

# Pastor's Pen

## The Divine Summons!

How do we respond to the Gospel? Why are some willing and others are not? The following is an excerpt from a Dr. John MacArthur sermon:

So the question is, How does the sinner become willing? No sinner has what it takes to be willing. When I teach on the doctrine of human depravity, the nature of fallen man, I talk about man's problem in two ways. He is unable to be saved on his own and unwilling to be saved. Okay? Unable/unwilling—that's the essence of depravity. Not only can't he, he doesn't want to. That's Romans 3. "No man seeks after God, there's none righteous, no, not one." Ephesians 2, "Dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience." Romans 5:6, "Helpless" is the word used. Helpless, hopeless, can't understand the things of God; they're foolishness to him as we saw in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2. Second Corinthians 4, "Blinded by Satan, the god of this world who has blinded their minds."

"No sinner left to himself is either willing or able to come to God." Corruption is too profound, too far reaching, too comprehensive. God must come then in His sovereign power and summon us to believe. He must on the day of His power make us willing. It's not a kicking and screaming work which we resist; it's a gracious, powerful, supernatural, heavenly regeneration of our whole inner being that makes us willing in the day of that power.

Well, what about the freedom of the will? What about that? Aren't we free? Sure. You have a free will. Everybody in the world has a free will. You know, you make choices all the time. You made a choice to be here. You make choices all through the day. I don't think you live under some kind of horrible sense of overpowering compulsion, unless you're addicted to something. But just in general in life, you have freedom.

But here's the problem. If you're not born again, if you are not regenerated, here's the extent of your freedom. You can pick whatever behavior, attitude you want that dishonors God. Take your pick. But you can't please Him. You can't. You can pick your sin. And people do it all the time. You can pick your sin, you're free. People talk about, "I want my freedom," you've got it; you can choose your sin. Well, you might be restrained a little bit because you don't want to go to prison for the rest of your life. Or you might be restrained a little bit because you don't want to crash your car, so you limit how much you drink. You might be restrained a little bit 'cause you don't want to lose your wife and your children, so you hide your immorality. But you can choose your sin. You just can't choose anything else. You can't choose not to sin. You can't choose what pleases God.

Jonathan Edwards dug a little deeper on that and Jonathan Edwards, certainly in my mind, the greatest theologian America's ever known and maybe the most brilliant thinker. He wrote this, "What we choose is not really determined by the will. What we choose is not really determined by the will. It is determined by the mind. What the mind thinks is what makes the choice and the mind is not neutral. The mind is not neutral. The mind," and I'm paraphrasing Edwards at this point, "the mind is corrupt, the mind, to borrow Jeremiah's word, the mind of man is deceitful above all things and exceedingly wicked." So the mind isn't neutral. It thinks some things are best and it's free to choose. "When confronted with God," Edwards goes on, "the mind of the sinner never thinks that following or obeying God is a good choice." Never thinks that. His will is free to choose God.

Nothing stops him from choosing God but his mind will not allow him to submit to God because that's not desirable to him. "Therefore," says Edwards, "unless God changes the way we think, our minds will always tell us to turn from God, which is precisely what we do."

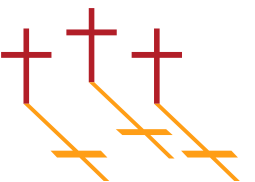
The sinner is in a position where he can't do anything else. So if he is to will to repent and will to believe, God has to change his mind. Change how he thinks. Change what he desires, what he loves, what he hates, what he longs for. This is often called irresistible grace, and that's okay. It works with a little tulip acrostic, irresistible grace. But I don't know that I like that because irresistible is negative, and I don't think of this as a negative experience, do you? I mean, if you call this His irresistible grace—I was saved by God's irresistible—it sort of sets up the idea that I got something I necessarily didn't want. Also, to say irresistible grace is redundant, because frankly, sovereign grace is irresistible since it's sovereign. And so to say irresistible grace sort of over-qualifies grace and sort of under-defines grace. Grace is more than something to resist. And it is by nature a gift from God that is irresistible.

We could do better than that. We could call it saving grace, life-giving grace; a sinner can't change his will because his mind is corrupt. He can't move his will toward God, not by logic, not by a persuasion, not by clever preaching, and not by emotional music. God has to go to the grave and say, "Come out," and give him a sovereign, supernatural call that summons the sinner up from the dead, at which point all his faculties are given new life, a new mind, a new will as mighty God works a work of regeneration.

You can listen to or read the entire sermon at <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/43-14/the-divine-summons>

## Quote of the Week

"Live in Christ, die in Christ,  
and the flesh need not fear death."  
-John Knox



# Weekly Gatherings

## Bible Classes

Old & New Testament Classes  
Ladies Class  
Young Adults    Young Parents  
Youth            Surge  
Sunday Morning @ 9:30AM



## Weekday Meetings

Mondays | 7PM  
Men's Bible Study  
1st and 3rd Saturday  
Women of Grace | 9AM



## Family Groups

Thursdays @ 7PM  
every other week @ Chambers, Cox's,  
Patrick's, Brown's and Royall's



## Build the Body Teams

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



## Youth Study

Wednesdays @6:30PM  
Youth Study and AWANA!



## Service Times

Sunday Services 8AM & 11:00AM  
Sunday School 9:30AM  
Children's Church @11:00AM



Giving from service on 05/21/2023

General Offering .....	8,644.11
Building Fund .....	2,013.00
Uganda .....	165.00
Total.....	\$10,822.11
Attendance .....	225
Online.....	26

**Uganda Mission Trip Amount Needed.\$12,750.00**  
**Uganda Mission Trip Collected...\$11,357.00**

*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  
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# Grace Harvest Baptist Church

May 28, 2023

*Welcome*

