

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church

Foundations Class

Week 12 – May 23, 2021, Missions and Evangelism: Can We Be Simultaneously Reformed and Outward Facing

Resources:

- J.I. Packer *Evangelism & The Sovereignty of God*, Inter-Varsity Fellowship, England, 1961.
- <https://www.alliancenet.org/placefortruth/article/john-calvin-on-missions>

A congregation that is God centered and outward facing

To be God-centered and outward facing not only is possible: the one necessitates the other. If you eject either one, you will lose them both in the end.

I. God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established. (Westminster Confession of Faith 3.1)

a. Antinomy

b. God did “ordain whatsoever comes to pass”

Gen 45:8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Gen 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Pro 16:9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

Pro 21:1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

Mat 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

Act 4:27-28 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, (28) to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Rom 9:20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"

Eph 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

c. ...yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures

Rev 20:12b-13 And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. (13) And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

Jas 1:13-14 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. (14) But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Luk 22:22 For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!"

Act 2:23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Rom 9:10-24 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, (11) though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— (12) she was told, "The older will serve the younger." (13) As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." (14) What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! (15) For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (16) So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. (17) For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (18) So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. (19) You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" (20) But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" (21) Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? (22) What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, (23) in order to make known

the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— (24) even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

- d. **nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.**

Rom 10:14-15 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? (15) And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

II. **John Calvin and Geneva Consistent with Reformation Theology**

- a. **Geneva as a missions center**

- b. **Ultimate Motivation in Missions: The glory of God**

When we know God to be our Father, should we not desire that he be known as such by all? And if we do not have this passion, that all creatures do him homage, is it not a sign that his glory means little to us?

- c. **Inconsistency of a profession of faith without witness**

... the godly will be filled with such an ardent desire to spread the doctrines of religion, that every one not satisfied with his own calling and his personal knowledge will desire to draw others along with him. And indeed nothing could be more inconsistent with the nature of faith than that deadness which would lead a man to disregard his brethren, and to keep the light of knowledge choked up within his own breast.

III. The Necessity of Personal Evangelism

Acts 8:1,4 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles... (4) Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

... Our interest now concerns the fact that those scattered abroad went about preaching the word. And from Acts 11:19-21 we learn that this activity extended to Antioch in Syria, which played so important a role in subsequent missionary expansion of the church. It would not be reasonable to restrict this preaching of the Word to the special offices of prophet, evangelist, and teacher, although from Acts 8:5ff we must reckon with the more official ministry of the Word (cf. also Acts 13:1-4)

It is this evangelizing responsibility of the members of the church that we are so liable to neglect.... No phase of evangelism is more indispensable to the spread of the gospel and to the building up of the church.

...At our doors and within our family circles is the call to mission. Our remissness springs from our lack of concern for the salvation of perishing souls, our lack of love, our lack of zeal for the claims of Christ and of his body the church, and finally our lack of jealousy for the glory of God. If fervor of spirit and the service of the Lord animate our hearts, then with the apostles we cannot but speak: the things which we have seen and heard. And we may not be dismayed by the odds of unbelieving opposition and indifference. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation and his Word will not return unto him void. And he has put this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. (Collected Writings of John Murray, Vol. 1, pp. 250–252)