to be a Wedge that Divides Us**

**Ephesians 4:1-3** "... I beseech you to have a walk worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Let's not attack each other or fight over which end of the theological rope you hold more tightly than someone else. Let's certainly not condemn each other, because both ends of this theological rope are taught in Scripture!

Have a humble orthodoxy.

Wherever you are in your understanding of God's election and our responsibility to make free choices, unite around those things that we can all agree on!