

The Potter's Power Over the Clay

by Eli Brayley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's sovereignty and election, highlighting the church's failure to accept these truths and the consequences of this failure.

Duration: 15:53

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Exodus 20:5-6, Isaiah 1:9, Matthew 7:21, Romans 9:14-16, Romans 9:27-29, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Sovereignty"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding God's purpose for the church. He urges the congregation to not be ignorant about the things of God, particularly the topic of election. The preacher reads from Romans chapter 9, discussing God's sovereignty and His right over His creation. He addresses objections and objections that people may have about this topic, emphasizing the need to align with God's will and to have a spiritual perspective.

Transcript

This morning I'm... Well, Dennis asked me to speak just yesterday, they called. But, because he was feeling, he had a problem with vertigo, and this morning I'm not feeling very good either, actually. Not as bad.

But, also, just, I'm very burdened this morning with the message that God has given me to speak. Actually, last night I was kind of pacing around, and I was just scared. I'm actually standing before you with fear and trembling this morning.

Couldn't really sleep much last night because of the message that God has given me to speak. And I just keep saying, why do I have to speak this message, Lord? And I can't get away. So we're going to be wading into some dangerous waters this morning.

And some waters that are seldom explored in the church these days. But it's a risk that I'm willing to take because my heart and my conscience have been stirred by these truths, and the church has failed to accept these truths. The church has dropped them somewhere along the way, and we've lost our compass, so to speak.

We've been disoriented. The failure of the church to understand and enunciate the thing I'm going to talk about today has cost the church much in the last few centuries. But it's been an issue that man has dealt

with God since the creation of the world.

It's men not allowing God to be God. And men not loving God for who God is. And men loving self more than God.

We will not accept the God who is over us. We would rather be God. Or we'd rather have somebody else be God than the God that we have.

The God with whom we have to do. And we point the finger at God for our problems. And we say it's all His fault why there's sin in the world.

It's all His fault why I'm a sinner. Remember Adam and Eve. When they were in the garden, they believed Satan's lie that God was withholding something good from them in the garden.

And they resented God in the garden. Now it was not a just thought. It wasn't true.

But they believed that lie and resented God. Because he had said, you shall not eat from that tree. Satan said, well God knows that if you eat from it you'll be like Him.

He doesn't want you to be like Him. He's holding something back from you. And so they resented God.

Then they sinned. And after they fall into shame and despair, they point the finger at God and blame Him for all the ruin that came upon them. There's something in man that will not justify his own guilt.

There's something in us. We won't own responsibility for our own sin. And we blame God.

And that's the history of men. That's not just in the garden, but that's even today. You hear it all the time on campus.

People are complaining and saying that God is at fault somehow. And people will kick and scream all the way to the judgment day that they're innocent and blame God. Kick and screaming all the way until that one day when God does judge the world in righteousness and all mouths will be silent when God judges the world in justice and truth.

Better to shut your mouth now than later. It's better to agree with God now than later. So what's my topic about today? My message this morning is the potter's power over the clay.

The potter's power over the clay. God's sovereignty and His right over His creation. I'm going to talk about election today.

And actually, I was saying to Alan on the phone the other day, he was saying, what are you going to talk about? This, that, the other? Because I had different ideas. I'd rather talk about those things. But I said, election.

Sean overheard me say that. After I got off the phone, he came up to me and he said, I'm not going to be at Valley Church tomorrow, but tell me, are you going to promote Obama or McCain? I'm not talking about the election in America, but I'm talking about God's election and God's right to elect. God's right to be God.

To choose and not to choose. His right that he has to be God and to be free as God. To do what he wills.

And it's a risky, risky subject, I know. Because, one, there's a lot of controversy around it, and many of you have heard many different things about it. And there's a lot of misunderstanding about it.

And I don't claim that this morning I'm going to open up the whole thing. I'm not going to exhaust the subject. But it's so important for us as the church to let God be God and accept God as he is.

And not shy away from these things. And we're going to get at it this morning. Why do we recoil from allowing God to be God? What is it about us that we don't like it, that God's in control? That's too much control.

And what is it? We're going to find the roots of that this morning. But the church has failed in this. And we've adopted a view of God that's unbiblical.

And we've made ourselves the center of the universe. And we've made the gospel to be self-help. We've made the gospel to be something that just accommodates us.

And we've lost the glorious truth of the gospel and God's eternal purposes in creating the world and sending Jesus to die. We've lost it. And you wonder why today so many people are giving up on the church because we don't really have much to say anymore.

We don't. I mean, you go in, you hear self-help. You could probably get better self-help from a secular doctor.

And you know what? Man's need is not just self-help, but to know God. This is eternal life, to know him and to have life through the Son. That's man's need.

So God has called us to be his people and his church, to understand these things, especially, brothers and sisters, as we approach a time when you cannot afford to not understand these things. You cannot afford to be ignorant about these things. So turn with me.

We're going to look at Romans chapter 9 this morning. I feel this is so important, that if the church misses this, we miss the purpose for the church. So let's pray this morning.

I'm just going to pray that God would help me, because I'm just standing here in fear and trembling this morning. Lord, we thank you for your grace. Lord, I thank you for the fact, Lord, that you have loved us with an everlasting love.

I thank you for the people you've brought here to this place now, Lord. People haven't even been to Valley Church before I see here. Lord, I thank you how you've prepared me to even speak a message like this, one I would never have spoken in the past.

Lord, it is a sobering subject. Lord, I understand it's an extremely weighty subject that I'll have to give an account for speaking it, if I speak it not in truth. Lord, I just pray for your grace.

Pray that you just give us revelation, wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you this morning. That we'd be lifted out, Lord, of this carnal mindset that has gripped so many of us in the church. And lift us up, Lord, out of it.

That we'd see spiritually. That we'd see as we ought to see, Lord. That even though we walk in the flesh, we wouldn't live by the flesh.

Or wage war by the flesh. I thank you, Jesus. I just pray that this morning you would use me, Lord, to teach and to open and to explain this marvelous, marvelous truth of who you are, Lord.

A truth that's not discouraging, but encouraging. I praise you, mighty God. I thank you that when we're weak, you're strong.

Lord, I can do all things through Christ. He strengthens me. Thank you.

And I give you praise. I give you glory. In Jesus' name, amen.

All right, we're going to read from Romans chapter 9. If anyone, if you're familiar with the book of Romans, people like to read 1 to 8, and usually they tread slowly and carefully through 9 to 11. And it's natural, understand. But why is that? Romans 1 to 8 is marvelous, and it's beautiful, but it's safe in a sense.

When you step into Romans chapter 9, 10, 11, you get out of the realm of what we can do and what we can accomplish. We start seeing things from God's perspective, and frankly, it's grim. It's grim.

And we start reading of things about God that we don't usually like to think about because of what it means for us and what it says about us. And we're going to find as we read this that there's a lot of finger pointing at God. There's objections that are raised to this, which you hear today if you speak about these things.

And maybe some of you have the same objections. But let's start in verse 14, and we're going to read to verse 29. So Romans 9, 14, it says, What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens. You will say then unto me, why does he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will? No, but, O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why have you made me thus? Has not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory? Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As he says also in Hosea, I will call them my people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved.

And it shall come to pass that in the place where it is said unto them, you are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God. Isaiah also cries concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved. For he will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

And as Isaiah said before, except the Lord of Sabbath had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom and been like unto Gomorrah. One thing we learn from the Bible is that God is a God who elects. God is a God who chooses.

You say, well, how so? Well, from the very beginning, it says that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God chose to create the heavens and the earth. He wasn't under necessity to do that, but he chose.

And it was his freedom. And his creation can't say, well, why did you create me like that? There's a verse in the Old Testament. It says that a child can't say to his parent, well, why did you have me? Why did you give me birth? The child is born.

The child can't reply against the parents. The parents had every right to do that. And it's a great blessing to be born.

But God chooses. God chooses to create. God chose to speak.

Let there be light. God said, let us make man in our image. You and I are a choice of God.

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