Southport
Presbyterian Church

July 3, 2011

Love God.
Love each other.
Serve the world.

“A Humbling View of Salvation”

"Pastor Bob's Pastoral Thoughts on Predestination"

Dear friends in Christ,

Today's sermon addresses a very controversial subject known as "election", which is a specific doctrine closely related to "predestination." It is never my intention to introduce controversy into the life of any church, but at times controversy is the effect even though it is never the intent. The call of any preacher of God's Word, however, is to "not hesitate to proclaim the whole counsel of God" (see Paul's charge to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20). So I approach this task today with great sobriety and - hopefully - humility. Indeed, these teachings are "the deep things of God" that Pastor June preached about several weeks ago.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, arguably the greatest theological document ever penned by man, warns preachers like myself as we approach this topic.

> “The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care . . ." [WCF 3.8]

What if you do not believe this doctrine? Do you lose your salvation? Does it make you an inferior Christian? Of course not! There are many sincere, faithful, Bible-believing Christians who do not believe in the Reformed faith in general and the doctrine of election/predestination in particular. You can certainly be a member in good standing in any Evangelical Presbyterian Church and not embrace it. However, you cannot be an ordained officer in the EPC if you do not embrace this doctrine. It is an integral part of our church constitution, and church officers are held to a higher theological standard than church members in the EPC.

Today, the majority of American Christians simply have not been taught, have not understand, and/or do not embrace this doctrine. Those of us who do are in a distinct minority. This was not true in the 18th and 19th centuries. In those days this doctrine was embraced by the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, all Presbyterian churches, and many Baptist churches. But, in any case, the majority can be wrong whether in the 18th or the 21st century. This doctrine is not presented in a popularity contest. IF it is taught in the Bible, then we are called to accept it with joy. IF it is not taught in the Bible, then we are called to reject it with conviction. IF you are not sure, keep studying, praying, and pondering it for yourself. May God continue to bless you all,

Pastor Bob

Bob's "Filters" (sermon on 6/4): rational, cultural, emotional, moral, intellectual

Romans 9:1-23 [1] I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit— [2] that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. [3] For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. [4] They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. [5] To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. [6] But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, [7] and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." [8] 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. [9] For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return and Sarah shall have a son." [10] And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, [11] though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call— [12] she was told, "The older will serve the younger." [13] As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." [14] What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! [15] For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." [16] So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. [17] 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." [18] So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. [19] You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" [20] 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?" [21] Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? [22] What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, [23] in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

WOW! Paul must really love his Fellow Jews!!

WOW! Look at all the ADVANTAGES OF Jews had over Gentiles. Why were they "God's CHOSEN people"? (see Dt. 7:7)

With so many unbelieving Jews in Jesus' day, does this mean God's plan + Word has FAILED?

Just being Jewish does not save you!

OUR SPIRITUAL LINEAGE

Abraham + Sarah → Isaac + Rebecca

Jacob Esau (twins)

Jesus (our salvation)

God's choice does NOT depend on their anticipated "track record" – God's choice simply based on "his call" (vs. 11)

→ OBJECTION #1: That's NOT FAIR (unjust)!!

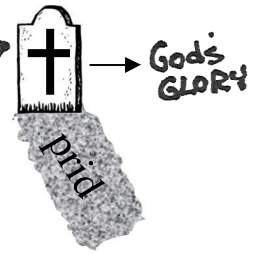
God's ANSWER to OBJECTION #1: God's MERCY not human will!

example of Pharaoh: A. "God hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Ex. 9:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8)
B. Pharaoh "hardened his own heart" (Ex 8:32, 9:34)

→ OBJECTION #2: How can God find fault?

→ ANSWER #2: Don't talk back!

BOTTOM LINE: God is SOVEREIGN
God is MERCIFUL
God gets ALL THE GLORY for our salvation!!!



Romans 11:33-36!