

Introduction to the Doctrines of Grace

I. Setting the scene for our study on the doctrines of grace

A. Glimpses of the Doctrines of Grace: Ephesians 1:3-14

- a. **What** has God done?
- b. **How** did he accomplish that?
- c. **Why** did he do it that way?

B. Reasons to Study the Doctrines of Grace: Ephesians 1:18-20

- a. We want to see how sure our hope is.
- b. We want to know God's amazing delight in saving a particular people—even us.
- c. We want to know the immeasurable greatness of his power in saving us.

II. What are the doctrines of grace?

A. Big Picture: Summarizing the Doctrines of Grace

1. Deals with the doctrines of
 - a. Theology proper – What is God like?
 - b. Anthropology – What is man's nature like?
 - c. Soteriology – How can sinful man be reconciled to holy God?
2. Definition: The doctrines of grace are the biblical truths that
 - i. God sovereignly chose to save certain spiritually dead people,
 - ii. That Jesus came to purchase all that was needed for this salvation,
 - iii. That the Spirit applies the "spiritual blessings" of Christ's work (including giving faith) by regenerating and preserving those the Father chose and the Son died for.
 - iv. All of this is despite our own persistent rebellion.

B. Zoom in: Describing the 5 facets of the doctrines of grace

1. These five issues have been condensed into the popular acronym **TULIP**, which stands for:
 - a. **Total Depravity** (Rom. 3, Eph. 2)
 - i. Not that we are as bad as we could be.
 - ii. But that we are born as slaves to sin, dead to God, and overcome with our rebellion against God.
 - iii. Thus, we are totally unable to save ourselves or even repent.
 - b. **Unconditional Election** (Eph. 1, Rom. 8)
 - i. God chose, before the beginning of the world, that he would save particular people from their rebellion.
 - ii. He set his saving love on them before creation.
 - iii. Thus, our salvation is not in any way decisively accomplished by our work (or generating faith).
 - c. **Limited Atonement** (John 10:15-16)
 - i. **Atonement** refers to the work of paying for sin that Jesus did.
 - ii. **Limited** refers to whether there were people for whom that atonement would definitely be credited to. The Son comes to redeem each member of his bride.
 - iii. Thus, the saving **design** and **effects** of Christ's death will definitely be applied to the elect.
 - d. **Irresistible Grace** (1 Cor. 1:23-24, 2 Cor. 4:4-6, 2 Tim 2:24-25)
 - i. The resistance that we show towards God is miraculously overcome at the proper time by his grace.

- ii. We go from dead to alive spiritually; from blind to seeing.
 - iii. This is attributed to God drawing us to believe in a way which is certain (for it was purchased by the Son and planned before creation) and which results in us receiving the gift of faith.
- e. **Perseverance of the Saints** (John 10:27-30)
- i. Because we have new life and belong to Christ, we will be preserved by grace (i.e., the gift of faith and relationship with God will be sustained into the eternal state).
 - ii. God doesn't change his mind about his promise, the Son doesn't lose any sheep, the Spirit's seal on our inheritance is not able to be broken.
 - iii. We persevere in trusting and following because His Spirit is in us (His grace continues).

C. Historical Review

1. Calvin did not come up with "the five points of Calvinism."
2. The followers of Arminius wrote a five point "remonstrance" and the majority of the church leaders in Holland responded with a document called the Canons of Dort.

III. Presuppositions

- A. Our allegiance to the Bible is far superior to any other allegiance (ex. Calvinism or Arminianism or a denomination).**
- B. The Bible is our authority and must guide all our logical inferences (not the other way around).**
- C. We must think hard about what we see in Scripture to understand it, and the Lord is the one who must give us understanding.**
- D. Right theology honors God and is good for us. Wrong theology dishonors God and hurts people.**
- E. God is God, and we cannot redesign him to fit our views or desires.**

IV. Why study the doctrines of grace?

- A. To know what the Bible says and why it says it.**
 1. What do words like "predestination" and "election" mean?
 2. Why are they in the Bible? Why does God want us to know these things about how his grace towards us operates?
- B. To think rightly about other related issues.**
 1. How we think about human nature
 2. How we think about and do evangelism
 3. How we navigate difficulties in life
- C. To have a right and full view of God's greatness that leads us to praise him in the fullness of joy.**
 1. To see his love as he expresses it
 2. To see his holiness rightly
 3. To see his sovereignty as he exercises his power
 4. Our chief end in all of life (including this study) is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.