

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 13- Luke 13:31-34

254- O Jersusalem, Jerusalem- Part 3

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Luke 13:31-35

31 Just at that time some Pharisees approached, saying to Him, "Go away, leave here, for Herod wants to kill You."

32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* I reach My goal.'

33 "Nevertheless I must journey on today and tomorrow and the next *day*; for it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.

34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *the city* that kills the prophets and stones those sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen *gathers* her brood under her wings, and you would not *have it*!

35 "Behold, your house is left to you *desolate*; and I say to you, you will not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, '**BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!**'"

To the Glory of God

Now let me say that almost every time we open our Bibles- we see challenges. The Word of God is filled with Puzzles and Mysteries and Paradoxes. Mountain paths beckon us to come up higher, and, yet, they seem to lead in opposite directions.

So I would like to invite you to go with me yet again this week as we complete our examination of this troubling and yet absolutely inerrant Passage of God's Holy Word.

Now keep in mind that the two paths that beckon us in this Passage are:

- The path of God's *Decree* of Sovereign Election
- The path of God's *Desire* for all people to be saved

So there are two things to consider:

- God's fierce Determination to receive Glory by saving all of those whom He has chosen to save from before the foundation of the world- which is His *Divine Decree*
- God's *Divine Desire* that all would repent and believe the Gospel and be saved

Now as we have already discovered in this Chapter- God has a people whom He has set His Love upon- *before* they were born and *before* they did anything "good" or "evil", and even *before* God made the Universe. And because God has put His Own Reputation and His Own Name on the line in choosing these unworthy sinners- God sees to it that all of them come to Christ and are saved. That is called "Sovereign Election", and it is absolutely true and Biblical.

And yet the Holy Bible also teaches that God loves *everyone*- at least to *some* extent. And the Scriptures also inform us that God invites *everyone* to come and that- at least in *some* capacity- He desires them *all* to be saved. And that, too, is absolutely true and Biblical.

And, so, one of two things is true. Either the Holy Scriptures contain contradictions and fallacies and falsehoods and they are no more reliable or trustworthy than any product of human ingenuity, or else we must do the hard work and labor to try to put two seemingly competing issues together to form a single cohesive Doctrine.

Now I understand that by my affirming the Desire of God to save *all* while also at the same time affirming the Decree of God through the unconditional Election of *some*- I am implying that there are at least "two Wills" in God, or at least two "ways" of us *understanding* God's Will, or better put- there are two "sides" to God's magnificent Will. One side implies that God sovereignly *Decrees* that one state of affairs *is*- while also allowing and permitting a completely different state of affairs to exist. So we are left to try to understand God's Will from two different perspectives.

Now the closet issue that I know of that troubles us like this one is The Doctrine of the Trinity- which seeks to uphold- on the one hand- the

Truth that the God of the Bible is “one” while- on the other hand- also fully affirming that all three “Persons” of the Godhead are eternally manifested in absolute Deity as well. So that Doctrine states:

God is one in His Essence and is eternally manifested in all three Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit

And this Doctrine certainly doesn’t answer all of our questions- which is why the golden tongued Preacher of the 3rd Century, John Chrysostom said,

“If you seek to understand the Trinity- you will lose your mind, but if you deny the Trinity- you will lose your soul.”

So the Doctrine of the Trinity simply seeks to establish the *parameters* around which the discussion of the one true living God may be carried out. So you are free to discuss and understand God *within* the boundaries established by The Doctrine of the Trinity- but you are *not* free to discuss or understand Him *outside* those boundaries.

I think we will find that the discussion of The Will of God will be done in the same way. We are free to try to understand God’s Will *within* the sometimes confusing and contradictory parameters of all that the Bible says about God’s Will- but we are *not* free to develop our Doctrine of God’s Will by leaving one side of the discussion out. And please permit me to give you a very clear example of what I am talking about.

We concluded our examination from last week by exploring how God can and does sometimes choose to sovereignly “intervene” and “prevent” evil from coming to pass by looking at the situation with Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech from **Genesis 20**.

And from that we saw that there are times when it is God’s Will to *frustrate* the will of rulers by sovereignly *inserting* Himself into their lives to such an extent that He interrupts their plans and changes them or causes them to fail.

But we also have to say that there are also times when God does *not* choose to use this “Divine Right” because- in those cases- God *intends* for human evil to run its course- but only so that a greater Good will come forth from that. For example, I want you to turn with me to

1Samuel 2. Now let your eyes fall on verse 22. Here we see that God meant to put the sons of Eli to death. Therefore, God *allowed* these two sons to sin and to rebel against their father's counsel and did not stop them. **1Samuel 2:22-25** says:

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

23 He said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"

24 "No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD'S people circulating.

25 "If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death.

Now what does the Prophet Samuel say is the reason *why* the two sons of Eli did *not* give heed to their father's good counsel at the end of verse 25? The hard and frightening and absolutely Biblical answer from the text itself is:

... for (because) the Lord desired to put them to death.

Now this only makes sense if the Lord actually had both the Right and the Power to sovereignly *restrain* their disobedience- a Right and Power which- in this case- He chose *not* to use. So we see that God sovereignly *allowed* or *permitted* the sons of Eli to go on doing what He commanded them not to do- which was to sin by dishonoring their father and engage in sexual immorality. Again- we need to understand that God did not "make" or "force" these men to commit sin- but for His Own Good and Perfect Reasons- God chose *not* to intervene to stop them and He permitted these men to do what was already in their heart to do anyway.

Now what is interesting is that the word for "desired" in the clause,

the Lord *desired* to put them to death

... is the very same Hebrew word (*haphez*) used in **Ezekiel 18:23, 32 and 33:11** those very well-known Passages where God asserts that He does *not* desire the death of the wicked. So when we put what God says in both **1Samuel** and **Ezekiel** together- we get:

God *desired* to put the sons of Eli to death (**1Samuel 2:25**), but He does *not* desire the death of the wicked (**Ezekiel 18:23; 32; 33:11**).

Now we can sit back and simply be confused about this- which would be easy- but it would also be a tragic mistake. What we *need* to take away from this seeming contradiction is the strong warning for us not to take one Biblical Statement- like **Ezekiel 33:11**- and then run off and form a doctrine around it- assuming that because we read one verse- that we now understand the whole Counsel of God and the vastness of God's Will- without allowing other Biblical Statements like **1Samuel 2:25** to help form our understanding and to help us create a more Biblical Doctrine.

So the upshot of putting these two Passages together is that in one sense- God *may desire* the death of the wicked while in another sense- He may *not*.

Another illustration of God's choosing not to use His Right to restrain evil is found in **Romans 1:24-28**. Three times in that Passage Paul says that God “**turns people over**” (*paredoken*) to sin. In other words- God sovereignly *allows* some people to sink further into corruption and He chooses *not* to intervene to stop or restrain them.

1. **Romans 1:24- Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.**
2. **Romans 1:26&27- For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.**
3. **Romans 1:28- And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,**

So the Holy Bible teaches that God has the Right and He has the Power to actively restrain evil the way He did for Abimelech. But the Bible also teaches that there are times when God chooses *not* to exercise that Right and Power. And in those cases- God's Will is to punish a people or a city or a nation- and the way in which God punishes them- is by passively *allowing* that evil to increase and refusing to stop it.

And this means that- on the one hand- God chooses for sinful behavior to be *permitted*- which- on the other hand- He has commanded that we not engage in and that He will eventually judge and damn. And the fact that God's willing is *punitive* here does not change that fact. But the fact that it is *justifiably* punitive is one of the points of this Sermon series.

Now we just saw from God's Word that God "desired" to put the sons of Eli to death, and that the Hebrew word that was translated into English as "desire" in **1Samuel 2** is the very same word used in **Ezekiel 33:11** when God says:

... I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live...

Another illustration of this complex "desiring" of God is found in **Deuteronomy 28:63**. There Moses is warning of the coming Judgment on unrepentant Israel. And what he says is strikingly different- but not contradictory- from **Ezekiel 33:11**.

It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.

Now we must first understand that the word here for God's "Delight" is the same word used for God's "Joy" and God's "Pleasure". And here God says that just as it was His Delight and His Joy and His Pleasure to prosper Israel- to that same extent- it is His Delight and Joy and Pleasure:

... to make you perish and destroy you...

So whether we like this or not- we are faced with the inescapable

Biblical fact that in one sense- God does *not* delight in the death of the wicked (**Ezekiel 33**), while in another equally true sense- He *does* (**Deuteronomy 28:63**; **2Samuel 2:25**).

Now behind this complex relationship of understanding God's Will in both of these two ways- is the foundational Biblical Premise that God is indeed Sovereign in such a way that makes Him the Absolute Ruler of all human actions. And so we are left with this:

- There are times that God manifests His Absolute Sovereignty by actively *imposing* Himself into human actions to *force* or *cause* "Good" to come about by either hindering or reducing or stopping "Evil" from being manifested
- There are times that God manifests His Absolute Sovereignty by passively *allowing* the "Evil"- that is already in the human heart- to manifest itself in committing acts of sin- sometimes very terribly. But God does that- only to the degree that- by allowing that "Evil" to be manifested to that extent- a greater "Good" is brought forth for His elect and a greater Glory for Himself

And God carries this out in such a way that God is *always* "Right" and "Good", and Man is always fully *accountable* for what he does- and can be and will be judged by God if he does not do the "Right" thing.

Indeed the Bible teaches that God alone *always* has the final control over all calamities and disasters wrought by "nature" or by Man.

- ✓ **Amos 3:6, If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?**
- ✓ **Isaiah 45:6&7, That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.**
- ✓ **Lamentations 3:37&38, Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded it? *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?**

So we are correct to say that God is absolutely Sovereign over all these things. But what is important in these texts is that the calamities in view here involve human hostilities and cruelties that God *always*

condemns and will judge- even as He *wills* that they be "allowed" or "permitted" to exist.

The Apostle Peter wrote concerning God's sovereign Involvement in the sufferings of His people at the hands of evil men. In his first letter he spoke of the "will of God" in two senses:

- A. God's Will was something to be pursued and lived up to on the one hand when Peter said, **"Such is *the will of God*, that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1Peter 2:15). And "Live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men but for *the will of God*" (4:2).**
- B. But on the other hand- Peter also understood that the term "Will of God" was not only God's Moral Decree- but also the state of affairs that God sometimes allowed to exist when he said. **"For it is better to suffer for doing right, *if that should be God's will*, than for doing wrong" (3:17). And "Let those who suffer *according to God's will* do right and entrust their souls to a faithful Creator" (4:19).**

And in this context, the suffering which Peter has in mind here is the suffering which comes to the saints from evil people, and, therefore, cannot come without sin on the part of those evil people being permitted.

In fact, the New Testament saints seemed to have lived in the calm light of an overarching Sovereignty of God concerning all the details of their lives and ministry. Paul expressed himself like this with regard to his travel plans. On taking leave of the saints in Ephesus he said,

"I will return to you *if God wills*," (The Acts 18:21).

To the Corinthians he wrote,

"I will come to you soon, *if the Lord wills*" (1Corinthians 4:19).

And again,

"I do not want to see you now just in passing; I hope to spend some time with you, *if the Lord permits*" (1Corinthians 16:7).

The writer to the **Hebrews** says that his desire for the Jewish believers was for them to leave and abandon the “**elementary teaching about the Christ**” (the Law) and to press on into the fullness of God’s Revelation of Jesus in the New Covenant. But after he told them his desire- he pauses and adds,

"And this we will do *if God permits*" (Hebrews 6:3b).

Now this is a fantastic statement since it is hard to imagine a single reason why God would *not* permit such a thing- unless we develop a remarkably high view of the sovereign Prerogatives of God. James warns against the “pride of presumption” in speaking of the simplest plans of life without a due submission to the overarching Sovereignty of God in whether the day's agenda might be interrupted by God's Decision to take the life He gave. So, instead of saying,

"Tomorrow we will do such and such . . . you ought to say, *`If the Lord wills, we shall live and we shall do this or that'*" (James 4:15).

So the saints in Caesarea, when they could not talk Paul out of taking the risk to go to Jerusalem;

"ceased and said, *'The will of the Lord be done'*" (The Acts 21:14).

... so these first century believers knew that ultimately God Alone would decide whether Paul would live or die- just as James taught.

So from this we can say that- evidently- the sense of living in the Hands of God- right down to the finest details of life- was not new or odd or strange for the early Christians. They knew it already from the whole history of Israel- but especially from their Wisdom Literature which taught:

- **"The plans of the mind belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:1).**
- **"A man's mind plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps" (Proverbs 16:9).**

- **"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will be established" (Proverbs 19:21).**
- **"The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is wholly from the LORD" (Proverbs 16:33).**
- **"I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).**

Jesus seemingly had no quarrel with this sense of living in the hand of God. If anything, He actually *intensified* the idea with words like **Matthew 10:29**,

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father."

This confidence that the details of life were in the total control of God every day was rooted in numerous prophetic expressions of God's unstoppable, unthwartable sovereign Purpose- like:

- **... For I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; (Isaiah 46:9-10; cf. 43:13).**
- **All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' (Daniel 4:35)**
- **I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. (Job 42:2).**
- **But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. (Psalm 115:3).**

Now one of the most precious implications of this confidence in God's absolute Sovereign Will- is that it provides the foundation of the "New Covenant" hope for our Holiness (Sanctification)- without which we will not see the Lord (**Hebrews 12:14**). You see- under the Old Covenant- the Law was written on stone and brought death when it met with the resistance of unrenewed hearts. But the New Covenant Promise is that God will not let His Purposes for a holy people be

shipwrecked on the weakness of human flesh and will. Instead, God promises to do whatever needs to be done to "make" us or "cause" us to be what we ought to be. So we rejoice when we read things like:

- ✓ **"And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live" (Deuteronomy 30:6).**
- ✓ **"I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:27).**
- ✓ **"I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them; and I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me" (Jeremiah 32:40).**
- ✓ **"Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, *for it is God who is at work in you to will and to work for his good pleasure*" (Philippians 2:12-13).**

Now we need to begin the task of trying to comprehend how these two ways that God's Will is manifested fit together and make sense. And the first thing to understand from all these texts is that God does not sin. **"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3). "God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself does not tempt anyone" (James 1:13).**

So, in ordering all things- including sometimes allowing sinful acts to exist- God is never sinning. As Jonathan Edwards says,

"It implies no contradiction to suppose that an act may be an evil act, and yet that it is a good thing that such an act should come to pass. . . As for instance, it might be an evil thing to crucify Christ, but yet it was a good thing that the crucifying of Christ came to pass."

In other words the Scriptures lead us to the insight that God can allow or permit a sinful act to come to pass without willing it as an act of sin in Himself. Edwards pointed out that even those who hold on tightly to human self-determination must also come to the same conclusion- if they are honest, when he said.

"All must own that God sometimes wills not to hinder the breach of his own commands, because he does not in fact hinder it . . . But you will say, God wills to permit sin, as he wills the creature should be left to his freedom; and

if he should hinder it, he would offer violence to the nature of his own creature. I answer, this comes nevertheless to the very same thing that I say. You say, God does not will sin absolutely; but rather than alter the law of nature and the nature of free agents, he wills it. He wills what is contrary to excellency in some particulars, for the sake of a more general excellency and order. So that the scheme of the Arminians does not help the matter”.

This is right and it can be illustrated again by reflecting directly on **1Timothy 2:4** where Paul says that God *wills* all persons to be saved. So what are we to say of the fact that God *desires* something to be- that, in fact, does not happen? There are only two possibilities:

- I. There is some “power” in the universe that is greater than God- which is frustrating Him by overruling what He wills to do.
- II. God does not intervene to save all- even though He is willing to save all- because there is something else that He desires even more- which would be lost- if He exerted His sovereign Power to save all.

And this second possibility is the solution that I suggest to you. In other words- both the Calvinist and the Arminian affirm understanding God’s Will in two different ways when they ponder deeply over **1Timothy 2:4**. Both can say that Scripture teaches that God wills for all to be saved. But then when asked why all are, in fact, not saved- both the Calvinist and the Arminian answer that God is committed to something even more valuable than saving all.

So the real difference between the Calvinist and the Arminian does not lie in whether there are two wills in God- but in just what they say this “Higher Commitment” is. What is it that God desires *more* than saving all?

And the answer given by the Arminian is that human self-determination is more valuable to God than saving all people by Sovereign Grace- of which we have *no* Biblical texts to confirm. And the answer given by the Calvinist is that the “greater value” is the manifestation of the full range of God’s Glory in both His Justice and His Mercy, and the humbling of Man so that Man receives no glory for his own Salvation and God receives all- which both **Romans 9:22&23** and **1Corinthians 1:29** clearly teach.

And this explains why Jesus could weep over Jerusalem and say that He would have gathered her but they would not- while all the while knowing that it was God's Will to make it abundantly clear that the infinitely superior New Covenant- that was brought about through Jesus' Life, Death, and Resurrection- could not and would not ever be mixed in with or added to the utterly inferior Old Covenant. And so God sovereignly *allowed* great evil to be manifested in the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem along with the destruction of the Temple and the ending of all animal sacrifices and the complete elimination of the Levitical Priesthood and by completely ending the Jewish way of life. And the greater Good that was brought forth by allowing this evil to exist was the welcoming in of all the Gentile elect and the final saving of the elected Jews.

Now this is utterly crucial to see- because it teaches that **1Timothy 2:4** does not settle the momentous issue of God's Higher Commitment which restrains Him from saving all people. There is no mention here of "free will" at all. When human self-determination is found in this verse- it is a purely a philosophical and metaphysical addition and not a sound exegetical conclusion. The Arminian assumes that if God wills, in one sense, for all to be saved- then He cannot- in another sense will that only some be saved. But that assumption is not found in the text- nor is it demanded by logic, nor is it taught anywhere else in Scripture. It is simply manufactured by people to try to make sense of it.

Therefore, I say that **1Timothy 2:4** does not *settle* the issue- it *creates* it. Both the Arminian and the Calvinist must look elsewhere to answer whether the gift of human self-determination or the Glory of Divine Sovereignty is the "Higher Commitment" that restrains God's Will to save all people.

Now the Calvinists that I admire do not claim to have simple, easy solutions to this complex Biblical tension. When their writing is difficult- it is because the Scriptures are difficult (as the Apostle Peter admitted that at times they are, **2Peter 3:16**). These Calvinists are simply struggling to be faithful to diverse (but not contradictory) Passages. And, so, in reality- the ridicule that is directed against their complex expositions are, in fact, a ridicule against the complexity of the Scriptures themselves.

For example- I find the effort of the Puritan, Stephen Charnock (1628-1680), who was a chaplain to Henry Cromwell and a non-

conformist Pastor in London- to be very helpful in holding the diverse Scriptures on God's Will together when he said,

“God doth not will [sin] directly, and by an efficacious will. He doth not directly will it, because he hath prohibited it by his law, which is a discovery of his will; so that if he should directly will sin, and directly prohibit it, he would will good and evil in the same manner, and there would be contradictions in God's will: to will sin absolutely, is to work it (**Psalm 115:3**): "God hath done whatsoever he pleased." God cannot absolutely will it, because he cannot work it. God wills good by a positive decree, because he hath decreed to effect it. He wills evil by a private decree, because he hath decreed not to give that grace which would certainly prevent it. God doth not will sin simply, for that were to approve it, but he wills it, in order to that good his wisdom will bring forth from it. He wills not sin for itself, but for the event”.

Similarly Jonathan Edwards, writing about 80 years later comes to similar conclusions with somewhat different terminology.

“When a distinction is made between God's revealed will and his secret will, or his will of command and decree, "will" is certainly in that distinction taken in two senses. His will of decree, is not his will in the same sense as his will of command is. Therefore, it is no difficulty at all to suppose, that the one may be otherwise than the other: his will in both senses is his inclination. But when we say he wills virtue, or loves virtue, or the happiness of his creature; thereby is intended, that virtue, or the creature's happiness, absolutely and simply considered, is agreeable to the inclination of his nature.

His will of decree is, his inclination to a thing, not as to that thing absolutely and simply, but with respect to the universality of things, that have been, are or shall be. So God, though he hates a thing as it is simply, may incline to it with reference to the universality of things. Though he hates sin in itself, yet he may will to permit it, for the greater promotion of holiness in this universality, including all things, and at all times. So, though he has no inclination to a creature's misery, considered absolutely, yet he may will it, for the greater promotion of happiness in this universality”.

Now putting that in Alabama English- Edwards said that the infinite complexity of the Divine Mind is such that God has the capacity

to look at the world through two different "lenses". He can look through a "narrow lens" or through a "wide-angle lens". When God looks at a painful or wicked event through His narrow lens- He sees the tragedy or the sin for what it is in itself, and He is angered and grieved, and from that He says. "**I do not delight in the death of anyone, says the Lord God**" (**Ezekiel 18:32**).

But when God looks at a painful or wicked event through His wide-angle lens- He sees the tragedy or the sin in relation to everything leading up to it and the greater Good that is flowing out from it. And so God sees it in all the connections and effects that form a pattern or a mosaic- stretching all the way into eternity. And this mosaic- with all its good and evil parts God *does* delight in (**Psalms 115:3**).

Therefore, we should not stumble over the fact that- in one sense- God *does*, and in another sense- God *does not* take pleasure in the death of the wicked. When Moses warns Israel that the Lord will take delight in bringing ruin upon them and destroying them if they do not repent (**Deuteronomy 28:63**)- He means that those who have rebelled against the Lord and moved beyond repentance will not be able to gloat that they have made the Almighty miserable. God is never defeated in the triumphs of His righteous Judgment. Quite the contrary. Moses says that when they are judged for their rebellion- they will unwittingly provide an occasion for God to rejoice in the demonstration of His Justice and His Power and the infinite Worth of His Glory (**Romans 9:22-23**).

So when God took counsel with Himself- in all three Persons of the Godhead- as to whether He should save all people- He consulted not only the Truth of what He sees when looking through the narrow lens- but also the *larger* and more glorious Truth of what He sees when all things are viewed through the wide-angle lens of His all-knowing Wisdom.

Therefore, I fully agree with **John 3:16** and **1Timothy 2:4** that God loves the world with a deep Compassion that desires the Salvation of all men. Yet at the same time- I also agree that God has chosen from before the foundation of the world- those whom He will actually save from sin. And since manifestly- not all people are saved- we must then choose whether we believe that God's Will to save all people is restrained by some unbiblical commitment to the fiction of human self-determination, or whether we believe that God's Will to save all people is restrained by

His greater Commitment to the glorification of His Sovereign Grace in accord with **Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14** and **Romans 9:22-23**.

And this choice should not be made on the basis of human wisdom and emotional arguments about what we think human accountability requires. A choice this important should only be made on the basis of what the Scriptures actually teach- without us adding words and logic to make us feel better. And I do not find anywhere in the Bible that human beings have the ultimate power of self-determination. As far as I can tell that is purely a philosophical addition based on human emotional agony. On the other hand- I am absolutely trying to say to you that the Holy Bible very clearly and repeatedly says and teaches the absolute sovereignty of God's Grace in Salvation.

So as weak as it might have been- my effort in this Sermon Series has simply been to show that God's Will for all people to be saved is not at odds in any way with the sovereignty of God's Grace in Sovereign Election- and that is why Jesus could say what He said here in **Luke 13:34**.

So my answer to the question about what restrains God's Will to save all people is:

God's supreme Commitment to uphold and display the full range of His Glory through the sovereign demonstration of both His Justice and His Mercy for the enjoyment of His elect and believing people from every tribe and tongue and nation throughout all ages- world without end- Amen.

Let's pray.