

Election

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I brought you three messages on the doctrine of election, and remember that the first message I spoke upon the subject of election, introducing it and giving you a Bible definition of the doctrine; and in the second message I tried to show you that God didn't owe us anything. We owe him a great deal. If we are different, it's because the God of all grace made us so. We have nothing therefore to boast of in ourselves or to glory in ourselves but to give him the praise. We sure owe him a lot. And I believe it was pointed out that I didn't think that anybody would ever come to a correct understanding of the Bible doctrine of election unless he started right there at that point. God doesn't owe me anything but hell. Hell. If I go to hell it will be my own fault, but if I'm saved, it's God's sovereign grace, an act of his holy and sovereign will. The third message was related to Paul's, the effect the doctrine of election had upon him and the use that he made of that doctrine in witnessing and in his preaching and service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, this evening I want to deal with the fourth message. In dealing with this fourth message, I want to bring a little different aspect of the doctrine of election that perhaps I haven't brought out fully, if I've touched upon it. I really haven't dealt with it too much in detail. But now, to begin our message, you know, after we've preached election and given all the scriptures on it, and suggested these things that the Bible teaches, most people will just come and say, well, the way the thing is, it's God foreknew who would believe on Christ, God foreknew who would repent and believe, and so he looked down through the ages of time and he chose those people who he knew would believe. Well, that's the way most folks do but let's come to the book of Romans chapter 8 and begin with that verse 28 in reading, and let's see what the foreknowledge of God really means. Paul said here,

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow [now watch that,] For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Well, you'll notice in verse 29 that the apostle isn't talking about the knowledge of God, knowing beforehand, but he's talking about what God did. Now keep this in mind, what

did he do? The scripture says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," and they get the calling and the justification and the glorification in this wonderful chain here, inspired chain that the word of God gives us.

Now, what do we mean by foreknowledge? We mean by foreknowledge the fore-love of God, God's affection for certain people before time. Now, I'll give you some proof of that, and this is very enriching to the souls of those who believe. In Amos chapter 3 and verse 2, the word of God says to these people, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Well, now here you have the word "know." God says to these people, "I haven't known anyone else. I've only known you of all the families of the earth." What does the word "know" there mean? Does it mean that God didn't know all the nations of the heathen, the nations of the world, he doesn't know anything about them, he wasn't acquainted with them? Well, that doesn't mean that at all. God knew all about the heathen. He knew their sins, their iniquity, their filthiness, foulness, and violence, and rebellion. He knew everything about them. Well, how could he say in Amos then, 3 and 2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth"? Well, the word "know" there means love. God is saying, "You only have I loved of all the families of the earth." God says, "I just didn't love these other families of the earth."

And the word "know" is used in the Bible, as you're well acquainted with, I think, interchangeably with the word "love." A lot of times you read the scripture where it says, "know," you put in the word "love" there. It means the same thing. For instance, our Lord Jesus Christ said, "I know my sheep." You know what he's saying? "I know my sheep." Does that mean he doesn't know the goats, doesn't know anything about anybody else but his sheep? Well, certainly not. He's saying, "I love my sheep. I love my sheep." And then in Matthew 7:21, one of the most awful scriptures in the whole word of God that just shakes the daylights out of you if you really get down and study it, and if it doesn't, you really better study it. Verse 21, our Lord said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Watch it now, "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity." What does the word "know" there or "knew," what does that mean, the word "knew" there? You know exactly. Our Lord Jesus Christ said to these folks, "I never loved you." He knew all about them. Knew their whole business. Knew they were false from center to circumference, from head to toe. He knew all these works that they claimed to do in the name of Christ and to preach in his holy name, he said, "You're nothing but workers of iniquity. I never loved you. Never loved you. Oh, that kills some people, doesn't it? They say, "Oh, he loved everybody," trying to save everybody. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "I never loved you. Never did love you." And that is something to think about too, isn't it?

I'll bring you to Romans chapter 11 and verse 2. Now, you ought to mark this one, lest you want to teach some of our dispensational friends the truth, prophetic truth. You can read this and you teach them sovereignty at the same time. He says in verse 1, Romans 11, I said Romans, didn't I? Romans chapter 11, "I say then, Hath God cast away his

people?" He asks a question and now he's going to answer it. "God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." Now here it is, "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." Do you see that? So here again the word means love, or love aforetime. God didn't cast away his people that he loved from the creation of the world before he created the mountains or the stars of the heavens or whatever. No, sir. He cast a lot of folks away. He cast a lot of Jews, a lot of the seed of Abraham away, according to the flesh, but Paul said right here, God never cast away his people whom he loved, whom he foreknew.

Now, let's go a little farther. In 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 3, Paul says, "if any man love God, the same is known of him." Now, here you have the word in the sentence "love" and you have the word "known." If any man love God, it's the same as known of him. You can use the word love there. He is loved of God. If a man love God, Paul says it really, the truth of the matter is, it's because God loved him first. Him first.

I like to call attention many times to people that scripture in Galatians chapter 4 and verse 9 where Paul says to those Galatian Christians, "But now, after that ye have known God," and it seems he takes an afterthought. I don't know how you read the scriptures, but sometimes I think people read the scriptures and they feel, well, that person that's writing the scriptures, God is using him as a sort of machine, you see, just eliminating his personality and so forth, but that really is not so. God used the personality of the men he wrote, though he used in such a way that what they wrote, they wrote God's words, not their own. And yet those words were their own in a sense.

Now, here Paul says this, "But now, after that ye have known God," and then he thinks about that a little bit and he says, "really, rather are known of God." So again he's saying, "Yeah, you love God, but it's all because he loved you first." Oh beloved, and you know, I can pick out a number of places in the scripture where the writers of the holy scripture seem to have been affected like that. You get into that first chapter of Genesis where he says, "And he made the sun and the moon," and then I believe there's a comma, and the writer adds this, "and he made the stars also." I said, "Hmm, why'd he say that? Why'd he bring that in? All the stars, different shapes and forms and sizes and colors and brightness and so forth, multiplied millions and billions of stars out there, he made the sun and the moon and, "he said," he made the stars also." And you find that little personal touch that God uses of the scripture writers to bring in these things and to sort of brighten up things a little bit.

I'll give you another scripture, Psalm 1 and 6, a writer writing about the blessed man and he says in verse 6, "the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Do you hear the word "know" there? He knoweth. What does it mean? It simply means he loves the way of the righteous. He comes for that way of the righteous he likes. The way of the ungodly is going to perish.

So from all these scriptures, to know and to foreknow simply means to love, and to fore-love, to love beforehand, and it's wonderful to know that. So let's come back to Romans chapter 8 and verse 29. When the Apostle Paul says here, "For whom he did foreknow,"

for whom he did foreknow, he's simply saying, for whom he fore-loved. This is what he did, all whom he fore-loved, them he predestinated and called and justified and glorified. Now, one of the pivotal points of scripture, we might call it, in Acts chapter 2 and verse 22 and here we read something that Peter says. He said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Now, how did God the Father foreknow that his Son would be taken by wicked hands of men till crucified on a cross of wood? How did he know that? Did the Father just simply look down through the ages of time, and he saw that wicked men would do that and so because they would do that, he simply knew that they would, you see, is that what the apostle is writing here? I think you see better than that, do you not because Peter is saying here in verse 23 that Christ "being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Wasn't it on purpose that the Lord brought this to pass, that it wasn't simply something foreseen that men would do, and God knew it in that way? But it was something that in his all-wise counsel he purposed his Son to die and that to die by the wicked hands of ungodly, ill-deserving sinners.

Now, that's a wonderful truth, because when we make the application of it, it just amounts to this, that in whatever sense God foreknew his Son to die on the cross, he also foreknew me to become a Christian. You get that? If he just looked down at the ages of time and saw that men would do that and knew they would in that way, that they would kill his Son, then he looked down at the ages of time and saw that I would believe and I would repent and so he chose me. But you know better. If you can convince me that that's the way it was that Christ died, that God simply chose him to die that way because men would do that and he knew they would, then you can convince me that God chose me because he knew I would believe, but I don't think you'll ever do that. God saved me on purpose, and God didn't foreknow anything about me in that way as a cause of his choosing me.

So it was an act of his sovereign will that Jesus Christ, his Son, died on that cross and was taken by the wicked hands of men, though God didn't force them to do it or had any part in their crime, and was an act of the sovereign will of God in choosing me unto salvation. You see, God's foreknowledge is that like an architect? An architect knows what a building is going to look like before the building is constructed and you know why he knows it? Because he has designed that building on the drawing board. He has purposed that building to look a certain way. And so you didn't tell him how the building is going to look. He knows. He designed it. And so we know this, God, dear friends, is the architect. He's the builder of his church and he puts the material in his church that he wants in there. He chooses whom he wants in his building. This is the way it is that he's decided it. This is the way it's going to be and all the devils in hell and you and I, anybody else, can't change it at all. He said, "I will build my church. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." So God knows how it would be. He knows whom he fore-loves, whom he chose as his own.

All right, back to Romans 8. I'm going to stay here a little while because this chapter of Romans begins with verse 1 in a wonderful way, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Now, that preposition "in" has a tremendous meaning, doesn't it? Are you in Christ Jesus? There's no condemnation for you if you are, if you're united to Christ our Lord. And he goes on to tell about the wonderful things about those who are in Christ, comes on down through the 28th verse. and 29, and then closes the chapter beginning with verse 35, with five wonderful verses. Look at it. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" This is after he has written that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ, after he's written the fore-love of God for his own, his predestination to be conformed to the image of his Son, and the effectual calling of grace, the justification of his own through faith, and then the glorification. And then he asks some questions we'll talk about later. But Paul comes to the conclusion here with five wonderful verses of, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And look at the awful things he mentions. Why, you'd think if anything in the world would separate someone from the love of Christ, these things would. So "tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded," now Paul loved to use that word, "I am persuaded," and mark it, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Now, beloved, that's assurance. Paul says, "I am persuaded none of these things can separate us." Well, let's just call Paul in here and ask him some questions. "Paul, how can you be so sure? How can you be so confident? How can you draw such confidence and peace and comfort and assurance and hope ere? What's the ground that you stand on?" Well, all right. I think Paul would answer that question by saying, here's my argument. Verse 28, look at the argument. He says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Phew, what an argument. That's the reason he says, "I'm persuaded that." Why are you persuaded, Paul? Well, because what God did for us, he anchored in eternity. It began in eternity, and it's anchored in the glory yet to come, in the future, in eternity.

So in verse 31, he just simply makes the application and says, "What shall we then say to these things?" What will we say to them? What things is he talking about? He's talking about God's fore-love, his predestination, his calling, his justification, and his glorification of the believers. The election starting back there in eternity past and going through time unto eternity future, electing us and choosing us in his Son before the world began, and then bringing us through and conforming us unto the image of his Son, calling us out by his glorious grace, granting us justification in his righteousness through the gift

of faith, and then glorification in eternity, absolute glorification all reaching from one eternity to the other.

You see, this whole chain, this golden chain, is anchored on both shores of eternity. That's why I can be so sure. Now, you take a lot of fellows and they talk about once saved, always saved, and when you ask them, how can you be sure? Well, you know what they say, "I believed, I did this, I repented, I accepted Jesus, and this, that, and the other. And when I exercised my free will, God did something for me." Boy, that's poor assurance. I'll tell you one thing tonight, if my assurance of resting in my free will of salvation, I don't think I could be very happy about it. I just couldn't be happy about it, because I don't know what my free will will do. I know what God's predestination, and God's choice, and God's purpose, and God's grace will do. I know what he'll do. And so Paul bases his assurance here upon the electing, predestinating love of God the Father and his electing grace of his sheep, his people, his chosen.

Now, that's wonderful because what he's saying there in verse 28 is, we know that all things work together. God not only saved you, chose you in eternity, but called you in time, justified you, and now he's making all providence work together for your good. The devil and demons and angels and ungodly men and hypocrites and everything in God's world, even the wagging of a dog's tongue and his bark, too, and even the bird singing is working together for the good of the child of God. We know that all things work together. Sickness, death, all kinds of diseases, accidents, if you want to call them that, whatever, and so here this apostle said, now watch it, can you make this application, "What shall we then say to these things?" What shall we say to them? Well, I accepted Jesus and when I did that, he just did something for me." He's just been talking about what God did, not what you did. What God did, not what you did. I get you're sick of this business, you know, what I did, I did this, I did that, and you hear it everywhere, and you say, these poor people are either lost and still on their way to hell, or they're greatly ignorant, and they're sure they're not reading the word of God. They're just swallowing what some preach, they go out and choose a preacher and they don't choose the preachers on the basis of the word of God being preached by the truth. "Man, he just looks, I just think this fellow, I like him." Or his personality or some quirk in him or the way he winks his eye, wiggles his ear, combs his hair or something. They choose him as, "I will believe what he says."

And people are doing that and they're running here and there and they never, never, dear friends, come to the knowledge of the truth and, brother, it scares the daylights out of me when I see it. I'm not running down these people or berating them. Don't say that. I'll just mention to show how deluded they are, how deceived they are by the anti-Christian doctrine that is being propagated today and people are saying, "Well, the antichrist is going to come." Brother, he's here and he's in the churches. He's doing his work of deceiving. And so they go off, and then people say, "Well, what's the difference, one church is as good as another, you see." And if you're going to talk about the goodness of churches and the goodness of men, you might agree, "Yeah, that's all." Yeah, sure is. We have something better than that, better than that.

Paul said, "What shall we then say to these things, this predestination, this foreknowledge, this calling, this justification, this glorification that God's doing? If God be for us, who can be against us?" Who can be against us? I'll tell you this, if God's for you like this, Paul is telling us here, if you're in that ark, you can't even be against yourself. Go out there and butt your head against the wall. You can't even be against yourself if God's for you. Hallelujah.

So, but he isn't through. Oh, my, he isn't through. Listen to this. "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all." Oh my, that pronoun, collective pronoun, plural. Oh, who's in that? Are you in it? "Delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Let's continue, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" What about it, brethren? Who's going to charge God's name when he quickly says, gives a reason why you can't charge. Why not? Because it says God justifies. Now, the great God of heaven, the God of all grace, the Sovereign of the universe, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, takes a poor, hell-deserving wretch and justifies him, who's going to charge him?

Paul says God justified him, now charge him. Are you afraid to say that? Don't skip that scripture. It is God the justifier. Well, you want to say, "Preacher, I wish you were dead." I know, but listen, God says I am his elect, who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect, God's chosen? You're going to say, "Well, look, I wish somebody did ride you out of town tarred and feathered on a pole, stripped down to the skin, and cut your hair off by the roots." Listen, friend, I'm God's elect. I'm God's elect. "Why, Paul, you ought to be killed. I'd like to stone you to death." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect," said Paul. It's God that justifies.

Now brethren, if you want a defense, here it is. You've got no other. Assurance and comfort and peace and joy, my God, men will disturb a little child of God to death, they'll pull every stop, they'll cut every rope and every string and overturn every stone to keep you disturbed. You know that? I've been through it. I'm still going through that. I see what the devil is doing and I don't think he left one stone unturned. He just loves to disturb a little child of God. He's so mad with God that he can't love one of his little children to save his life and so he'd just love to disturb, take his assurance away, take his peace away. And so here he goes turning here and overturning there and overturning that. How are you going to get your comfort? Say, "My, the devil is doing so much and he's using these men and they are doing this, that, and the other, and they're saying this, that, and the other, and I just can't rest, I can't have enough peace. I'm just throwing up all the time. I can't serve God." What are you going to do, Paul? Well, here's what Paul did. He said, "If God be for us, who can be against us and who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He said God's the justifier. God justifies the sinner, brother. You can't charge him.

I'll tell you that. What are you going to do? You can't take God's justification away, can you? No? Now, you charge Paul with writing Antinomian doctrine, and all that foolishness you want to, and die and go to hell, and in your unbelief, here, this is for the comfort of the people of God. You get your eyes off what the devil and his men are doing

and what they're saying and all that, what's God doing? He says, "I'm working all things together for your good." Your good, not your hurt. I know, but these things are hurting you. Why are they hurting you? They can't hurt you if you're an elect of God. You justify and stop this complaining. The devil starts that, you just say, "Look here, devil, I'm God's elect. I know I'm nothing in myself. I have nothing. I can do nothing apart from Christ, but I'm God's elect. I ought to go to hell for my Christ, but I'm God's elect! Filthy, vile wretch I am by nature but God chose me. I'm going to glorify him."

All right, let's go on. Verse 33, he isn't done, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Now, beloved, you know where most men are getting their peace? Not from God's justification but from whose justification? Right. They're justifying themselves, aren't they not? I, I, I, I this, and they're finding justification of themselves. Or they're finding some preacher or some people who will justify them. Boy, that's dangerous, isn't it, because the devil will justify you. You do that. Somebody says about these five fellows in jail, in prison, can you find any criminals in prison now? All the criminals are on the outside, those fellows in jail, they're innocent, they've been framed. You just can't find anybody there that's yielded. Beloved, those fellows justifying themselves in prison on their crimes and, well, people outside doing the same thing, excusing themselves and pampering themselves and trying to find some preacher just soft-soap them and never rub the fur and not lacerate them and dynamite them as brother Lynn Barry put in that last idea of this fellow of mine. He was cut to death by the preacher, and he said, "Either that preacher's a fool or I'm a fool." And he said, "God just accommodated me by showing me that it wasn't the preacher that was a fool." He said, "I appreciate that now. He cut me to death, and I thought I'd never get back together, and the preacher didn't care, it looked like."

All right, let's not look for justification from men or the ears of most church members the day you just lifted some Bible to say, "You're all right, you're doing the right thing, you keep on where you're going, you're good," and some preacher that'll tell you that and take a collection and go on. Oh no. Oh beloved, how is it that God can take up a guilty, wretched, filthy, vile, kill-deserving sinner and justify him? Now, that's God's problem, but he solved it, and he did it, he did it through the atoning work of his Son, through his electing grace and saving grace.

So the Lord Jesus Christ is given for me, goes on, and he's still arguing here. Verse 34 says, "Who is he that condemneth?" Beloved elect of God, who's charging you? Who's condemning you? Of course, the devil will do it. The ungodly will do it. The hypocrite will do it. They condemned the Lord Jesus Christ but who's condemning you? And how can you be condemned? He said, "It's impossible because God first justified you and Christ died for you and atoned for your sins. He paid for them, who's going to charge you again with them? And Christ has risen from the dead and justified you. He's at the right hand of God as our King of kings and Lord of lords, and he's there making intercession for who? The whole world?" That isn't what what he says, is it? He's making intercession for us. Us.

You know, most people who get torn about election and predestination and foreknowledge of God is taught here in this chapter the way they talk, of course, you think they wouldn't believe these things but when they start praying, you think they did believe them. I have heard many people pray contrary to these things. I have heard some, I've heard some men, I've heard some preacher's pray something like this, "Now, Lord, you know you love everybody, and you're trying to save everybody, and you want to save everybody." And they go on like that. I've heard them go on. One preacher had a funeral, went on like that. He felt like the corpse, the fellow that died in an accident went to hell because they found some liquor in the car and he lived an ungodly life, probably did go to hell, but who can say absolutely that the man went to hell? He doesn't know but he felt that way, and so he was just telling God in his pitiful prayer, "Lord, you said you love everybody, you want to save everybody, you did your best to save this man, all you did. It wasn't your fault," he said, "God," and I said, now he's going to start praying. He was just preaching there for a while about the love of God and God trying to do this and trying to do that and couldn't do it, and then he really got to praying. He said, "But he wouldn't come." Oh, I said, now he's praying. But he wouldn't come! That's what the Bible says, isn't it? Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "You will not come!" Now, he might have thought he was still praying free will, and he was in a sense, but he was actually in accord with the Bible, free will will take you away from God all the time and not toward him. So if God the Father has justified me, ain't anybody going to condemn me. I challenge the angels in heaven to condemn me, brother. I'm elect of God. I've been justified and paid for by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and clothed in righteousness. That's all the dress I need to stand justified in his holy sight, that glorious clothing that he's given the people of God.

All right. Now, who's going to condemn us? Can you get in that "us"? You're going to take yourself out of that "us"? You can't put yourself in it and you can't really take yourself out of it. God has to put you in that, will he not? But how can you be sure that you're in it? How can you be sure? Well, look at Romans 8:28. How can we be sure of that? "And we know," that's assurance, "that all things work together for good." To whom? "To them that love God." Isn't that what it says? Do you love God? How about it? Do you really love him? I mean, the God that Paul's talking about, not some God that you concocted in your own mind and imagined some idol. You bow to that and call him, Lord, and shift him around one way or the other, whichever way you want, but do you love this God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of election, the God of predestination, the God of all grace, the Sovereign of the universe who does according to his will and he doesn't ask anybody any advice?

Well, who are these who love God? He says, "who are the called according to his purpose." Now, there's the election. Those who are really called, I mean, effectually, he's not talking about the general call that goes out to everybody but those who are really called and brought to him by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit of God, according to God's preface, loved him, and nobody else does. Nobody does, really. You and I didn't until we were called. We hated God. And so we mustn't get mad with God sending a sinner to hell who hates him. If he's our friend, neighbor, loved one, a relative, or what, we mustn't get angry with God Almighty who sends a person to hell who hates him and

every sinner in God's world hates him until he's called, effectually by the grace of God and the love of God put in his heart. None of them will admit it, or at least most of them will not admit it, but that's their case. Is it not so?

You see, you can't break that chain that starts with the foreknowledge, verse 29, of God, comes on through predestination or the fore-love, as I said, then predestination and the calling and the justification and the glorification. It can't break. There's no weak link in that chain that man has anything whatever to do with. I thank God that's so. So if you stand here where Paul stood, right there in eternity, what God did for him at the beginning end of that chain, that God loved him from eternity, then you're going to stand there in glorification at the other end of that chain in time, in time to come and I'm sure glad that I'm not saved by my free will. No, sir. When you understand the doctrine of election, beloved, you see what God has saved you from and what God has saved you to. He saved you to conform to the image of his Son, and he's going to make you like him. He's going to make you into the image of Jesus Christ. That image that no sinner in the world wants to be like, and take my own case, and I think it's exactly yours. I sure didn't want to go to hell. I was willing for God to save me from hell, but I wasn't willing for God to save me to be like his Son, to make me into the holy image of Christ. Tell you the truth, I'd rather go to hell in my state of nature than to be saved into that image. Oh, when the work was done and grace came and God put it in my heart and stamped his image there, I said, "Lord, I thank you, Lord. I'm so glad to be in the way now and whatever you want to do, what I want, this is what I'm going to be happy with. And folks can tear themselves to pieces and get angry and do everything in God's world they want to do but I'm going to be happy, God willing, with what God did for me, this poor son who couldn't do for himself."

What's the conclusion? Then it says if God had not foreknown us in a way of love, we'd never been saved. Dear friends, we'd never come to him. We'd never been called in power and we'd never answer that call. We'd never taste of his justifying grace and his glorifying grace if election is not so. Aren't you glad then that the election is so? Let me give you this before we go. We have just a few minutes, on how God saves a sinner. This poor woman was born poor, and she married young. She had thirteen children. But, of course, before she was married and just as she got strong enough to work as a child, they put her in the silk factory to learn that trade, and then she married very young in life and had these 13 children and a drunk husband. And she told that story and she said that she and her husband, her husband being a sop-drunkard and she being the type of person who'd like to keep everything tidy and nice in the house, and provide for the children, 13 of them, and working day and night herself to do this and keep things together, said, we live like cats and dogs in that house. And she said, six months after her youngest son was born, she felt a prick in her conscience. Her conscience tricked her over her bad language and her bad ways and she tried to throw that off. And she couldn't throw it off. So she tried to mend her ways, and she couldn't do that. And she was getting worse instead of getting better. And she went on like that for a good long time until she just felt, "Now, if I keep on the way I'm going, I'm surely going to, I'm going to stand in God's presence condemned. I'm going to perish in hell and God isn't going to be the blame for it."

And so going in that state for quite a while, one Sunday morning she told her husband after cooking the dinner for him and all that and getting everything ready, she said, "I'm going to church." The church was three miles away. She had to walk. And he warned her, he said, "If you go to church, I'm going to do certain things to you, which frightened me," but she said, "I had to go." She walked that three miles to church and had no neighbors, lived in an isolated place. But she entered the church door just as the preacher was giving out his text and the preacher gave this text there in Matthew's gospel, chapter 11, where the Lord Jesus Christ had just preached election and sovereignty, and then said this, and these are the words the preacher quoted, and she heard it, she entered in the door and sat down, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." And she said she heard those words, and she sat down, she was weary, she was tired, and she felt rested, and she felt comfortable all during that service, and when the service was over, she went out the door, and as she went out the door, that rest left her, and that comfort left her, and she went home thinking about these words. And as she got off from work on Monday, she was sitting in her house, she saw that preacher coming up to visit. He came in and greeted her. He was a little surprised that she lived in such an isolated place. But she told him the story and how poor she was and so forth and he questioned about coming to church and what effect did it have on her and she said, "Well, it had a good effect." Well, tell me about it. She said, "Well, when I sat down, I heard you say words like this, 'Come unto me loaded, and I'll help you.'" And he said, "Well, did you get help?" She said, "Yes." He said, "Did you get peace?" "No," she said, "I didn't get peace, but I got rest." Well, where did that rest come from? "Oh," she said, "I suppose it came from God. Yes," he agreed, that rest came from God, and then he went on to show her that God had a people, sheep, election of grace and he brought them to himself eventually through all kinds of trouble and all kinds of difficulties and made them to see their ruin, their sin, their filthiness and vileness and undoneness, and she confessed that there was no wretch on earth or in hell that was more sinful than she.

She told the preacher about it and the preacher had prayer with her, and as he was leaving, he said, "Do you have a Bible?" And she said, "No, we have no Bible. But if we did, nobody in the house can read it." "Well," he said, "would you like to read?" "Yes." "Will you try?" "I will." Well, he said, "I'm going to send my daughter here to teach you to read. She'll bring an easy book." The next day, the daughter came and began to teach this woman to read and she said, "I was so dumb," she said, "I hated myself. I just couldn't learn. It was so hard. But," she said, "that dear little daughter of that preacher took me, and in six weeks she taught me to read, and I could read the word of God, and I can read it today just as good as in six weeks that I can read it today." So she said, "I began to read God's word and to search it and to go to church. And the more I read it, the more miserable I became and the more wretched I became, the more sinful," she said, "I became."

And so one day she got so miserable that she said to herself, "I'm in hell already. Isn't anybody in hell any more miserable than I am? What difference would it make, why should I live?" And so she decided to take her own life and she decided this, "I'm going out to the well and I'm going to fetch a bucket of water and then I'm going up in the attic and I'm going to hang myself." And fully intending to do that, she took the bucket, went

to the well and let it down and the bucket when it was filled with water, she started drawing it up. When she started pulling that rope up, she said God guarded his grace in her heart and opened her eyes and made her to seek his love for her, and gave her grace to receive him as her Lord and acknowledge him as her Savior. She said she pulled that bucket of water up and set it down and sat down by the curb in the well on the side of it and wept with joy and praised God and thanked him for his great salvation. And God saved her between the bucket going down in the well and coming up. God saved her and put his grace in her heart.

Well, she began to read the Bible, of course, with more delight, and go to the service of God, the church, and to worship him. But she said just soon after that happened, a terrible thing happened in her family. Five of her children took fever and died and that disturbed her a great deal, but still she had this peace in her heart. And her husband became worse in the family. He tried to aggravate her, and he aggravated the children, and to destroy her peace. And in spite of all of that, Christ gave her peace in her heart and helped her to serve him and to praise him. And she said one Saturday night, I believe it was, it was late, she'd gone to bed, lying in bed and the lights were out. She heard an awful crash downstairs and she said, well, my husband's liquored up and so something got in his way, just pushed it out of its way. She went on back to sleep. Awaking the next morning, she went downstairs. She saw what happened. She said, every piece of property that I had, he had just swept it off the shelves into the floor and it was broken to bits just lying down on the floor. Well, she said, my spirit started to rise. Oh, she said, I really wanted to rage but she said, Christ had taught me to make peace. She said, I did it I was able to hold my temper. I said Christ had given me peace through his word so much that I fetched the Bible and I just sat down in the chair with all that mess on the floor, broken crockery and dishes and so forth, every one of them, and I just started reading the word of God until I forgot anything around me. And after a while he came downstairs, stopped on the steps, looked at her, looked at all her broken pieces on the floor and he said, "What? No fire, no food." She said, I didn't answer. I made no reply whatever. She said he walked out the door, closed it, and shortly thereafter he came back and he brought food, cooked food for the whole family. And she said it was wonderful after that, though, she said, my husband wasn't saved and through drinking so much, he became sick. We had less money, but she said we had more peace and more happiness in the home. Wonderful. But she went on to the end of her story and told how God had blessed her and that he'd given her 13 children, all of them had died except two, and one of them was steadfast in affectionate, the other was grumpy and complaining and ill and so forth. Well, she said, I had one of those 13 children out of all 13 that gave any proof of the grace of salvation.