

# The Doctrine of Election and Man's Free Will

by Rolfe Barnard

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*The Bible teaches that men do have wills, but they are not free, and that a miracle must take place in a man to cause him to begin to seek the Lord.*

**Duration:** 45:02

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 5:39-40, John 6:46

**Topics:** "Election"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that it is God who brings forth the truth and applies it to people's lives, not the preacher or personal worker. He explains that God draws people to Himself through His truth, and those who listen to His voice will find salvation. The preacher gives examples from the Bible, such as the conversion of Paul and the encounter with Lydia, to illustrate how God draws people to Himself. He concludes by highlighting a verse that closes every door except the one door to salvation, emphasizing the hope and encouragement found in God's message.

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## Transcript

This has been a pleasant experience and I've just tackled a few things about which there is so much misunderstanding. Where we were guests tonight, we were pounded with questions about the Wednesday night message and I told them that it was on tape for them to listen to it again. They wanted to know if I distinguished between God's act of election and God's act of predestination.

I said, well certainly the Bible does. The Bible doesn't say they're the same thing. Election has to do with one thing, predestination another.

Now the reason I tackled some of these subjects, and I paid this church a great honor in that I could use those terms and that I could even talk about them without having to fist fight. But I tackled some of those things where I have an opportunity, where the pastor would not be resentful and the dear people, because of all of the tremendous resurgence in the last few years of the old doctrines of the word of God. And I think that's good.

I think that's good. And I believe it's just getting started. I believe it's going to get better and better.

I'm of the opinion that while Satan manifests and brings the antichrist to blow his breath upon us in the last days, that there will be a counter movement and there will be a great movement of God bringing his dear

ones together. I envision the time when first kids and Baptist and Methodists can pray together. They can't do it much together now, but they will if they know the Lord.

And I'm so glad for the resurgence of the old truths. But about them there is so much needless misunderstanding. And in the handling of any truth, any public teacher or preacher, would if he had sense enough and wisdom enough, he would not cause a little weak faith in Christ to stumble if he could help it.

And he would try to fix it so that if people fight, they fight what the Bible actually says. What the Bible actually teaches, not so much as what we learn about it, you know. I think that is a task that we not be ashamed of in our day.

Not for a moment would I want to apologize for any of the great truths of the word of God. I'd want to expound them as much as I had sense enough to do it. Wouldn't want to apologize for it.

But we do live in a day now when because of the renaissance of publishing good books, for instance the works of John Tarver and the old Puritan works, you couldn't get them a few years ago. And now the publishers can't print them fast enough to meet the demand. And they've even invaded down our way.

And I rejoice in that. And so I again tonight want to take two passages of scripture. And if I can, it might be that it would be of some help to somebody here.

I want to take the passage of scripture in John chapter 5, verses 39 and 40. And then the passage of scripture in John chapter 6, verses, well, several verses leading up down through verse 46. The first passage of scripture in the fifth chapter of John's gospel at verses 39 and 40, I'm going to read them, and I want to read the passage in chapter 6. And I don't know wherever I've gone, I have found that people have been greatly misled on these two passages of scripture.

And yet where they're opened up, they are very simply explained. And what I'm doing is saying that if God saves you, he calls you to be a preacher, a proclaimer, a gospel, a witness of the Lord. And I still say that this world is going to keep on going to hell unless we have a renaissance, a resurgence, a revival, a witness on the part of the people of God.

We're just not going to stop the headlong rush of this generation going to hell, preaching to people who come to church on Sunday morning, because very few of them do. But they're out there, and they're the only people on earth that can reach them, or God's people. And our lips have been closed too long.

They've been closed too long. And we need to give an effective witness, preach to people wherever they are. And because I believe that you as Christians are under this obligation, have this tremendous privilege, I won't spend a little while tonight opening up these passages.

Now, the first passage of scripture I call the most pessimistic scripture in the entire New Testament. Now, I use that term because this is the whipping board. This is the verse of scripture that the people who talk so much about the free will of men and the whosoever will gospel, that they're popular because it makes you big and God little and it sounds good.

This is their favorite passage of scripture, and I want to show you how instead of opening the door of salvation, this verse of scripture utterly closes it. There is no hope of the salvation of anybody on earth in these two verses of scripture. These two verses of scripture effectively fix it so everybody will just have to go to hell, if there is a hell, as the Bible says so.

Now, do not misunderstand me. We are foolish if we deny that men have wills. Men do.

God gave you a mind, he gave you an emotion, heart we call it, and he gave you will. And men do have wills. The only person, if this is the right use of it, the only person between the eternities that has a free will is Almighty God.

God can do anything he wants to, but I can't. I've got to go down to my pocket and raise \$200 to buy it out of my own pocket. I'm going to do it and preach to a whole lot of preachers next week just to get them infected with this gospel.

I wish I could just flap my wings and fly her down. I just can't do that. Now, as long as there are some things you'd like to do you can't do, you're not come free, are you? Are you? So you have a will that lacks a lot of being free.

Now, God's will is perfectly free. Is that right? But ours, something happened to it. It's been greatly bent.

And it's in pretty bad shape. If we had free will, we'd decide when we'd die. Would we not? And we'd be able to decide when we'd die.

Or if we had free will, we'd just decide we wouldn't die. Isn't that right? There's all these terms above and below. Who's up for the survey? Now, if I had free will, I'd be a millionaire.

Wouldn't you? Like all these fellows out there that can't, you know. One of them tonight, John, told me he wasn't a millionaire. I tell you, he's getting off his highs, you know.

He stayed there two years ago. Wouldn't you? Come on now, be honest. If you had free will, wouldn't you be a millionaire? Huh? Well, why aren't you? You're free, you fellows.

Huh? We're not quite as free as we've been told, are we? But we do have will. And I want us to see a little picture of the kind we've got. Now, here in the thirty-ninth verse, this is a very pessimistic scripture.

He's dealing here, is our Lord Jesus Christ, with the leaders of the Jewish nation. They were so powerful that they were able to incite their followers into becoming a mob to demand the release of Barabbas and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord, in the gospel of John, is in great conflict with them.

And here he makes a remark to them. And if you have your pencil, I have marked my Bible, I hope you do. Here are the King James, the authorized version that I use for folks at work.

I wouldn't be surprised if it isn't maybe the best one yet. I don't know about that. It's not the best of its translation.

But here they make a bad mistake, if you will not accuse me of being a modernist. And I wish you changed this. If you have an authorized version before you, it says, Search the scriptures.

But that's the very thing they spent their lives doing. They were Bible students. And what he actually says is, you are constantly searching the scriptures.

Their trouble was not that they needed some guy to jack them up instead of the Bible. They were Bible students. And he reminds them, this makes the pot a little thicker and the condition of them a little worse.

He says, you are constantly searching the scriptures. And the reason you are constantly searching the scriptures is that he and William, he thinks he has eternal life. They found that which satisfied William in a faith belief in their interpretation of the Old Testament.

That perfectly satisfied. And they were good students. They spinned it down to where two of the scribes would spin three doors in debating about how much room, how many ovens, the particles of ovens could rest on the sharp end of a needle.

Yet constantly searching the scriptures. Jocks and tittles, they had a meaning for everything. For they found that which satisfied them.

They found that which gave them peace. They found that in which they could rest in their knowledge, such as it was, of the scriptures. So they constantly searched the scriptures.

For they believed that in them, in them now, knowing them, believing them, you have eternal life. But he says, you have made one little mistake. These scriptures that you are constantly searching, which give you peace and satisfaction, they are they which testify of me.

And you missed it. Here I am. All those scriptures you are constantly searching.

How blind people are. How blind they were. And they were constant, diligent students of the scripture.

Searching, searching. Not just reading it to be able to say you've read your daily Bible reading, but they were searchers of it. They were constantly searching the scriptures.

And never saw what they were talking about. He said those scriptures that you spent your life constantly searching, there they are on every page. These are they which testify of me.

And all of your constant Bible searching has been brought to naught. Worse than that, it's got you in the shape you're in of being satisfied with that which often does not really satisfy. And has left you in this awful position to look at the next verse.

Constant searches of scriptures. Missed the point. Didn't get a word they read about.

Blind, blind, blind. How blind. So blind that they didn't see what the scriptures were talking about.

And because of that, he can say verse 40. Dearest sense, I was reading this verse in the Greek New Testament. I'm not a Greek scholar, but it is good enough that I can rattle it out for taking a lot of time.

And I found out, and this is a terrible thing, the little reading of this next verse is this. If you read it in the King James, you will not. Because you found peace otherwise.

You're all right. You've got what satisfies you. You're the Bible student.

You're Orthodox. You've got your customs and traditions and your religion. And you're all right.

And ye will not come to me. That's bad enough. But the actual reading of it is this.

Ye will not to will. It's not a passive thing. It's an active thing.

It wouldn't be so hard to win men to Christ if they're just nice little people that just hadn't decided yet to come to Christ. But that isn't the condition of men and women. The condition of these people is the condition of people today.

They were active in this willing not to come. They will. They summoned up all the powers of thy will.

And an unsaved man has a will, and it's powerful. Isn't that right? A lot of things a man can do because he wills to do it. Isn't that right? Some things you can't.

He's as free as he's able to do what he wills to do. Isn't that right? But so many things he can't do. But he summons up all the powers of thy will that God gave him.

Creates him in his own image, and he gave men a will. I can do something. I will to do this.

There's so many things we can will to do, and we do it. And they summon up all the powers of thy will. And they use it to will not to come to Christ.

Now, folks, in that case, we're all entrenched, brother. It don't take more than a nice little persuasive argument to judge a man that has built a fortress around the temple strong that he wills not to will to come to Jesus Christ. That's kind of folks we have preaching.

Left alone with God, unenabled of the Holy Spirit, men and women are acted in their will not to will to come to Jesus Christ. In Old Testament days, these same people, thy granddaddies and Jeremiah, for instance, it's chapter 2, I forget the verse, Jeremiah will say of these same people's ancestors that have the same attitude, my people. In the Old Testament, that doesn't necessarily mean that they're saved people.

They're God's covenant people, had access to the blood, most often ever by faith, took advantage of it. But my people, members of that elect nation that God picked out of all the other nations, all the nations, my people have committed two evils. The first comes back from the North in Old Testament time.

First they've done what? They've forsaken God at that North. But to make it twice as bad, having forsaken God, they've used that for themselves. They have no will, but people think they have.

And they drink of this system that they've, the world they've built, and they're perfectly satisfied. After reading the Bible, they come along and say, seek the Lord! They didn't pay much attention to him his whole life. They're drinking out of the will of the true God.

They've forsaken God, they've been drinking of that living water, that bad North, but when it's up, they've consumed the drink that satisfied them. He's put that faith in them. And so most of the appeal to that rite of the Old Testament was like water off a duck's back.

Wouldn't that so? Seek ye the Lord. Nobody much was interested. They didn't need to.

And when the Lord came along, their great-grandchildren were entrenched in the same situation. They found their satisfaction, these people, the text is talking about in Bible study, and in believing their interpretation of the Bible. And they found it satisfies them so well that they actively decided not to desire.

The actual best streak on it is, ye desire not to desire. To come unto me. To come unto me, that ye might have life.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, next time somebody talks to you about, oh, we believe in whosoever will and may come, fine. Next time somebody talks to you about, oh, we preach this great whosoever will gospel, Jesus died, whosoever, come on, come on, whosoever will. Just remember, that's fine.

But nobody will. That's just like whistling in the dark. Nobody will.

In all the world, from Adam's day till now, that's all there is to it. Who will? But the answer is, nobody. Nobody.

Nobody will. Now, I believe the Lord's sure talking some bad things about folks when he looks us in the eye. And says, well, one of you are entrenched in something just like these Jews were.

You have no desire to come to Christ. You have no sense of your need to come to Christ. No reason to motivate you to try to find out what it means to come to Christ.

Nobody. Nobody. Nobody.

I'm glad I don't have to preach that. I like John 6.4. Here's an optimistic verse. I want you to look at it.

And I say this is an optimistic verse. This has got hope in it. Oh, I'm not a novice in trying to preach the grace of God.

Don't know how to preach it very well. But I've been making steps at it for quite a while. I'm not exactly a novice.

And I have run across several things. And the thing I've run across everywhere I've gone is, oh, that's terrible stuff. That'll discourage people.

That'll discourage people. But the most encouraging verse, oh, it's full of hope. It opens, shuts every door so it can show you the only one.

And a fellow that shows something every false door so he can drive you to see the only door that's worth entering, he's your friend. And this verse certainly closes every door except the one door. But it opens that door as wide as the heart of God.

A young fellow used to go to school. He told me the other day, he's a brother of mine. He said, I wish I could have you hold a meeting in my chair.

I said, that means you're so mad. But he said, the first time you got up in the pulpit and said to the congregation that unless God undertakes to work a miracle, change you from a God-resister into a Christ-seeker, you're going to go to hell. I said, scare my folks to death.

And he's telling the truth. Because he's been taught to preach and believe that this world is just full of folks dying to get to Christ. And all we've got to do is to say, come on and give it a try.

Now, that ain't the kind of folks people want. No, you weren't that kind. And you cut out the same kind of cloth the folks you're trying to witness to.

And it is true, if it does scare people to death, although the preacher doesn't have sense enough and hard passion enough to explain it or know it so, that a miracle does have to take place in a man to cause him to begin to seek the Lord. Isn't that right? He said that would discourage people from deciding from Christ.

And I said, well, that's what I'm trying to get people to quit doing, decide for Christ.

Well, nearly everybody in America has done it 20 times and nothing happened yet. So that word, decision, has got a bad ring in it now. It used to be a good word, now it seems to be a bad word.

Look at the hope in this verse of scripture. You're familiar with this verse of scripture, this passage of scripture. Let me begin reading, if you will, at verse 38.

For I came down, 6 John, for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life.

Now, that's wide enough, isn't it? But that's narrowed by believing and seeing. Everybody believes? Amen. Everybody sees? Amen.

This is the Father's will, that I raise him up at the last day. And you know what happens? And in the gospel of John, the term, the Jews, means the leaders of the Jews. Not the mass people that didn't know what they believed until they found out what their leader said, you know.

That's largely the way it is now. People say, what do you do? What's your church? Well, I don't know. I'll have to find out.

That's pretty well most of it. You know what Jews did, these leaders? You know what they did, that kind of teaching? They murmured. Grrr.

They growled. Huh? They weren't nice people that were just hungry to be saved. These old hardships come along, tell them they couldn't.

No, no. No, no. They murmured.

That's a bad word. They didn't murmur to him. They murmured at him.

Not to his face, but at him. They went around in the corner, you know. Grrr, grrr, grrr.

I used to have a lot of that. I got to where I got so nice, I can't get a fight much anymore. But I used to be in some scrap.

And as soon as it starts to be over, the brethren would be over there. There's a knoll in that zone. They're over there.

Well, we'd get somewhere in those days. They knew something was going on. But everything got so nice and quiet now, we can't even have a good church for us.

We're over. You know what the Jews did? They murmured at him. Now, keep that in mind.

Because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. Would this bread coming down from heaven look like, folks, the tickle of death you hear about? Not this crowd. He said, not you, but also we've looked you over.

Not you. Not you. No.

And they said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, I came down from heaven? He was in the world and the world didn't even know about him. He came into his own zone, looked him over and said, you'll never do it. He dwelt among us, and some people beheld his glory.

These folks didn't. They said, we know who he is. We know his daddy and his mother and his brothers and sisters.

They didn't see his glory. How is it he comes here and says, I'm the bread that came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, now all this fussing, that's not getting you anywhere, murmur not among yourselves. And then I'll script you in that sort of an atmosphere.

No man. No man. No man.

Here's a fellow that's refusing to believe the world. He shuts them up. He does it to bring them down off their high horse.

They are sitting in judgment on the Son of God instead of being judged by him. They are denying his deity and murmuring at his praise. They are doing it woefully with all their wits about them.

They are Bible students. They are the same crowd that spent their lives constantly searching the scriptures and found everything in them except the testimony of Jesus Christ. And to that class of people the Lord said, no use to murmur.

No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Now people say to me, well, Brother Barnes, if that's so, nothing but poor sinners do. They just fool their minds and hope that someday, maybe, whatever that means, the Father will draw him.

And so they say we ought not to quote that verse of scripture. That will discourage men and women. But this verse of scripture is true.

It's true. It's true. No man can get to Jesus Christ unless God does draw him.

That's just as so as it can be. And it's never wrong to tell a sinner the truth if it's God's truth. And in telling the truth you're saying don't take that other medicine.

This is the medicine. Swallow that and just get it into your throat. That in your own strength, under the pressure of all these appeals, well, you do so and so.

You get it and taste it because it's God's truth. You just can't get the job done unless God draws you. Now that's telling the fellow the truth.

And truth, if known, will set a man free. It will close every door that leads to nowhere. And it will shut a man up to the only door that leads to Christ.

Let's look at how God opens that door. Here's hope. How does God draw me in? Truth.

Well, the next verse tells you. Nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand people picked this verse up and recorded the Lamb based truth with and denied truth and the lie of the sinners. When it's the only hopeful verse, I know one thing.

The most hopeful verse, I know it in death. Is it so, Lord God, that a lost man can't get to Christ unless the Father draws him? Yes. He won't do it himself.

He'll desire not to desire unto Christ himself. If you show him where there's a million dollars, he'll run for that or something else. But he won't run for Christ.

Is it true that unless the Father draws a man, he can't get to Christ? Yes. Is that to discourage people? No. That's to show them the door and introduce them to the drawing work of Almighty God.

Look how simple it is. How does he draw people? Well, it's an Old Testament teaching. It always has done it this way.

It's written in the Prophets. It's not something new. It's as old as the heart and plan of God.

It's written in the Prophets. What's written in the Prophets? Well, it's in Isaiah. And they shall all be taught of God.

How does God draw sinners to his Son? By bringing the truth of his Son to men and women. Just as simple. No use all this fussing, feuding, and spitting the people are doing now about this blessed truth.

How does God draw sinners? He draws them by bringing truth to them. And they shall be all taught of God. They shall be all taught of God.

And what will be the result? Every man, therefore, that hath heard. I don't know anything to keep an old sinner from listening to the truth, do you? There's nobody in America that will arrest you if you listen to truth, now. I sure wouldn't be terrible to go to hell from America where, if you wanted to, you could hear the truth.

Isn't that right? Every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father. What's the Father doing? He's teaching them. What about the fellow that listens to God and learns of him? What'll he do? Every last one of them, what'll he do? Commit unto me.

Don't lose a single one. So instead of pressing at God and saying this is a pessimistic scripture and that'll lead to fatalism and lead people so they won't come to Christ and discourage them, no, no. It'll do this.

It'll do this. As my speaking then, if God don't know the law, he never will. Unless you become a listener to him bringing you the truth of his blessed Son.

It's still that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The gospel. It's still true that men and women can be said of you that you have obeyed that form of doctrine that was brought to you from the heart.

True presence. The only way on earth anybody can get to Jesus Christ is in the truth of him. And this is a thing that has encouraged me and made me be pretty much a critic of myself and done a very good job of it, but done the best that you have.

Ladies and gentlemen, you listen to me. It's really God who does the teaching. It's really God who does the preaching.

I am the sentient that preaches the gospel. John God uses my little old voice and brain. He's the one that commands people to repent.

He uses my little old voice. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, that's who John the Baptist was, and the two people there, the voice of John the Baptist, the one crying in the wilderness is Almighty God. It's really God's Spirit that brings these truths out and applies them, not the poor preacher or the personal worker.

This is the way God draws men and women. And it works, brother. You've got your time to listen and to learn.

You'll come to Christ. You can't get to him except in the truth of him. And God's the one who brings that truth to men.

That's the reason it's said, my sheep, I suppose, I'm not doing violence to it. See, my sheep, whether they're yet found or not, there's one thing that will characterize them. They're listening.

They listen to my voice. You keep on listening to God's truth about God's Son and God's gospel and the power of God's Spirit, you're going to get close. It's not going to come in a whirlwind.

God don't teach that way. It's not going to come in a vision. How does God draw men? By teaching them.

Teaching them what? Teaching them truth. The truth about what? Teaching them about Christ. And they're just two truths about Christ, his cross and his throne.

Peter said the gospel is the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow. And he's in it now. He was on a cross, now he's on a throne.

Learn about the cross of Christ on which the Prince of Glory died. That's either the fairest story or it's God's truth. You want to get Christ? Listen to God's truth.

How does God draw men to Christ? By becoming their teacher. Every man shall be taught of God. He that hears and learns of him, glory hallelujah, comes to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brother, that gets the job done. This other business, leading it up to Holy Old Brother Barnard's will, I don't do so good. I don't do so good.

But to listen. To listen. Listen.

That's optimistic. I'd look every human being on earth in the face and say, I'm going to tell you how you're going to get to Christ. You're going to get to him in the truth of him.

How are you going to find it out? Listening to the great teacher of God. He draws men to his son by bringing them face to face with truth as it is about his son. And there isn't a sinner alive that's got an excuse if he has opportunity to be a listener.

That's the door. I like to open Acts chapter 16 and show you how the sovereignty of the Spirit, so we can't get God in a straight jacket or in our little particular bucket. Three different people are brought to God in Acts 16.

All of them. As God brings them, as that teacher, as he draws them, apparently in a different way. There's Lydia.

She owned the biggest women's clothing store in the city. She was a seller of purple. And you know what happened? How did God teach her? Well, he opened her.

What did he do? Huh? That she'd do what? That she'd sort of pay a little attention? Huh? He opened her heart that she attended on the Word. She became a listener. And who did she listen to? She listened to God.

Huh? It dawned on that child that the truth she was reading was God's truth. Is that right? Then there was a little woman who made a lot of money for her master's telling fortune. Must have taken her about a month to get to Christ.

She followed a couple of fellows. You know what they were doing? In her own testimony. He said, Let these be the servants of the Most High God that do what? Do show unto us the way of salvation.

And one demon went out today and you could hear the grind in her soul. And another went out the next day. And another went out the next day.

She followed Paul and Cyrus, listened to them as God used them to do what? Show people the way of salvation. How does God draw the truth? He says he brings truth. That's how he draws it.

And after many days she followed Paul. Paul found the third and struck the job done. And then there was the man who had beaten Paul and Cyrus with stripes.

And the others had put their feet in stocks and put them down in the cell and left them. And the God who draws men to himself went to all the trouble of performing an earthquake. After a while the man was awakened by that earthquake.

And being scared half out of his wits, he came before them firmly. And apparently there he did what knocks into pocket all of our recipes. Although we're not sure.

But we do know this that an awful quick thing. That man got under conviction, was seized with fear, and found relief. A sovereign God draws men.

He may do it like he did Lydia. Just opened her heart. She just sat down and said, now I'm just reading the word.

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