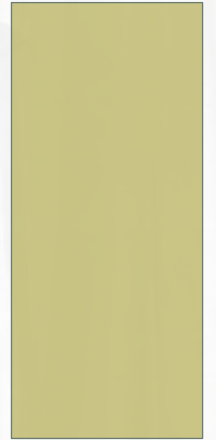


The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of four large stone statues of men in historical religious attire, likely the Reformers. They are standing in a row, with the second figure from the left holding a book. Below the statues, a stone ledge is visible with the IHS monogram and decorative flourishes.

# A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & DOCTRINE



# PREVIOUS LESSONS

The slides from previous lessons are available at:

[www.theheightschurchmn.org](http://www.theheightschurchmn.org) – click “Ministries” –  
click “Adult Sunday School” / under “Lesson Notes”

They are also available at this direct link:

[www.theheightschurchmn.org/adult-sunday-school](http://www.theheightschurchmn.org/adult-sunday-school)

Feel free to save or print the PDF files of the slides.

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# A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

OUTLINE & PLAN OF ATTACK

# HISTORY

1. Intro & Overview of Church History
2. Forerunners of the Reformation
3. The Protestant Reformation
4. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

# DOCTRINE

1. Reformation Doctrine: The Big Picture
2. Total Depravity & Irresistible Grace
3. Limited Atonement
4. Unconditional Election
5. Perseverance of the Saints
6. Answering Objections & Q+A
7. **Answering Objections (cont.) & Why the Reformation Matters Today**



# RECAP OF THE “FIVE POINTS” OF CALVINISM

BACKGROUND & DEFINITIONS

# SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

- God's will is supreme & no one's will can diminish His will.
- God's sovereignty is displayed in Providence & Predestination.

*God “works all things according to the counsel of his will.” (Eph. 1:11)*

*God “does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” (Dan. 4:35)*

# THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

- Today, the five counter-points in answer to the Arminians, are remembered as the “five points of Calvinism” [TULIP].

**T**otal Depravity – Fallen Man’s Inability to Come

**U**nconditional Election – God’s Sovereign Choice

**L**imited Atonement – Our Particular Redemption

**I**rresistible Grace – God’s Gracious, Enabling Call

**P**erseverance of the Saints – The Completion of God’s Work in Us

# RECAP: TOTAL DEPRAVITY

*Total Depravity (or Radical Corruption) means that every aspect of man is tainted by sin.... evil affects every part of our being – mind, will, heart, etc.*

We are:

Children of Disobedience	Ensnared by the Devil
Enemies of God	Of our father the Devil
Blind to the Gospel	Lost in our sins
Apart from God	Cannot seek God
Cannot please God	Cannot understand truth
Cannot do good	Dead in our Sins
Have a dead heart	<b>UNABLE TO BELIEVE</b>



# RECAP: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

*Irresistible Grace (or Effectual Grace) is God's grace overcoming man's resistance. It is God's inward call that imparts faith to the elect. Faith flows from a heart that has been regenerated.*

We are:

Drawn by the Father	Received gifts:
Given to the Son	Faith
Granted to come/believe	Repentance
Circumcised Hearts	Conversion
Believe because we are sheep	Ordained/Appointed to eternal life

# RECAP: PARTICULAR REDEMPTION

*Particular Redemption (or Limited Atonement) refers to Jesus' death in the place of a particular group of sinners. Redemption blesses all mankind, and Jesus' blood is sufficient to cover everyone, but God intended Jesus to be Savior "especially of those who believe" (1 Tim. 4:10).*

Jesus :

Purchased the **Church** with His blood

Laid down his life for the **sheep**

Gave his life for his **bride**

Ransomed **a people** to God

Saved **his people** from their sins

# RECAP: UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

*Unconditional Election (or Sovereign Election) emphasizes the free choice of God which stands behind why some people believe and others do not (because people are not able to meet any condition on their own).*

God chose you... to be saved

Appointed to eternal life

Chosen... to be rich in faith

Chosen by grace

Chose us... that we should be holy and blameless

I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy

it depends not on human will... but on God, who has mercy

Predestined to be conformed to... his Son

# RECAP: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

*Perseverance of the Saints (or Eternal Security)* emphasizes that God completes His work in the lives of the elect so that none of them finally fall away from grace.

<b>Security</b>	<b>Perseverance</b>	<b>God in Us</b>
In God's Hand	If you hold fast	Working in us
Passed from death to life	If you endure	Will bring it to completion
Perfect for all time	If you abide	Will sustain you
Guarded thru faith	If you continue	Not I, but Christ

# THE WHOLE PICTURE

- *Man is so fallen, he cannot seek God & is an enemy of God, resisting God's outward call to believe.* = **Total Depravity**
- *For the elect, God graciously overcomes their resistance, enabling them to believe.* = **Irresistible Grace**
- *This gift of faith, is given to those purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ their Savior.* = **Particular Redemption**
- *Ultimately, God's choice of who would believe stems from his own sovereign will, and is not dependent on any special condition in those chosen.* = **Unconditional Election**
- *God preserves all the elect so that not one of them is finally lost, but He also so works in them that they persevere in their faith.* = **Perseverance of the Saints**



# ANSWERING OBJECTIONS

FITTING OUR THEOLOGY TO THE TEXT



# CONSIDERATIONS

- We must be careful to **subject our theology to the text**, not twist texts to fit our theology
- We must admit that there are **difficult texts** for all sides of this issue.
  - We shouldn't just ignore some texts and cling to others.
  - We have to aim for a position which does justice to all texts.
- We may not be able to explain everything to our satisfaction. Some things are shrouded in **mystery**.
- However, we can't shrink back from believing what the text does clearly say.

# WHAT ABOUT THESE TEXTS?

- **John 3:16** “that whoever believes in him”
- **John 5:24** “whoever hears my word and believes”
- **1 Tim. 2:4-6** “who **desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth... who gave himself as a **ransom for all**”
- **2 Pet. 3:9** “**not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance”
- **Ezek. 33:11** “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked”



# WHOSOEVER WILL

- **John 3:16** “that whoever believes in him”
- **John 5:24** “whoever hears my word and believes”
- Anyone who believes – will be saved.
- Whoever wants / desires to believe, can (Rev. 22:17)
- This fits with **John 6:37b** “whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” *God doesn't turn people away!*
- But, look at **John 6:37a** “All the Father gives me will come to me”
- Calvinism doesn't take away “whosoever will” – it explains why some believe and others don't.
- It explains what happens “behind the scenes” in the heart

# WANTS ALL TO BE SAVED

- **1 Tim. 2:4-6** “who **desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth... who gave himself as a **ransom for all**”
- **2 Pet. 3:9** “**not wishing that any should perish**, but that all should reach repentance”
- Context determines meaning of “all”
  - Luke 2:1-2 – all world went to be taxed
  - 1 Cor. 15:22 – in Adam all died... in Christ all will be made alive
- 1 Tim. 2 – compare vs. 1, “all kinds of people” are in view
- 2 Pet. 3 – see vs 1, 8 and beginning of v. 9 “is patient toward you” referring to the “you” in v. 1 and 8, and v. 11. Refers to the “elect” – doesn’t want any [of you] to perish.

# NO PLEASURE IN DAMNATION

- **2 Pet. 3:9** “not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance”
- **Ezek. 33:11** “No pleasure in the death of the wicked”
- Best explanation is that **God has 2 wills**.
  1. God wills that all be saved.
  2. God also ordains [= his will in another sense] that some suffer in Hell for all eternity, to satisfy his righteous wrath against sin.
- These two wills are termed:
  - God’s **prescriptive will** or **revealed will**. [this OUGHT to be / pleases God]
  - God’s **decretive will** or **secret will**. [God PLANNED this to happen]

# OTHER QUESTIONS

- What about Free Will?
- How can man be responsible for his sin/unbelief?
- Doesn't this make God the author of evil?
- Are you saying God doesn't love everyone?
- What about evangelism?
- Are we just puppets, is life meaningful?

# FREE WILL

- *Don't we have Free Will?*
- What do you mean by Free Will?
  - Not forced from the outside --- YES
  - Active agent, responsible for choices --- YES
  - Able to choose contrary to their nature (who they are) --- NO
- **Libertarian Free Will** (can choose contrary to nature)
- or **Limited Free Will** (limited by man's bondage to sin)
- Can't choose family, nationality, chronology, genetics, gender, etc. – free will is inherently limited
- Scripture teaches God causes the saved to will differently (if He can change their will, why not unsaved people's will too?) – Phil. 2:13, Heb. 13:21
- Everyone prays like a Calvinist “Lord save him/her...”

# MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

- *If man doesn't have libertarian free will, then how can he be blamed for his choices.*
- *If man doesn't have the ability to believe, how can he be responsible for not believing?*
- It is wrong to conclude a command implies ability to obey command.
  - We are required to love God with all our heart, but we cannot
- Scripture teaches we sin because we are sinners (original sin), yet we are judged because we sin (judgment of our works)
- We cannot reconcile man's responsibility and God's sovereignty, but we accept Scripture teaches both.

# PROBLEM OF EVIL / SIN

- *Why does God allow sin? Is He the author of sin?*
- *If God desires all to be saved, why does He damn many to Hell?*
- This is a big objection against Christianity.
  - If God is good & all-powerful, why does He allow evil/suffering?
- All forms of Christianity grapple with this.
  - Saying God permitted free-will doesn't let God off the hook, since God knew all this evil/sin would happen. If he knew, why did he let it happen?
- Ultimately, Calvinism must follow Scripture's teaching on this.
- God is holy and good, but God has permitted evil

# GOD ALLOWS EVIL

- God hardens the hearts of people/rulers
  - Deut. 2:30, Joshua 11:20, Ex. 4:21
- God causes nations/kings to persecute/war against other nations/people (causing harm and doing evil).
  - Job 1:21, Isaiah 10:5-6, Jeremiah 12:12, 51:20-23
- God sends evil or lying spirits causing someone to sin
  - Judges 9:22-23, 1 Sam. 16:14, 2 Chron. 18:21
- God works in people who are evil / fallen in sin
  - 1 Sam. 2:25 (because it was the Lord's will to put them to death)
  - 2 Sam. 12:11-12 (I will take your wives and give them to [Absalom]... you did it in secret, I will do this.. before all Israel)
  - Did God (2 Sam. 24:1) or Satan (1 Chron. 21:1) cause the sin?
  - Ps. 105:24-25, Prov. 16:4, 2 Thess. 2:11-12, Rev. 17:17



# WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO GOD?

- God wants all to be saved, but He must want something MORE than that, since all do not get saved.
- Two principle options:
  - **To preserve free will:** God desires intimate fellowship from free beings so much that he wouldn't impinge upon their free will to actually force them to become saved. He wants true love not a coerced love.
  - **To display God's glory:** God desires to display the full attributes of His glory – his anger toward sin, his perfect holiness, & his mercy toward the undeserving. He wants to magnify Himself in salvation so no one can boast.
- The first option depends on a libertarian understanding of human “free will.” This is never explicitly taught in Scripture.
- The second option is taught clearly in Rom. 9:22-24, 1 Cor. 1:29 & Prov. 16:4. [Also, God didn't create out of a sense of need.]

# WHY DID GOD PERMIT EVIL?

- Behind the problem of why God doesn't save all people, lies the question of why God permitted sin in the first place. **Jonathan Edwards** has a convincing answer:
- *"God's awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice, and holiness... would not shine forth as the [other parts of divine glory] do, and also the glory of his goodness, love, and holiness would be faint without them; nay, they could scarcely shine forth at all... There would be no manifestation of God's grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. No matter how much happiness he might bestow, his goodness would not be nearly as highly prized and admired.... and the sense of his goodness heightened. **So evil is necessary if the glory of God is to be perfectly and completely displayed.**"*
- Remember, it is not Calvinists who raise these questions. Calvinists try to answer them, others are often content to not even think about such questions.... ~ quoted from *Chosen for Life* by Sam Storms (Crossway, 2007), pg. 186-187

# DOESN'T GOD LOVE EVERYONE?

- Scripture shows us God is compassionate, loving and good to all.
  - He causes the rain to fall on the just and unjust
- God's love for the world stands behind the universal offer of the Gospel
  - John 3:16
- But sinners are in rebellion to God and there is a sense in which God hates not only the sin but the sinner.
  - Ps. 26:5 "I hate the assembly of evildoers"
  - Mal. 1:3 "Esau have I hated"
  - Ps. 139:21-22 "Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against Thee? I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies"

# WHAT ABOUT EVANGELISM?

- *Why evangelize if the elect will be saved anyway?*
- God ordained the preaching of the gospel to be the means that the elect are converted
  - Rom. 10:14-17
- We are called to go and preach to all
  - Matt. 28:18-20
- We do not know who are the elect, only God does
- So we preach to all and call all to believe
- The ones who come, were “appointed to eternal life”
  - Acts 13:48

# EVANGELISM



# ARE WE JUST PUPPETS?

- *Are we just puppets? Are our lives truly meaningful?*
- Scripture teaches that our choices matter and have eternal consequences.
- But in a sense we are actors in a big Play where God is the Divine Playwright.
- Like any good story (Cinderella, as an example), bad things happen, complicating the plot – but the hero wins, and tragedy is turned to rejoicing
- The best authors create characters with a life of their own. God is the Ultimate Author, and his characters have existence. But he is still the Author, crafting his perfect plan. God gets glory for all the good that is done. Sin is permitted but not directly caused by God.

# UNFAIR TO HAVE FAVORITES

- *But – it is not fair of God to pick favorites. He can't do for some what he doesn't do for all.*
- “Friend, I do thee no wrong....Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own” (Matt. 20:13, 15)
- “The question is not whether a father will treat his children alike (remember some people are the Devil's children), but whether a sovereign must treat all condemned rebels alike. It is obviously not true that a Governor who pardons one convict from the penitentiary is obligated to pardon all. Such logic is nonsense.”

~ William Sasser, *Objections to Election*

(<http://livingwatercc.org/images/VarArticles/Objections%20to%20Election%20-%20Sasser.PDF>)

# LEADS TO LICENTIOUS LIVING

- *Believing you are elect and secure, would lead to a life of lawlessness.*
- The doctrine of eternal security (which most Baptists hold), would be subject to the same objection.
- Paul doesn't argue like this, he sees election as a calling to live up to:
  - Col 3:12
  - 1Thess. 5:8-9
  - 2 Thess. 2:13-15



# FOREKNOWLEDGE IS THE ANSWER

- *You're missing it, election is based on God's foreknowledge of people's free choices. This gets rid of all the challenges and risk of Calvinism.*
- Actually, this doesn't really rescue you.
- "According to [this] position, God foreknows all events. God did not choose who should believe on Christ; but God has known from all eternity what each man's choice would be, for God is omniscient.... There can be no alternative. If God foreknew that Mr. A would believe, then there is no possibility whatsoever of Mr. A's not believing."

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Calvinism defends a **God-centered view** and majors on God's bigness.
- Other positions **defend man's role and freedom.**
- Conditional election ultimately rests on an idea of libertarian freedom which is not clearly taught in Scripture – only inferred.
- The impetus behind Calvinism is a desire to believe **what the text actually says** about this difficult matters (Rom. 9, Eph. 1, etc.).
- *My example is typical, I came to believe that Scripture clearly teaches this, so I changed my belief system to line up with this understanding of Scripture.*

A large, light-colored stone relief sculpture of four men in historical attire, likely the Reformers, standing in a row. The man in the center holds a book. The background is a textured, light-colored wall. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular box with a thin black border. Below the main title is a dark green horizontal bar with white text. To the right of the text box is a vertical olive green bar.

# WHY THE REFORMATION MATTERS TODAY

REMEMBRANCE, RENEWAL AND REVERENCE

# REMEMBRANCE

- We should remember what God has done in Church History and where He has brought us.
- Too many today are forgetting why the Protestant church separated itself from Rome.
- A de-emphasis on doctrine and history has led to:
  - Some of the same errors that were found in Rome, popping up in mainline denomination churches and some conservative culture-focused churches
  - More and more evangelicals are returning to Rome, enamored by historic teachings and profound rituals that cast church in a more serious and sober light than today's evangelicalism.
  - There is a movement to blur distinctions & to yoke up with Catholics to do the real ministry of standing for Christ in a fallen world. This leads to an acceptance & tolerance of soul-damning errors.
  - Justification by faith, and a penal-substitutionary atonement are now doctrines that are up for grabs in evangelicalism, rather than the bedrock of the Protestant faith.

# RENEWAL

- Restoring a **sense of rooted-ness to Church History**, a continuity with the Church of past ages, will safeguard us from error and keep us humble.
- Recovering **Reformation doctrine**, emphasizing the truths of the 5 solas, and appreciating the role of God in our salvation will keep us from moving off into a man-centered pragmatism that shifts with the sands of culture and obscures the Gospel – the only true hope for our world.
- A **clearer understanding of salvation, election and “the doctrines of Grace”** can lead to transformed lives, humility, worship and a careful persevering trust in the grace of God.

# REVERENCE

- How does understanding Calvinism (TULIP) help us?
  - **HUMILITY** – shouldn't promote pride, but a newfound awe of God's incredible grace and mercy in saving us.
    - **Deut. 10:14-15**
  - **ENCOURAGEMENT** – knowing that God chose us, and promises to complete His work he started in us, assures us of our standing with Him. Nothing separates us from His love.
  - **CONFIDENCE** – in evangelism, we are confident that God is at work, and He will save His people. We can serve faithfully trusting God to “give the increase”
  - **JOY & PRAISE** – since election glorifies God, it should make us happy too. Our assurance that God has loved us before the foundation of the world should spill forth in joy and praise. As we understand the truth of this teaching, our hearts will come to rejoice in it as we should.

~ adapted from *Living for God's Glory* by  
Joel R. Beeke (RHB, 2008), pg. 69-71

# TESTIMONIES

**Jonathan Edwards:** “There has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, in respect to the doctrine of God’s sovereignty... [it] has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God... [it is] a great part of his glory.”

**George Whitfield:** “The doctrines of our election, and free justification... fill my soul with a holy fire and afford me great confidence in God my Saviour.... I am persuaded, ‘til a man comes to believe and feel these important truths, he cannot come out of himself, but when convinced of these and assured of their application to his own heart, he then walks by faith indeed!”

## TESTIMONIES, cont.

**George Mueller:** “To my great astonishment I found that the passages which speak decidedly for election and persevering grace, were about four times as many as those which speak apparently against these truths.... As to the effect which my belief in these doctrines had on me, I am constrained to state for God’s glory... I have walked more closely with Him since that period.”

**Charles Spurgeon:** “I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what is nowadays called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else.”



# CONCLUDING POINTS

**John Piper:** “[Election] is not mainly a doctrine to be argued about, but a doctrine to be enjoyed. It’s not designed for disputes; it’s designed for missions. It’s not meant to divide people (though it will); it’s meant to make them compassionate, kind, humble, meek, and forgiving.”

Piper again: “I recall the time I first saw... the threefold statement of the goal of all God’s work, namely, **“to the praise of the glory of His grace”** (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). It has led me to see that we cannot enrich God and that therefore his glory shines most brightly not when we try to meet his needs but when we are satisfied in him as the essence of our deeds.... Worship becomes an end in itself.”

~ quote 1, from Piper’s sermon “Pastoral Thoughts on the Doctrine of Election”, quote 2, from Piper’s article “Ten Effects of Believing in the Five Points of Calvinism”, both at [desiringgod.org](http://desiringgod.org)