

Our Doctrine (TULIP)

Part 4:
Irresistible Grace



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The Doctrines of Grace



- Total Depravity (*Human nature is totally corrupted by sin*)
- Unconditional Election (*The Father sovereignly elects some for salvation*)
- Limited Atonement (*The Son atones for the sins of His people*)
- Irresistible Grace (*The Holy Spirit gives life and faith to His people*)
- Perseverance of the Saints (*God eternally secures His people*)

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The Lord Gives Life



Ezekiel 37:4-6

Then He said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

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Outline



- A Quick Review
- What is God's Calling?
- Doctrine of Irresistible Grace
- Scriptural Basis

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A Quick Review



Romans 8:29-30 For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.

Golden Chain of Salvation

Foreknew → Predestined → Called → Justified → Glorified

Question: How does God call the elect and bring them to faith in Christ?

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What Does it Mean to be Called?



- Scripture presents two types of calls
- An external (or *general*) call given to everyone
 - The Gospel is freely and truly offered to all people
 - The message is received by some and rejected by others
 - Even creation testifies to God's divine, invisible attributes (**Romans 1:20**)
- An internal (or *effectual*) call given only to the elect
 - The elect also hear the Gospel, and God grants them life, faith and repentance
 - It starts with the Holy Spirit's gracious work of regeneration

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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General Calling



- **Isaiah 55:1** Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
- **Revelation 22:17** The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.
- **Matthew 11:28-30** Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.
- **Matthew 22:14** For many are called, but few are chosen. [Wedding feast parable.]

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Effectual Calling



- **John 6:44** No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.
- **Acts 2:39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.
- **1 Corinthians 1:9** God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- **2 Peter 1:3** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence...

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What is Saving Grace?



Arminian View (*Prevenient or Enabling Grace*)

- Unregenerate man is capable of believing the Gospel
- He is spiritually sick, but God gives grace to enable him to choose Christ
- However, this grace does not ensure that he will make that choice
- Those who choose Christ are regenerated by the Holy Spirit
- In this view:

Man's faith precedes the new birth

His salvation depends ultimately on his own will and not on God's

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What is Saving Grace?



Arminian View (*Prevenient or Enabling Grace*)

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,...
 ...¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.

- “all people” = all kinds of people (from every tribe, nation and language)
- The grace of God is training us to live godly lives as we await His return

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What is Saving Grace?



Reformed View (*Irresistible or Effectual Grace*)

- Unregenerate man is incapable of believing the Gospel
- Because he is spiritually dead, he cannot/will not choose Christ
- He must first be regenerated by the Holy Spirit
- Those who are regenerated certainly and willingly choose Christ
- In this view:

Man's faith is a result of the new birth

His salvation depends entirely on God's work and not his own

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Doctrine of Irresistible Grace



Irresistible (Effectual) Grace

The doctrine of *irresistible (or effectual) grace* asserts that, when God moves in the lives of His elect to give them spiritual life, nothing in heaven or on earth can prevent Him from doing so. That is, the Holy Spirit never fails to bring about the new birth (regeneration) of the elect so that they freely and willingly believe the Gospel and are saved.

God never fails to regenerate anyone He has purposed to save!

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“Of Effectual Calling”



Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 10, para. 1

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ: enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

See also *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 31 and 32)

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“Of Effectual Calling”



Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 10, para. 2

This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

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Scriptural Basis of Effectual Grace



- The effectual calling by the Word and Spirit:
 - Grants life to those who are spiritually dead
 - Gives the elect a new heart (nature and disposition)
 - Grants His people the gifts of faith and repentance

Titus 3:4-7 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

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The Spirit Gives Life



John 3:1-8 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

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The Spirit Gives Life



- (vs. 3) “...unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”
 - Unregenerate man is spiritually blind to the things of God
 - We cannot even *perceive* the kingdom of God (let alone enter it)

- (vs. 5) “...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”
 - Unregenerate man is spiritually powerless to save himself
 - We are no more responsible for our spiritual birth than for our physical birth!

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The Spirit Gives Life



- (vs. 8) “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”
 - “The wind blows” describes the certainty and effect of the Spirit’s actions
 - “The wind blows where it wishes” describes the sovereignty of the Spirit (the regenerative work of the Spirit is not controlled by man)
 - “...you hear its sound, but you do not know...” the Spirit’s work is mysterious

The Holy Spirit is sovereign and effective in its work of regeneration

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The Spirit Gives Life



- **Ezekiel 36:26** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.
- **John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
- **Ephesians 2:1-2** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...
- **Ephesians 2:5** ...even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...

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Faith is a Gift of God



- **John 1:12-13** But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- **John 6:37** All that the Father gives Me will come to me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.
- **Acts 13:48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

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Faith is a Gift of God



- **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...
- **Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake...
- **2 Peter 1:1** Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained [or received] a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.
- **1 John 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him. ²¹

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Repentance is a Gift of God



- **Acts 5:31** God exalted Him at His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.
- **Acts 11:17-18** If then God gave the same gift to them as He gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."
- **Romans 2:4** Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

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Repentance is a Gift of God



- **2 Timothy 2:24-26** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.
- **2 Peter 3:8-9** But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing [*willing*] that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

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Summary



From Beginning to End, Salvation is of the Lord

Praise Him for His glorious saving grace!

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

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Helpful References



- *Holy Bible* (ESV)
- *Westminster Confession of Faith*
- *The Bondage of the Will* (Martin Luther)
- *The Potter's Freedom* (James White)
- *Original Sin* (sermon 38, John Wesley)

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