

1. **Introduction:** We will continue the discussion that was ongoing as we ended last week's lesson but first some preliminary information.
 - God's Sovereignty versus the Sovereignty of the Human Will: The human will is typically understood to be that faculty or principle of the mind by which the mind chooses between alternatives.
2. **Non-Negotiable Libertarian Free Will:** Arminian theology, but not Reformed theology, holds "libertarian free will" as a non-negotiable presupposition.
 - Arminian theology holds that people cannot be held responsible for their choices unless the will is "free" in a libertarian sense.
 - Libertarian free will: The will functions as an independent neutral faculty of the mind making autonomous choices – choices free from prior prejudice, inclination, disposition, or constraint from God.
 - The Armenian position is: If no "libertarian free will" – then "no human responsibility."
 - The non-negotiable nature of the presupposition of human libertarian free will means every fact must be interpreted such that it is consistent with that presupposition.
 - God's sovereignty, for example, must be envisioned in such a way that human libertarian free will remains true.
 - R.C. Sproul argues in **Chosen by God** (page 51) that if the will were truly libertarian, all choices would be arbitrary, made literally for "no reason" – no cause for the choice.
 - Such reasonless choices would have no motive and no moral significance.
3. **Compatible Free Will:** Reformed theology (Calvinism), but not Arminian theology, holds God's absolute sovereignty as a non-negotiable presupposition. God's sovereignty is absolute and constrains the human will.
 - Calvinists cannot and do not accept "libertarian free will." The Calvinist view is that Scripture teaches the truth of both God's absolute sovereignty and human responsibility for their actions.
 - Human choices must, of necessity, be such that they are under God's sovereignty in a way that humans remain responsible for their actions.
 - The simplest thing to say is that, although we don't understand the details, we accept both concepts because Scripture teaches both.
 - But, through the centuries, Christian theologians have wrestled with why and how it is true both that God is sovereign, and humans are responsible.
4. **Which is True?** (1.) Libertarian human free will that recognizes God as sovereign in every respect except with regards to the human will. (2.) Compatible human free will recognizes God's sovereignty as absolute. Human choices are determined by the strongest inclination at the instant of choice.

- Armenian theology says that the correct answer is “libertarian free will” which can and does make “free” choices. God cannot overrule human choice.
 - Reformed (or Calvinist) theology says that the correct answer is that “God is absolutely sovereign” and the human will is subject to His sovereignty. Human choices are constrained by God’s sovereignty. God can overrule human choice.
 - The reformed view says “compatible free will” is correct, meaning that the human will functions in a manner compatible with God’s absolute sovereignty.
5. **Beginning where we left off:** The issue under discussion was, is it necessary (that is, essential) to “invite Jesus into your heart” to receive salvation?
- If so, is “inviting Jesus into your heart” only possible if the fallen person has been regenerated (made spiritually alive)?
 - In other words, can a person seek Jesus and His salvation only after regeneration or can a spiritually dead person seek salvation by inviting Jesus into their heart?
 - Is receiving salvation absolutely dependent on a person making a willful choice to ask Jesus to come into their heart, or is salvation entirely a work of God alone?
 - Does Jesus knock at the door of our heart unable to enter unless we invite Him in?
 - Must we open the door to our heart? In other words, must Jesus have our invitation and permission before He can come into our heart as Lord?
 - Paul says, it is “in Christ” that we find redemption. How do we achieve the necessary union with Christ if we are spiritually “dead in sins?”
 - If we are spiritually dead, will we seek salvation by coming before Christ Jesus and inviting Him into our heart to save us?
 - To continue thinking about this, we need some definitions. (1.) Spiritually dead means separated from God. In general, “death” means separation.
 - A living person is body and soul. Human mortal death means the animating soul is separated from the body.
 - (2.) Spiritually alive means enlivened, prompted, and guided by the Holy Spirit.
6. **1Corinthians 2:13-14:** *And we [Paul] impart [these teachings] in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. ⁴ 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.*
- A “natural person” is a person who remains in the fallen state of their birth, separated from God and without the Holy Spirit indwelling them.
 - A natural person neither perceives the things of the Spirit of God, nor understands them, for they must be spiritually discerned.
 - Persons who are spiritually dead but physically and mentally alive remain active intellectually, emotionally, and in making choices.

7. **Ephesians 2:1-3**: *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² 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—³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
- Though spiritually dead, a person remains active. They follow the passions of the flesh, the desires of fleshly body and mind.
 - Spiritually dead persons have physical and mental life with desires and the ability to express those desires. In their fallen nature, they do things in ways compatible with that nature (perhaps mitigated by God’s gift of common grace).
 - The question is, can an unregenerate, spiritually dead person have a genuine longing for the one true God that causes them to “seek God?”
 - Paul’s answer to this question is given in Romans 3:9-11. He is blunt. No!
8. **Romans 3:9-12**: *Jews and Greeks, are under sin,¹⁰ as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one;¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God.¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”*
9. **John 6:37, 44**: Jesus says, *“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.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.”*
10. **John 3:16-8A**: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned.*
- Whoever believes in the Son is not condemned. Belief in “the Son” is necessary to avoid being condemned. What, then, are the necessary conditions for a person to move from being a “spiritually dead” unbeliever to “believing in Christ?”
 - (1.) You must be drawn by the Father. No one can come to Christ unless drawn by the Father (Jn 6:44).
 - (2.) You must be born again of the Spirit (Jn 3:1-8). Spiritual rebirth means the Spirit giving a spiritually dead person new spiritual life. Spiritually dead means “separated from God.” New spiritual life means being reconnected to God.
 - (3.) **Romans 10:9**: *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
 - New spiritual life enables a person to perceive spiritual realities that can only be perceived spiritually. Outward expression of new spiritual life is complicated by the fact that our sin nature is initially not eliminated but only subdued.
 - Our new godly nature must combat the residual old sin nature. Variations in our new behavior (words, decisions, emotions, and actions) reflect the ongoing battle between our old and new natures.

- As we strive to be obedient to God and follow His guidance, our old sin nature will gradually be reduced and finally eliminated when we are glorified.
- Philippians 2:12-13 says we are to work out the implications of our salvation knowing that it is God who continues to work within us.
- When God draws us and enables us to believe, the necessary internal work that enables salvation is done by God alone. The internal renewal accomplished by God is to be reflected in our external behavior (words, decisions, and actions).
- Believers are to “put off” external behavior that is inconsistent with God’s revealed character and “put on” external behavior that is consistent with God’s character.
- Paul says to put off inappropriate words, emotions, decisions, and actions like you would put off dirty clothes. Then, put on the clean things of salvation.

11. **God is Sovereign!** Nothing He chooses to do requires our permission.

- He does not need our permission for anything He chooses to do or have us do including those things related to His gift of everlasting life.
- We need the salvation earned for us by Jesus. Nothing we say or do can change that fact. The gift of salvation is in God’s hands and received by His will alone
- Scripture emphasizes the necessity of “believing” but, as far as I know, never speaks of inviting Jesus into our heart.
- The possible exception in Revelation 3:20, picturing Jesus standing and knocking at the door of the church of Laodicea.
- This verse is in the letter to the angel of the “neither cold nor hot” church of Laodicea that Jesus is ready to spew out of His mouth.

12. **Revelation 3:20: *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.***

- Jesus yearns for someone in that church to participate in true fellowship with Him, but their door is shut, and no one answers His knock.
- This verse doesn’t appear to be a statement that Jesus stands at the door of sinners’ hearts knocking to attract their attention and have them invite Him into their heart.
- The basis of our salvation is in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit alone. The initial act of conversion from “being spiritually dead in sins” to being “alive in Christ” appears to be an act of God alone in which we passively receive His grace.
- We can and should gratefully thank our Lord for choosing to give us the salvation benefits He earned on our behalf through His living a perfect life under the law and dying to pay the penalty due our sin.
- God the Father doesn’t wait for us to invite Him and give Him permission to draw us to Christ. We don’t pursue Him. He pursues us. Neither does He require our invite or permission for Him to give us new spiritual life in Him.
- He is sovereign and ***“in Him we live and move and have our being”*** (Acts 17:28A). He is the potter, and we are the clay. He moves and we respond.