

Pastor's Pen

"Anchored in Sovereign Love"

"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." -2 Thes. 2:13

I was talking with a member who said he often gets questions about the Doctrine of Calvinism when he tells someone he attends Grace Harvest. The sovereignty of God as it relates to salvation is one of the most hated doctrines. Charles Spurgeon said, "I know nothing which is more hated by worldlings than the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. The fact that 'He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy' is one of the things which the worldly mind cannot endure."

Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica is just one of many where Paul discusses the Doctrine of Election (Calvinism). This single verse provides a brief summary of the Doctrines of Grace. Paul reveals God's saving work so believers under pressure can find stability, humility, and confidence.

1. Salvation Begins With God's Sovereign Grace (Unconditional Election).

"God has chose you...to be saved." This forms the foundation of salvation. Election is not based on foreseen faith or future obedience. God did not look ahead in time to see who would choose Him; He set His saving love on His people before the world was made. Grace is not a response—it is the cause. Our salvation begins with God's free, sovereign choice, not our initiative. This brings a deep sense of humility, "Why would God choose me," and strong assurance, "God will finish what He started."

2. We Are Saved Because We Are "Beloved by the Lord" (Irresistible Love).

Paul grounds election in love: **"brothers beloved by the Lord."** This is not general love; it is covenant love—specific, intentional, and redeeming love. God's saving love is effectual: those upon whom He sets His love are truly drawn, regenerated, and saved. This means that your salvation is not fragile. His love is not fickle. He holds you fast.

3. The Spirit Applies What The Father Decreed (irresistible Grace & Regeneration).

"Through sanctification by the Spirit..." The Spirit's sanctifying work begins with regeneration and continues with ongoing transformation. In Reformed thought, sanctification here includes the Spirit's effective work in making the dead sinner alive and giving a new heart that desires God. This is irresistible grace—not that God forces us, but that He changes us so we willingly come. The Spirit's work makes faith possible; without His regenerating power, no one would or could believe.

4. Faith Is the Result, Not The Root (Effectual Calling).

"...and belief in the truth." Here is the beautiful harmony of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Election leads to calling. Calling leads to regeneration. Regeneration leads to faith. Faith leads to salvation. This is not mechanical, but relational—God pursuing, awakening, and drawing His people into the truth. Faith is real, chosen, personal—but it is also a gift (Eph. 2:8–9; Phil. 1:29). You believed because the Spirit made you alive.

5. The Proper Response: Thanksgiving And Worship (Perseverance of the Saints).

Paul doesn't debate election—he praises God for it. **"We should always to give thanks..."** Why? Because salvation is secure. If God chose you, called you, regenerated you, and granted you faith, He will also keep you (John 10:28–30). The Doctrines of Grace lead not to arrogance but to adoration. You persevere because God preserves you.

Your shepherd,
Pastor Mark

Quote of the Week

"Faith is man's response to God's elective purpose. God's choice of men is election; men's choice of God is faith. In election God gives His promises, and by faith men receive them."

-John MacArthur

Grace Gems

How ravishing is the thought!
- Charles Spurgeon

"Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love! Therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you." -Jeremiah 31:3

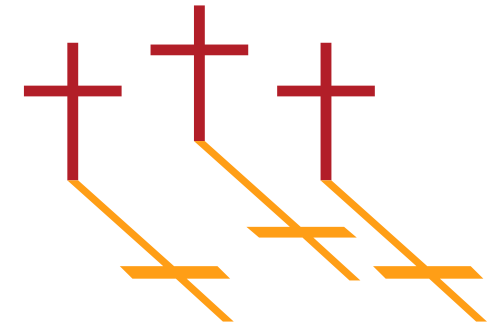
How ravishing is the thought of eternal love! Try to drink it in. If you are a believer in Christ, you were loved before time began its cycles. In that old eternity, before the earth was born, you were beloved of the Lord.

You were dear to Jehovah's heart when this great world, the sun, the moon, the stars--slept in the mind of God like unborn forests in an acorn-cup.

He loved you with an everlasting and infinite love. God chose you, not because of any goodness in you--but of his own sovereign will and good pleasure. Rejoice in this and let your heart be glad.

Never forget that sovereign and eternal election is the source of your every spiritual blessing!

"We love Him, because He first loved us!" -1 John 4:19



Weekly Gatherings



Sunday Bible Classes

Elders- Old Testament (Sanctuary A)
Bereans- New Testament (Sanctuary B)
Ladies- (Downstairs B, Gray Room)
Young Adults- (Downstairs B, Red Rm.)
Youth and Surge (5th-6th)- (Upstairs C)



Weekday Meetings

AWANA—Wednesday's 6:30-8:00 pm
Trail Life—Monday's at 6:30 pm



Family Groups

All Family Groups began **Sept 25th**
Host Families: Tom & Penni Cox, Jesse &
Deborah Royall, Larry & Gina Covington,
Jeff & Bridget Brown, Alan & Leigh Anne
Chambers and Mark & Trisha Keffer



Build the Body Teams

If you would like to serve on a BtB Team
and need to sign up, please contact the
team leader at the appropriate email



Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM
Youth Study & Surge!



Service Times

Sunday School 9:00AM
Children's Church 10:30AM
Sunday Services 10:30AM

Giving from service on 11/30/2025

General Offering	\$9,347.41
Building Fund	\$1,620.00
Uganda	\$365.00
Benevolence	\$375.00

Total.....\$11707.41
Attendance 223

Build the Body Ministries

Women's Ministry-women@ghbcva.org
AWANA-awana@ghbcva.org
Outreach Ministry-outreach@ghbcva.org
Worship Ministry-worship@ghbcva.org
Men's Ministry-men@ghbcva.org
Children's Ministry-children@ghbcva.org
Youth Ministry-youth@ghbcva.org
Prayer Team-prayer@ghbcva.org
Maintenance-maintenance@ghbcva.org
Fellowship-fellowship@ghbcva.org
Communications-communications@ghbcva.org
Front Line-frontline@ghbcva.org
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GRACE HARVEST BIBLE CHURCH

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Grace Harvest Bible Church

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