

“The Glory of His Reign in the Choosing of His People”

1 Thess. 1:1-10 (v. 4)

The Sufficiency of His Grace for the Sustaining of His Suffering People

First Thessalonians 1:4 provides for us a window into the working of God in the salvation of man. Let us pause for just a moment and consider the idea of God’s choice of individuals. What exactly is meant by this language?

The doctrine of election is a theological phrase that creates a knee jerk response in most people. Some love it, some hate it, some ignore it, or some simply shrug their shoulders and continue; yet, it forms one of the most basic truths woven throughout Scripture. The doctrine of election is not based on personal feelings; it is based on the teaching of Scripture. Regardless of position, belief must be based on the Scripture.

Although we will not have complete consensus on this subject, I do believe that in the midst of our theological diversity we can have a spirit of humility, unity, and charity. It is not my desire to be bogged down in theological debate that is divisive and acidic.

I have three desires this morning. I believe the study of election will do the following for us:

- **First**, to praise God for His control in all of life
- **Second**, to stand in awe at the unfathomable richness of His workings
- **Finally**, to sit in humble adoration and gratitude for saving sinners like us

I believe there are four ideas that we must keep in mind as we work through this area of study. No truth is an island unto itself.

1. The choosing by God is an expression of His rule (Eph. 1:5, 11).
2. The choosing by God is a solution/answer to man’s total depravity (John 6:44, 65).
3. The choosing by God is an expression of His wisdom, mercy, and grace.
 - In His wisdom, He is using the best means to accomplish the highest end of glorifying Himself.
 - In His mercy, He is withholding from me that which I truly deserve.
 - In His grace, He is giving me that which I do not deserve.
4. The choosing by God is a comfort for us in the midst of unbelief.

Continued on the other side...

To help us in our study, I would like us to look at Romans 9 as a platform for our investigation.

- I. God chose me to be in Christ long before I was ever born (Rom. 9:11a).
 - A. The choice of God takes place long before anyone is born (Rom 9:11a).
 - B. The choice of God is not based on individual merit or demerit (Rom 9:11).
 - C. The choice of God is based on His free will as expressed in and through His eternal purpose (Rom 9:16).
 - D. The choice of God leaves no ground for boasting or a charge of injustice.
- II. The death of Christ was for me long before I was ever born (1 Peter 1:18-20).
- III. The choice of God is certain (Romans 9:19, 20).

God never needs a defense, and He never has to answer to anyone for His actions. God never has an unfulfilled desire. He is never frustrated, confused, perplexed, surprised, or caught off guard. God has never said, "Oops."

- IV. The choice of God leaves the chosen humbled, awed, and worshipful.

God's actions as an expression of His will are past finding out (v.33); He has sought counsel from nothing created (v.34); and God stands as no ones debtor (v.35).

The truth of God's choosing is...

- Positive not negative.
- Dynamic not static.
- Inclusive not exclusive.
- Explosive not deadening.
- Life giving not joy robbing.