

Regenerated by Spirit

September 22, 2019 ~ Five Points of Calvinism ~ John 3.1-12

Recap of Previous Messages

- This is the 4th message in a 5-week series entitled the “**Five Points of Calvinism**”
- 1st message was “**Enslaved by Satan**”
 - Fallen man, from conception, is by nature enslaved to do Satan’s will
 - Man does this willingly (but unwittingly) because he’s apathetic towards God
- 2nd message was “**Chosen by Father**”
 - Father God “**before the foundation of the world**” elected some to be in Christ
 - God’s choice was not dependent on anything foreseen in man (will or works)
- 3rd message was “**Saved by Son**”
 - Jesus came to earth to be the propitiation for the sins of the elect
 - Jesus gave His life as a “**ransom for many**”, for His “**sheep**”, for His “**friends**”
 - For all those that the Father gave Him
 - Jesus is the Savior of the world – the only Mediator between God and man

Today’s Message – “**Regenerated by Spirit**”

- Note subordinate role of man in these sermon titles indicated by “**by**”
- Man is passive | reactive in the relationship to Satan, Father, Son, and Spirit
- The “I” of TULIP is tightly correlated with the “T” yet occurs 4th
 - John Piper places Irresistible Grace right after Total Depravity in “**5 Points**”
 - 2nd is the logical place to put it / This is many people’s experience of it
 - They experience a release from sin (“T”) by the power of God’s grace (“I”)
- Tempted to do that – but opted to retain traditional order
 - Father – Son – Spirit – also seemed proper order based on custom

Covenant of Redemption

- We also now see the role of each Person of the Trinity
 1. God the Father chose the elect in eternity past
 2. God the Son saved the elect at the cross nearly 2,000 years ago
 3. God the Spirit regenerates each elect at a time of God’s choosing
- **CoR**: Covenant within Godhead between Father and Son but involving Spirit
 - Great article on “**Monergism**” site by Louis Berkhof explaining it

Xition: Let’s look at another term in theology . . . the “**Order of Salvation**”

“Order of Salvation” – Church of Christ

- Common concept in theology to name and order steps in process of salvation
- **///**: Searched “order of salvation” - auto-complete “arminian, reformed, charts”
- **///**: Church of Christ – “Hear – Believe – Repent – Confess – Baptized – Obey”
 - God’s responsibility (*Father, Son*) / Man’s responsibility (*6 steps above*)
- All 6 steps in Church of Christ order of salvation are active

Calvinist “Order of Salvation” – 11 Steps

- Variety of ways of portraying order – even within Reformed perspective
 - Election → Redemption (p-p)
 - **Effectual Call → Regeneration** → Faith → Repentance (r-p-r-r)
 - Justification → Adoption → Sanctification → Perseverance → Glorification (p-r-a-r-p)
- Most steps in Reformed order passive or reactive (only Sanctification active)
 - **passive** | reactive | **active** → p-p-R-p-R-R-p-R-A-R-p (p=5, R=5, A=1)
- **///**: KJV Bible - **blue** pencil highlights (*Arminian*) / **yellow** highlights (*Calvinist*)

Another Term – “Conversion” (1 occurrence Acts 15.3 ~ “conversion of Gentiles”)

- Broad term covering transition to “saved” state
- Calvinist: Effectual Call → Adoption (*6 steps*)
- Arminian: Hear → Confess (*Baptized?*) (*4 or 5 steps*)

More Terms Pertaining to Effectual Call

- Effectual Call includes steps such as Illumination, Conviction, and Sanctification
- Sanctification is lifelong – but part of it occurs at start w/being “set apart”
 - **Phil 1.6** ~ “He who has begun a good work in you will complete it”

1. Effectual Call

General Call Important but Ineffective

- Paul explains importance of general call in **Romans 10.14-21** (*Jews loss our gain*)
 - **v14** ~ “How then can they call on Him in whom they have not believed?”
 - **v15** ~ “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace”
- Paul distinguishes between the general and effectual calls in **1 Cor 1**
- **1 Cor 1.18** ~ “the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Xition: The General / Effectual Calls are Very Different . . .

General Call is Not Effectual Call

- Jesus illustrates the difference in 2 parables – First is workers in the vineyard
 - **Mt 20.16** ~ “last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.”
 - **Read Mt 22.1-14** ~ “And Jesus .. many are called, but few are chosen.”
 - 1st – Jesus didn’t tell parables to teach manners – this parable is odd
 - Effectual call is here embedded in the general call – called vs. chosen
 - Wedding guest had responded to general call only, not effectual call
 - Many (*seeker sensitive*) churches today are filled with such people

The Purpose of Parables

- Disciples asked Jesus about parables and He explained Himself clearly
- **Read Mat 13.10-17** ~ “And the disciples came .. and did not hear it.”
 - **v11** ~ “it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”
 - **v15** ~ “lest they should see .. lest they should understand .. that I should heal them”
- Jesus spoke in parables to hide the gospel message in plain sight from non-elect
- “If **General Call** was the call why would Jesus suppress it being understood?”

Effectiveness of Effectual Call

- **John 10.16** ~ “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice.”
- **1 Pet 2.9** ~ “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
- **2 Thes 2.13b-14** ~ “.. God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel ..”

Effectual Call - Illumination

- Earlier I said effectual call included Illumination – Conviction - Sanctification
- **III: Concise Theology – Illumination** – “**Illumination, which is a lifelong ministry of the Holy Spirit to Christians, starts before conversion with a growing grasp of the truth about Jesus and a growing sense of being measured and exposed by it.**”
- **III: Hungry for Truth** – Months / Years? before saved – hunger for the truth
 - **III: Reading Revelation** – Obsessing with Gazaway over “**End Times**”

Xition: God did grant me knowledge of the truth . . .

Effectual Call - Conviction

- **III:** “Is this chair saved?” – “No, but it’s under strong conviction.”
- **III:** Vision of sin – God showed me ugliness of sin in vision – wanted to fight it
- **III:** God exists! – Friend shared “**Dispensational Map of Ages**” / “**God exists!**”
- Conviction made me miserable for weeks until new roommate shared gospel

2. Regeneration

Controversial Placement of Regeneration

- Arminians place Regeneration after Faith and Repentance (*result*)
- Calvinists place Regeneration before Faith and Repentance (*cause*)
- **Acts 16.14** ~ “Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. .. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.”
 - God opening “her heart” was regeneration – Her heeding was faith
 - Obedience to the gospel came only after God “opened her heart”
- **John 3.3** ~ “.. unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
 - “born again” is regeneration / to “see the kingdom of God” is faith
 - Jesus asserted that one must be regenerate to have faith
 - i.e., Faith comes after Regeneration – not before

Controversial Treatment of Baptism

- For Church of Christ baptism is an essential step in salvation / frustration
 - CoC men wouldn’t insist someone couldn’t go to heaven without it, but . . .
- “**How important is water baptism to God?**” / “**Is it required for salvation?**”
- **Read Acts 9.17-18** ~ “**And Ananias went .. and was baptized**”
- **Read Acts 22.14b-16** ~ “[T]he God of our fathers .. name of the Lord.”
 - Note how important baptism seems to be in Paul’s retelling of the story
- **Read Mark 16.15-16a**” ~ “**And He said to them .. baptized will be saved**”
 - Such texts have confused many believers over the centuries

Baptism from Two Perspectives

- Baptism in the Church of Christ is very important / “**Essential?**”
 - Church of Christ’s obsession w/water baptism bothered me a lot
 - Lots of things did – but this stuck out as most bothersome

Xition: Let’s examine water baptism at close of Peter’s Pentecost sermon . . .

Baptism at Pentecost

- Read Acts 2.36-39 ~ “Therefore let all .. our God will call” / Pentecost sermon
 - v37 ~ “they were cut to the heart” / Conviction part of effectual call
 - v38 ~ “Repent .. be baptized” / Man reactive to God’s work
 - v39 ~ “the promise is to .. as many as the Lord our God will call”
- We can allow focus on man’s responsibility to obscure God’s sovereignty

John 3.5 ~ “Born of Water and the Spirit”

- Why did Jesus include “water” in v5?
- He could have said, “unless one is born of the Spirit”
- What Jesus is saying is “water” alone is not enough
 - Reread with emphasis upon “and the Spirit”
- Water is the sign, but baptism by Spirit is what is signified
- To obsess over water is exactly what Jesus was warning Nicodemus against
- Some Pharisees came to John for baptism – maybe Nicodemus was one
- But Jesus is warning him that outward conformity is not enough

John 3.7 ~ “Do not marvel”

- “But what does Nicodemus do?” He marvels in v9 – “How can these things be?”
- v10 ~ Jesus marvels back, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things?”
- “Why is all of this marveling going on?” / Answer is in **Eze 36**
- Read Eze 36.22-24 ~ “Therefore say to .. into your own land.”
 - God has nothing good to say about Israel – God hallows His “great name”
- Read Eze 36.25-27a ~ “Then I will sprinkle .. cause you to walk in My statutes”
 - Jesus rebukes Nicodemus for ignorance c/this text

God’s Grace is Irresistible in 2 Ways – Yes, it cannot be resisted

But it’s also so beautiful that no one who truly sees it wants to resist it . . .

God the Father Chose the Elect / Son Saved the Elect / Spirit Regenerated the Elect
Next week we’ll see how they preserve the Elect and bring them home to glory

Jude 24-25 ~ “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and
to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy;
To God our Savior, Who alone is wise,
be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.”

Regenerated by Spirit - Handout

September 22, 2019 ~ Five Points of Calvinism ~ John 3.1-12

1. Why did John Piper place Irresistible Grace right after Total Depravity? _____

2. The traditional ULI order within TULIP reflects the members of the Trinity in what order? 1) _____, 2) _____, and 3) _____.
3. The Covenant of _____ is an extra-biblical phrase (*like Trinity*) describing the roles of the Trinity members in saving the elect.
4. Yet another extra-biblical term capturing the steps in saving the elect is the _____ of _____.
5. The Church of Christ (*Arminian*) describes man's steps as _____ in nature. Those of Reformed faith are mostly _____ or at most _____.
6. The two calls are referred to as the _____ and _____ calls.
7. Do Arminians place Faith & Repentance before or after Regeneration? _____
8. What two texts were shared to show this to be in error? _____
9. What had already happened to Pentecost listeners in **Acts 2** when Peter told them to repent and be baptized? _____
10. Were the listeners merely convicted or had they also been regenerated? _____

11. What text from **Ezekiel** does Jesus appear to have in mind when talking with Nicodemus in **John 3**? _____