

## **The Lord Knows Who Are His**

Amen. Let's turn to our Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 2. 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 19. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God.

2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 19. Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his. Let us pray.

And these amazing words, God, may we find comfort, may we find encouragement to know that, yes, we sin, yes, we struggle, yes, God, we feel we are so weak with our faith, but that does not matter as long as the Lord knows who we are. We should not be looking to these things as our final source of encouragement, but rather, God, to your promises, and this promise here, that you know us, God, with an everlasting love and knowledge that will sustain us into eternity. We pray this, God, would be an encouragement for all of us, and a calling to any who are not believers to put their trust in him, to know that they, therefore, are known by him as well.

In your name we pray, amen. This simple sentence, the seal of truth upon our conscience, makes our burden light, I hope, and our walk easy in this valley of tears. As such, we should delve into the depth of its glory by looking to the work of our wonderful God, who as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are intimately involved in our redemption, making us secure when all others fall around us.

For that is the context of this comforting truth. Timothy was warned about the men who caused problems in the church, with needless debates, and eventually denying the resurrection itself. As such, they and others' faith were overthrown, cast aside.

Thus the implied question rises to the fore of our mind, perhaps the mind of Timothy. If they fell, what of others? What of us? Nevertheless, in spite of apostasy, God has not failed, giving us the sure foundation, having this seal, the Lord knows who are his. And thus we have the doctrine of election.

## **Doctrine of Decrees**

I want to first talk about the doctrine of decrees more broadly, for our God has decreed all things he must, for that is his nature as the omnipotent one from eternity past, and all of us depend on him in our existence and our very being. The doctrine of decrees, of course, begins in eternity past because God has no time. He has always existed and always shall exist and must necessarily exist.

For our Creator God is eternal, that's part of his nature. He has no beginning, no end, and all his attributes reflect that. That is, his knowledge is infinite, his power is infinite as well.

Our knowledge, on the other hand, is limited. We are finite in all that we have, our characteristics, our attributes are therefore reflective of our nature, of those who are limited beings. And further, his knowledge is, of course, related to his power and his might, as all that he has is.

For God's knowledge is not discursive like ours, to speak philosophically. That is, we see, examine, and draw conclusions. The most classical, of course, is the Aristotelian syllogism, all men are mortal, I'm a man, therefore I am mortal.

That's not how God thinks or processes it. I could speak like a man. He knows things immediately, without discourse.

Although you may think you know something immediately, you see it, but you're processing it so quickly, we have to step back and say, well, you've actually made a syllogism in your brain and you put the pieces together. That's what's really going on often. God doesn't do anything like that.

He knows it immediately and exhaustively, of course. Ours is limited knowledge, a finite knowledge. We miss things at times, although it's still true knowledge.

His knowledge is not dependent upon us either. Our knowledge is dependent upon his. That is, his knowledge is part of eternal plan and predestination.

It wasn't as though he was thinking about what everyone else would do and therefore reacts to it, but he is the initiator of all things. Predestination, the broader description of God's authority and power over all. We have this from the Shorter Catechism.

What are the decrees of God? The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. Whatsoever comes to pass. This is the doctrine of decrees that he has determined such things by his own decisions and his own plans, his own knowledge, we should say.

We have from the Confession itself, God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass, yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. That's a lot to unpack and I'm going to unpack some of this in the sermon, specifically with respect to this text and related texts and understanding what it means that God knows those who are his. I already gave part of the answer when I expressed to us that his knowledge is different in the sense of how he has acquired it.

He's always had it. We acquire it and his knowledge is tied into his nature and his power and so there's part of your answer already in this regard. But God's decrees of eternity pass or expressed in history in twofold manner.

Question 8 of the Shorter Catechism. How does God execute his decrees? We know he has decrees. The Bible talks about them and I will get to those verses in a little bit.

God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence, but also redemption. Creation and providence, they go hand-to-hand. The great act of God forming and creating all things out of nothing, what they say, ex nihilo.

Seen and unseen, understood or not understood, beyond our understanding. The largest supernova to the smallest quark. All this was put together by him, created by him, instituted by him, even sustained by him.

Speaking of the act of creation, now I'm going into the act of providence. There you have the Lord God holding up all the nations and the pillars of the world and all of creation itself. Continued beyond the Lord by our Lord and Savior in what we call providence or perhaps sometimes more narrowly we would say history as we look back upon what we've gone through, what our church has gone through, what our nation has gone through.

That's working out of God's plan. That's providence in action. All of it is under his hand and his direction.

We have a whole chapter in the Confession on the doctrine of providence that even any objects, rocks, water, to living things like plants and animals, all fall within his comprehensive plan and guidance. And again, I can go through lots of verses on those. I will not because I'm going to hone in on the doctrine of election, of salvation from eternity past.

But it's all of a piece. This is why I'm building up to this. It's not just inanimate objects, not just living things in the most primitive sense of animals and plants, but humans, all mankind collectively and individually is within and under his plan and power.

If that be granted, then divine election just falls into place. And unfortunately, we can't always grant that with Christians that we rub shoulders with today. They may talk of providence and God's control of things.

I know I grew up that way in charismatic circles out here, but it certainly didn't mean what I heard when I talked to a Calvinist. I'm like, where did that come from? Well, you've been talking about it your whole life. Well, yeah, but that's not what I really meant.

Yeah, because it's a very vague kind of way of speaking without a lot of substance. I'm giving you some more substance. God's providence is very particular.

It covers all things. So perhaps if you're talking to your friends about election, you might want to back up and say, do you even believe in providence? Are things running around willy-nilly without God's control? The devil does whatever he feels like. Man's will conquers God all the time.

Is that what you believe? God's just up there frustrated. What am I supposed to do? You put it that way, I think a lot of people would be like, I'm a little uncomfortable with it. I know.

So that's perhaps one way you can go down this path. Of course, the other one is what I'm going to go down because of the text we have before us, which is God's redemption is also part of his acts, acts of saving us. Question 20 of the Shorter Catechism.

Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? God having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some to everlasting life and did enter into a

covenant of grace to deliver them out of a state of sin and misery and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

## **Doctrine of Election**

This is the grand doctrine of election. That God predestined, chosen from eternity past those who would be saved.

It's about who chose salvation first. We sang it in the hymn earlier. I would not have chosen you, I would not have loved you, I would not have sought you out if you had not sought out me first.

That's the Christian testimony, whether you're a Calvinist or not. And it's God who chose us before we even thought of him. That's an amazing thing to consider.

It's a very awe-inspiring thought and I hope to show you a very comforting thought. We have some classic text here on this doctrine of divine election that God chooses whom he will to go to heaven. Acts 13, 48.

Now when the Gentiles heard this, that is the good news of Jesus Christ, and they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Interesting way of phrasing it, don't you think, by Luke who wrote the book of Acts.

Those who were appointed or ordained to eternal life believed. Not just anyone who believed was saved, but rather those who were ordained, they believed. It's a different way of speaking than what you typically hear in evangelical circles today.

As many as had been appointed to eternal life, and has been appointed as you can hear in the English, a passive, you're not appointing yourself, someone else is. Who's doing the appointing here? The Apostles? Clearly not. It's God.

God's appointing them to salvation, giving them the gift of faith itself. Ephesians 1, 4 is another classic text for us in the doctrine of election. Ephesians 1, 4, the whole, in fact, all those verses, verses 2 through 13 or 14, I think it is, is one long sentence in the Greek.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. That's a lot. There's a lot of truth in here, clearly.

That is, we are his according as he has chosen us. God chose us. We didn't choose him.

And when did he choose us? Sometime, you know, after the fall. He's like, well, I guess you were the best believer and you're the weakest believer. No.

He chose us before the foundation of the world, before anything was made or created. To what end? That we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Which is another way of saying what? That you're saved.

To save you. And he doubles down on this teaching that God chose us from before the foundation of the world, having predestined us, he says, unto adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. So he chose us before all things.

He predestined us. That's obviously a clear, strong word, good translation. That is, he's doing it.

He's doing the choosing. Or foreordaining is another word that we use sometimes. Fore means beforehand.

Here again, fore. Before you even have your own destiny, God has chosen it. And then he ends this section of his long, long sentence, according to what? According to your good works.

According to the strength of your faith. According to your baptism. According to your birth.

Like some Jews believe. We're Jewish. We're special.

No. According to the good pleasure of his will. Not your will.

I couldn't get away from that. I remember learning this stuff when I was 18, 19, 20. I was in the military.

I never ran across that. I know I read the Bible at least once. I'm sure I ran across this.

But your mind just glazes over it if you don't understand. You don't just slow down. This is why God gave us preachers, for that matter.

To wake us up. To point things out that you missed. And praise be to God.

I think most of you have missed that. By his grace, he's opened your eyes. 2 Thessalonians, another verse.

Although I think many of us don't often think of this verse. You may be aware of it. It's not the first on my list when it comes to the doctrine of election.

If I was going to find a verse. But here it is. It's a good one.

In 2 Thessalonians 2.13, written by Paul, we read, But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you. Brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. It's not about us.

He doesn't say, I thank God for your faith. Although he has intimated that elsewhere. That this is a good thing that you believe.

But here he's emphasizing your salvation is because God from the beginning, before you were saved, chose you for salvation. It's God choosing you. Isn't this good news? It's wonderful news.

Because otherwise I wouldn't have chose him. Chose you for salvation through sanctification and belief in the truth. See this here? So you're like, okay, salvation meaning, yeah, I'm gonna be sanctified.

I'm gonna become holy. I'm gonna change and become more like Jesus. This is good.

So from the beginning God chose you for this end. But also belief in the truth. Implying both come from God, necessarily.

The salvation broadly conceived sanctification is from him and he chose you for that end. And he also chose you for belief in the truth. Because there's another passage in Ephesians 2 that shows us that faith itself is a gift of God.

Those are the obvious verses. You just look up, choose, look up predestination. Although predestination I think is used like three times in that particular word in the New Testament.

It's quite interesting. But clearly in those texts it's just what it says. And there are many of those kind of verses.

But what about other texts that don't use these clear words? Choose, predestinate. The doctrine of election is still seen in other verses like this verse. Doctrine of election point two.

Nevertheless, in spite of these men falling away from the faith, Hymenius and Felicius are of this sort, saying the resurrection has already passed and they overthrew the faith of some. It doesn't really matter because at the end of the day the solid foundation of God stands. Having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his.

Implying those are not his. He knows who are his and who are what? Not his. And those are his.

We are his. The word know here, to get the proper mind and understanding of this passage, I think is to go over how the word know here is used. This verb.

As I summarized earlier, the nature of God means his knowing is different from ours by mode and content. And although our content is true, it's limited, his is known from the beginning and eternity past because it's part of his plan. Doesn't catch him off guard.

It's not external to him, his knowledge, but intrinsic to him. Because if it's external to him, that means his knowledge is dependent upon something else. But it's not dependent upon him.

Which means you see knowledge and predestination go hand-in-hand already. We have some text to show us the use. We talk about the Hebraic way of speaking.

It's very concrete often. They don't use a lot of abstract words that you're going to find like the word predestinate in the Greek, for example. Doesn't make it better, just makes it different.

And we miss that because we have a lot of Greek influence in that positive sense of that's our part of our Western history. This way of thinking more abstractly and talking that way more abstractly, especially in a highly industrialized engineering society like ours. Not so amongst the Jews.

They use more simpler terms like no. Genesis 425 we read, and Adam knew his wife again and she bore a son and named him Seth. Clearly knowledge here is not head knowledge.

That's not what he means. I'm gonna ask my wife some more questions about an intimate knowledge and an active knowledge. Genesis 322, and then the Lord said, the Lord God said, behold the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil.

And now lest he put out his hand to take of the tree of life and to eat and to live forever, you know, God cast him out. Here, to know good and evil, Adam knew good and evil in the way we use the word know today typically. That is, he was informed.

He knew he shouldn't eat this. Everything else is yours. He was told that.

He knew right from wrong. He basically had the Ten Commandments written on his heart, but I would say in a more positive form. All the negative comes out of the sin, I think.

Thou shalt not, thou shalt not, but thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt. He knew that. It wasn't like he was in a amoral, indifferent universe at the time.

He was in a positive universe. Everything was good and he was righteous and holy and upright. So the word know here means something else, doesn't it? It's that Hebraic idea again.

Here, more determinative, more active, that they will determine for themselves right and wrong. 2 Corinthians 5.22, For he made him, that is Jesus, who knew no sin to be sin for us. You see where this goes now? He knew no sin like he didn't know what sin was.

Is that what he means? Of course not. He knew intellectually what it was. He knows what transgressions of God's law are.

He means an intimate knowledge of sin such that you are sinning. It's another way of saying he sins. He didn't sin, of course, in this case.

He did not sin. For he made him who knew no sin. There the word knew, the verb, is this intimate active sense, but negated, of course, because he did not have that at all.

So you see already that the word know is not used the way we typically use it in English, the verb. And that's true here with the, what, the Hebrew writers of the New Testament using

Greek words. You see them over and over again using them in a way that was familiar to the Hebrews, the Old Testament way of thinking.

They were raised as Jews who knew their Old Testament, at least especially the educated, such as Paul. And then lastly we have the well-known passage, Romans 8:29. Romans 8:29.

For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. This foreknowledge, so it's the same verb but with the word fore in it, giving you the English, of course, is an eternal knowing of his own mind and that we are part of that plan and that knowledge of his is again not passive but active, as all that he has and all the attributes he has describe all the other attributes. His knowledge is omnipotent, his love is omnipotent, etc.

And so it's an intimate and active knowledge or foreknowledge of God Almighty. Exercise in time, what we call predestination, conformed to the image of his son. Those of mankind, we read in the Confession on Doctrines of Decree, those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God before the foundation of the world was laid according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his own will has chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory.

It continues on from there. I bring this up to show us there's other passages as well, not just the no passage, so this tied clearly to our text here, that the Lord knows those who are his. It's not a mere abstract intellectual knowledge but an intimate and active outworking of his power for our salvation.

The other verses, 2 Timothy 1:9, that we are saved by God's purpose from eternity. Saved according to his own purpose and grace which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began. So there we have again, before the world began, like in Thessalonians, where it said before the foundation of the world, same idea.

That clearly ties to the doctrine of election, that description. So the word election isn't there but the context is clearly there. Before anything else existed, God is here with his own purposes and his own plans and that's why you're saved.

That's the point of those texts, which means he elected you. One more step, there it is. The ground of salvation also necessitates election.

The ground of salvation. Romans 9:11. For the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him who calls.

So in that text, where he emphasizes not of works but of him who calls, that is you're saved by grace. He emphasizes that over and over. That's the ground of our salvation.

Necessitates that the doctrine of election because as part of the purposes of God that election might stand. Otherwise, all of God's salvation falls apart. If he doesn't have divine foreknowledge, an active foreknowledge, that is essentially forward nation because it's a

plan of his to save us, then the whole system falls apart and you're not saved by grace from first to last but saved by grace kind of second to last, the first being eternity past.

You had something to do with it. If he didn't choose you, I guess you chose yourself. God gives the- there are minions who teach that, the Wesleyans do.

They'll say, well the Holy Spirit comes to you, frees your will, so the Holy Spirit comes and regenerates you, we would say, but that freedom of the will is such that it's literally free. It has no influence by the Holy Spirit and so you get to choose in that point of time like Adam before the fall. Yes or no to God? What? So there's no there's no decree from there.

I guess the decree would be God gave everyone regeneration and now you're all Adam again. You get to choose for Jesus. No.

There's all these different ways in which the doctrine of God's decree are therefore undermined but you can see in the flip side by that negative example how the decrees would fall apart, how the decrees are parcel of what it means to be saved. We have other verses. Lastly, the purpose of salvation implies divine election.

It's in those other texts as well, right? According to his purpose and grace, not according to your purpose and grace, but his. If that's true, he's eternal, then it's his plans that are eternal. His decrees are therefore eternal.

For all that he has is that way as well. Ephesians 1, again 6 and 12 and 14. There in that passage, Ephesians 1, 3 through 14, is what I call a Trinitarian doxology, a theology of praise.

Because it talks about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and he describes each member of the Trinity and ends each section of that description of the Father's electing us from eternity past with the phrase, to the praise of his glory. And those are the verses that break off the three parts of those verses to show us the pattern. Ephesians 1, 6, to the praise of his glorious grace.

That's the divine election of the Father. Ephesians 12, 1, 12, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of his glory. There it is again, to the praise of his glory.

And there he had just finished describing the work of Christ and his redemption and his blood for us. And then verse 14 ends the matter of the Holy Spirit who's given to us as a seal of salvation on our hearts. Ephesians 1, 14, that is the Spirit who is the guarantee of our adherence until the redemption of the purchased possession, what? To the praise of his glory.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to the praise of his glory. We are saved not to our praise, not to our glory, not even for our own good in the ultimate sense. It's secondary.

Our good is derivative and underneath and for the purpose of his glory and his praise, his honor, his magnification before the world. That's what salvation is about. And if doctrine of election doesn't magnify God to the nth degree, I don't know what else would.

It means it's all about him and we are just used as vessels to bring him praise, to bring him glory. It's a humbling doctrine and people do not like it because of that. If salvation is ultimately about God's glory, Paul's kind of emphatic about that three times there in Ephesians 1, which another way of describing that is his honor, his praise, then not having divine election would detract from his glory and bring man into the picture.

The confession there, again on the doctrine of decrees, that's chapter 3 by the way, if you want to look it up, mentions here in paragraph 6, as God has appointed the elect unto glory, that's been established that there's a doctrine of divine decrees, anointed or appointed, excuse me, the elect unto glory, that is to heaven, nice way of saying heaven, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his will foreordain all the means thereunto. So here we have another way again of looking at the doctrine of decrees, not just God's purposes imply that, God's glory implies that, that it's all of grace and not of works implies that, necessitates is a stronger word, I want do all the means given to us thereunto. In other words, election is not in a vacuum.

So again, with respect to Ephesians 1 that I read, that God chose you from before the foundation of the world, predestined unto salvation, some of the Armenians argue, well that predestination in Christ is this abstract category of the church and the elect has not been filled yet until you choose to be filled into that great place to be in. It's not an abstraction. He has appointed the means thereunto as well, it's concrete and we see it by our salvation itself of course and that God has sent the pastors, the preachers to bring the good news.

It proceeds that is salvation through many moving parts, is perhaps the word we would use, lots of things going on from election and eternity past, to calling, to regeneration, to justification, to adoption, to sanctification, each having their own particular acts and properties, can't conflate them, such that the elect never fall away. They will go through all of that. Those are logical categories and real categories in the sense of the effect upon us and they will never fall away.

So we have more texts from this perspective of that God has ordained all the means thereunto, that is our salvation, unto our salvation. Ephesians 2.10, I like this text. This is a good one to encourage you, I hope.

It encourages me not to get down in the mouth and miserable about my sins. There's a time to repent of course. There's a time to get up and carry on with our tasks before God.

We shouldn't stay in the pit of despair our whole life. Ephesians 2.10 we read, for we are his workmanship, right? God's working on it. He's got that chisel out.

Created in Christ Jesus for good works. To what end? To have obedience to him. Good works.

Which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Good works were prepared. Obedience to God's Word was prepared for us by him beforehand.

That is before we did them. They're part of his plan. To what end? That we should walk in them, which is to say do them.

Did he just make empty abstract plans? Plans that failed to bring good works in our lives? I think not. And so divine election is necessitated here. He chose us as individuals, not abstraction, with particular good works in mind to do these and he planned them from eternity past, beforehand, before we even did them.

Not at the last minute after we're saved, but obviously from eternity past because God is eternal. His knowledge is eternal. Another example of divine election being necessarily implied, not just by the good works God has prepared for us before we're even sanctified, is 1st Peter 1.5. In 1st Peter 1.5 we read, We who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Your God is the one who created all things out of nothing and sustains and guides it to the here and now that is providence where nothing catches him off guard and none stay his hand. And this passage necessitates divine election. We're kept by the power of God at the last minute? No, from eternity past.

He already decided it and it was already being unfolded for us. And again, John 17.9, I pray for them. This is Jesus.

His prayer shows us divine election. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world, but for those whom you have given me for they are yours.

Here we have Jesus, the great high priest, described by liberals and others alike as, in many ways, a great Santa Claus of some sort who just has this compassion that's equal upon all creation. And it's not. We know he has compassion upon the unbelievers insofar as he calls them to repentance and the like.

We read the text last night about the rich young ruler with scribes and Pharisees that Jesus loved him, but he walked away sad because he had great possessions. He wouldn't give them up. That's true, but that's clearly a different order of love than this kind.

He prays for some and not for others. What is that? But there are some who were chosen and some are not. And if God's doing the choosing, if Christ is doing the choosing, clearly, then it's an eternal choosing because he himself is eternal.

It must be. It must be known by him from eternity past. There are other ways the divine election can be inferred and necessitated by many other passages.

Here, again, Christ only prays for the elect in a redemptive way as a great high priest. He lived and died for his people and intercedes for them even now and no one else. It's another way of saying divine election. It necessitates that and nothing else.

## **Doctrine of Comfort**

It is therefore, lastly here, a comforting doctrine. Now it's a doctrine that should be taken care and expressed with proper care.

We have there, in chapter 3 in particular, that the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care. This is what our confession says. That men, attending the will of God revealed in his word and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election.

In other words, it's describing here that, yes, this doctrine can be abused. It can be used in the wrong way, the doctrine of election, a predestination of unto salvation, in a lazy way. This is one of the arguments many have against the Calvinists.

You Calvinists, you really believe in divine election? Why do you bother doing anything? Why be sanctified? It's just going to happen, right? So they conflate us with fatalism. We're not fatalists. Fatalists ignore the means to the end.

God gave us the means and the end and he works both of them to our good. No, that's not the case. And this section of the confession makes that clear and reminds us, out of Deuteronomy 29.29, for example, the limits of our understanding of the doctrine of election.

That we can't always, as it were, answer everything to it. There's a mystery to this truth insofar as that God is eternal and he being eternal, we being finite, we're going to have mysteries. We're not going to understand the fullness of what he is and can do and does.

Deuteronomy 29.29, another, I think, good passage for us. The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of his law. So you ask yourself, what's been revealed to me? The doctrine of election.

All these passages and more go on and on all afternoon. But it also says the secret things belong to the Lord our God. I don't know who he chose.

I don't know when he chose, that is, to work out in history who's going to be saved when, when they're going to be saved. All this stuff. And I don't know how all the pieces work together.

I can't fathom the kind of absolute mind and power it takes to coordinate all the pieces, all the moving parts of history, of the universe, from the smallest to the greatest, at the same time, simultaneously, and with perfection. And so we teach what the Bible teaches and leave everything else to a mystery. It's in God's hands.

But lastly here, in the same part of the Confession, excuse me, chapter 8. So this, so shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God. That's why it was given to us. Not so we can pry in to figure out who's really elected, who's not.

I don't know. I just go by your profession, words, and your actions. That's all I have.

But it's been given to us that we would praise him, revere him, admire him, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel. The doctrine of election, in other words, leads to praise. Romans 11.33. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.

How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. And it's not that case if the divine election doesn't exist. You figured it out.

There's no problems. Freed the will of man. It humbles us.

Luke 10.20. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you, Christ tells the apostles. But rather rejoice because what? Your names are written in heaven. And the implication is you didn't write it.

God wrote it. You didn't go up to the heavens. Say, Lord, let me in.

He came down to earth and brought you in. The teaching here, brothers and sisters, when you struggle, and I know you will struggle because you're a sinner saved by grace. Romans 11.

Romans 11.5 and 6 is wonderful. Even so, then, at this present time, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is no longer of works.

Otherwise, grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace. Otherwise, work is no longer work.

That's not how obedient and good you are. It is never going to be the case. You're not saved so that you can therefore save yourself more by good works.

You do the good works because you have been saved. Brothers and sisters, I pray that this is true for you and that you realize it's not the strength of your faith, the pureness of your heart, but it's all of grace from eternity past to the last when heaven and earth shall be one. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, we pray.

Amen. Our God above, we are thankful for this truth that you've opened our hearts to, that it rings, I pray, strong in our hearts and our minds and our souls that you love us with an everlasting love. You chose us from eternity past.

Even though you knew we would rebel and hate you, you deign to change our hearts by granting us the power of the Holy Spirit. May this be true for all of us I hear. I pray God this morning.

Amen.