



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Life Groups Begin Today** – Our Life Groups’ Winter Trimester starts TODAY! If you have not joined a Life Group, there is still time! Visit the App or head to the tent on the courtyard with questions. Then, get ready to study God's Word together, grow in faith together, pray together and simply fellowship together. Life is not meant to be lived alone. For additional information contact Talanna Williams at: twilliams@southwinds.org.
- **Guest Services Rally** – If you are currently serving in GSM & anyone who would like to be a part of this great ministry, join us on Sat., Jan. 27th from 9-10:30 in The Shed. Breakfast provided. Childcare will also be available if you sign up in advance by emailing Pastor Chris at: cthielen@southwinds.org.
- **Women’s Brunch** – Saturday, February 3rd, Southwinds’ Women’s Ministry is pleased to have you join us for brunch as we welcome local author and speaker, Cheryl Jacobo. Cheryl will share her testimony and unpack with us, the Theme/Topic: “His Grace is Sufficient”. Registration for this event is required and childcare will be available. Click [here](#) to register. For questions contact Pastor Chris Thielen at: cthielen@southwinds.org.

MY STORY

Share a time when you encountered Jesus for the very first time.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at this week’s teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

Have a Volunteer Read: Romans 9:6-13

“Four Questions: Election & Predestination is what we’ll be talking about today. I want to begin by stating clearly that the Bible teaches election and predestination. No one who reads the Bible can deny this. The question is: what do these words and doctrines mean? How do we interpret them? How do we apply them in our lives as we follow Christ? The words themselves are pretty straightforward. Election refers to God’s gracious choice of those he saves. Predestination literally

means to decide beforehand, or predetermine. The Bible uses this word in several ways, but we'll be thinking about it primarily in terms of salvation. For today, we'll think about these 2 terms synonymously." – **Michael Nolen**

Question #1: Does God KEEP HIS PROMISES?

Have Another Volunteer Read: Romans 9:14-18

"Paul is telling us God's covenant with Israel was never about ethnic identity but always about faith in God's promises. The creation of God's people has never been purely by physical birth. It wasn't mechanical or natural. God's people have always been created through God's sovereign, unconditional choice, through God's promise. We saw that that back in Romans 2 when Paul said true circumcision wasn't merely physical, the cutting away of skin on the body. Instead, it was the cutting away of spiritual deadness from the heart. True circumcision was always heart circumcision and not everyone in Israel experienced that. Paul give us 2 OT examples to demonstrate this. Look at Romans 9:9." – **Michael Nolen**

Mercy, by definition, rules out obligation. By definition, mercy means receiving something you do not deserve. If you deserved it, it wouldn't be "mercy", but justice. And so, if God doesn't owe anyone mercy, you can't say it is unfair for him not to show it to someone." – **Michael Nolen**

Question #2: Is God's sovereignty FAIR?

Have Another Volunteer Read: Romans 9:19

"I'm confident many of you are also asking that question right now. 'If God chooses and predestines who will believe, how can he judge who just do what he determined they would do?' If that's what you're asking, Paul's ready for you. Paul's first answer to this is to show that God's rejection of Pharaoh was consistent with Pharaoh's own choices. In fact, here's the key question: 'Who rejected whom FIRST? Did Pharaoh reject God first or did God reject Pharaoh? Scripture does say that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart to resist his message.' But...only after the 6th plague. After the first 5 plagues it says, Pharaoh hardened his own heart. (Exodus 8:13, 15, 32; Exodus 9:34). In other word, God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart is after Pharaoh does it himself 5 times! The point is: God is not to blame for Pharaoh's hard heart; Pharaoh is. (the bibleproject.com/blog/pharaohs-heart-grew-harder)." – **Michael Nolen**

"When people reject God, it's always described like this. When Jesus lamented the Jews' rejection of him in Matthew 23:37, he said, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!' – **Michael Nolen**

Question #3: Isn't election and predestination UNJUST?

Have Another Volunteer Read: Romans 9:20-32

"The ultimate goal that God pursues in all things, including our salvation, is glory. Time Keller says this: 'Somehow, if God had mercy on all or condemned all, we would not see his glory. I don't think Pau is giving us much more than a hint here, but it is a very suggestive hint. For the biggest

question is: *If God could save everyone, why doesn't he?* And here Paul seems to say that God's chosen course (to save some and leave others) will in the end be more fit to show forth God's glory than any other scheme we can imagine. This may seem strange to us, but that is the point – we are not God, and cannot know everything or decide what is best.” (pg 68)

They rejected him because they wouldn't humble themselves and accept the gospel. They wouldn't accept that salvation could only be by grace through faith...and not of their goodness or works. That's where they got stuck. Remember how Jesus appeared to Paul in Act 9? Jesus reveals himself in incredible glory and says, 'I am Jesus. Follow me.' – **Michael Nolen**

Question #4: How can a sovereign God still be GOOD?

APPLICATION

“A.A. Hodge once said. ‘Does God know the day you'll die? Yes. has he appointed that day? Yes. Can you do anything to change that day? No. Then why do you eat? To live. What happens if you don't eat? You die. Then if you don't eat, and die, then would that be the day that God had appointed for you to die? Hodge responds, quit asking stupid questions and just eat. Eating is the pre-ordained way God has appointed for living. We may not understand how God's sovereignty and our responsibility work together. It doesn't matter. It's arrogance and presumption to sit around speculating on God's sovereignty when he commands you to obey. Figuring it out isn't your job. Your job is to obey God. So pray and share and trust God to work!

What questions do we need to stop asking and start following this week?

PRAISES

PRAYER REQUESTS