

PREDESTINATION and FREE WILL Pt. 3: VESSELS of WRATH, FAITH, FREE WILL, CHOICE

This past week I searched for a few videos on our Youtube platform and so many videos have been pulled down or are just suppressed that we cannot access them – same difference. I encourage you to go to our website. Some of you guys told me you missed a few messages near the end of the coronavirus teaching just before we took a break from that series. Always go to the website, that is where all of our messages are housed. Just type threeheartchurch.org all together into whatever search engine you use. Then from the website homepage click on sermons and the newest sermon should be there Saturday morning by about 10:00 unless something happens and there is a delay that day. Sometimes they scramble our sight. Truly we are still going and doing what we do by God's grace.

Even though I am just now going to be officially starting to cover free will in this part of this series, the subject matter of this teaching overlaps and you just can't keep them separate when teaching on predestination and free will. So from the beginning of this teaching you have already been getting some information on free will but we are really going to get into it today.

Last week we read the passage about the vessels of mercy and the vessels of wrath (Romans 9) and we discussed God's Sovereignty in that He has mercy on whom He will and He hardens whom He will. We read that God hated Esau. Let's talk about that.

God told Rebecca, even before her babies were born that she had two nations fighting in her womb. (Gen.25:23) God knew before they were born that Esau would serve Jacob. He also knew that Esau would not love the ways of God. It seems harsh to read, that God hated him. I remember reading that as a baby Christian and I would think to myself, hmmm that doesn't make sense to me. Why does it say He loved the whole world and right here it says He hated Esau? I knew that there was more to it even if I did not understand it right then. When

you read things like that ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the meaning of it to you and move on. Sometimes it is a matter of you just needing to grow and walk with God longer as He continues to teach you His Word and all about Him and you draw nearer to Him.

God knew all about Esau before he was ever born. He was against God from the very beginning. He did not care for God and His ways. He did not care for the firstborn birthright blessing that would be bestowed on him. He threw it away without a second thought for a bowl of lentil stew. God knew before birth that Esau would not grow up loving God and would not walk in His ways.

What about these vessels of wrath that are fitted for destruction? God does as He pleases, He is Sovereign over all. If He chooses to use someone like Pharaoh so that He can show His power and draw His people to Himself, He will. Just like He chose Judas to be one of the 12 disciples knowing full well what he would do in betraying Jesus. I think Judas is just another Esau. God knew Judas would not come to Him and so He used Him to fulfill His plan to give Jesus as a sacrifice for the whole world.

Matt.26:24 - The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man (far better for that man) if he had not been born.

Just as God knew who would come and believe in Jesus and who would not, He knew Judas would not. Therefore God knew the exact time to send Jesus into the world and have Him grow up at the same time as Judas so that everything would go off like clockwork. Judas did what he wanted to and God used it for His purpose and His glory. Just like the Bible calls Babylon a hammer and a golden cup in the Lord's hand (Jeremiah 50 – 51). They were a hammer that God used against Israel and other nations to pour out His judgment. Then the time came when God destroyed that hammer, He came back and brought judgment against Babylon. God tells us not to rejoice when our enemy falls lest it displease the Lord and He turns His wrath from them onto you. They were not a God fearing nation. So after He used them to judge His own people, then He turned and poured out His judgement on them.

satan is a vessel that was fitted for destruction. The angels or at least the fallen angels will be judged just like we will. Of course if you read in Revelation satan is thrown into the lake of fire and it doesn't even mention a judgment for him. Or at least it mentions The Great White Throne Judgment of the damned after satan has already been cast into the lake of fire. God is using him right now to test the whole world and see who will come to Him and be saved or who will choose the god of this world who is satan.

Hitler was a vessel fitted or prepared for destruction. He pursued the occult and not God and never repented and turned to God.

The same must be true of Judas who walked and lived with Jesus for 3 years and yet did not truly believe and love Him. He allowed satan to enter him. Luke 22:3 / John 13:27. Once Judas decided to take money and betray Jesus, then the door to sin was open and satan entered Judas.

There have always been people that hate God. The Bible calls them fools – the fool has said in his heart there is no God (Psalm 14:1).

There is a story in the old testament about Ahab who was not a righteous king, he wanted Naboth's vineyard and Naboth would not let him have it, not for money and not in exchange for another piece of land. So Naboth was depressed about it and pouting. So Jezebel devised a wicked plan to get that land for Ahab. She sent her instructions to the elders and leaders of his city and sealed them as if they were from Ahab.

1 Kings 21:9-10 – And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high (in a prominent seat) among the people: And set two men, sons of Belial (scoundrels), before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

Surely these sons of Belial, who is satan, were vessels fitted for destruction.

FAITH

Some believe God gives faith to believe in Him only to those who are predestined and that faith is a gift.

Romans 10:17 - So then faith *cometh* by hearing (the message or good news), and hearing by the word of God (about Christ).

Faith is there for anyone who listens to God's Word and believes. The more you read His Word and feed your spirit man, your faith will increase.

God is the One Who knows exactly when faith is present in the heart.

John 6:63-64 – (Jesus speaking) It is the Spirit that quickeneth (makes alive or gives life); the flesh profiteth nothing (Human effort accomplishes nothing): the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit (full of the Spirit), and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto Him of My Father (unless the Father enables them to come or unless the Father gives them to Me). From that time many of His disciples went back (turned away), and walked no more with Him.

Being born again or from above is when belief or faith is there and the Holy Spirit comes in. This comes by hearing the Word of God or the Word of Christ or about Christ, that's how faith comes. The Spirit is our Teacher and God's Word teaches us how to obey and draw near to Him and to have eternal life. God has also called and gifted some of us to help in teaching as well.

Remember no one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws them. The disciples that left could not understand what had just been said in the previous passage of scripture about eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood. They did not understand this was not literal, but it was spiritually speaking.

James 1:18 – Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth (He chose to give us birth through the Word of Truth), that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creation (or of all He created).

This is another passage that shows that it is by God's Word that we come to Him through hearing His Word. He begot those in the early churches with His Word and that is still how we come to Christ today.

2 Thes.2:13 – But we are bound (ought to) to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning (from the first) chosen you to salvation (chosen you to experience salvation) through sanctification of the Spirit (the sanctifying work of the Spirit) and belief of the truth (through your belief in the truth):

Who are the chosen ones that God chose from the beginning? The ones that would believe by being drawn by the Spirit and hearing the truth of Christ or of God's Word about Christ, be saved and let the Holy Spirit work in their lives. This again is a scripture to one of the early churches. God chose to begin salvation in them and then it spread out to the rest of the world. Again, Belief of the truth, hearing God's Word and then faith or belief comes.

Acts 14:8-9 - And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet (lame in his feet), being a cripple from his mother's womb (since birth), who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him (Paul looking straight at him), and perceiving (saw) that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped (jumped up) and walked.

Paul was preaching and could SEE the man had faith. When you speak God's Word you can see who believes it and who doesn't. The man heard the truth, God's Word and had faith.

Romans 12:3 - For I say, through the grace (by the privilege and authority) given unto me, I say to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly (be honest in your evaluation of yourselves), according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith (measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us).

I believe this passage is talking about new believers and the faith that God gives them once they hear the gospel message and believe. Then as we grow in relationship with Christ, we grow in faith too. As God continues to reveal Himself

to you, your faith gets stronger. As He answers prayers and does miraculous things and you see change in your life and those around you, your faith is growing and being strengthened.

In the next passage of scripture, a man came to Jesus seeking deliverance for his little boy.

Mark 9:21-24 - And He (Jesus) asked his father (the little boy's father), How long is it ago since this came unto him (How long has this been happening)? And he said, Of a child (since childhood). And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire (the spirit often throws him into the fire), and into the waters, to destroy him (to kill him): but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us (Have mercy on us and help us, if You can). Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe (?), all things *are* possible to him that believeth (everything is possible if a person believes). And straightway (immediately) the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief (help me overcome my unbelief).

This man was willing to admit he may have unbelief and was asking the Lord to get it out of the way. It is always good to ask the Lord to get rid of any doubt and unbelief you may have.

FREEWILL or CHOICE

I can't believe there are people teaching there is no free will. They believe that if you are going to be saved that God will make everything happen. That you have no choice in the matter. All of these false teachings are God's prophecies coming to pass.

Matt.24:10-11 - And then shall many be offended (At that time shall many turn away from Me or from the faith), and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise (will appear), and shall deceive many.

1 Timothy 4:1 - Now the Spirit speaketh expressly (clearly says), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits (following deceiving spirits), and doctrines of devils (things taught by demons);

So there really are people that believe there is no free will.

Even satan had a choice and he wanted to be God so he rebelled and took a third of the angels with him. (Rev.12:4,9)

What about these vessels of wrath?

Psalm 81:10-12 - I Am the LORD thy God, which (Who) brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it (with good things). But my people would not hearken to My voice; and Israel would none of Me (Israel would not submit to Me). So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust (unto their own stubborn desires): *and* they walked in their own counsels (ideas / devices).

The G.Bible says "I gave them up unto the hardness of their heart."

Hebrews 3:7-8 – Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation (rebellion), in the day of temptation (testing) in the wilderness:

These passages show us that we have the ability to harden our hearts and to follow our own ways or desires and not God's. If you harden your heart long enough, if you grieve the Holy Spirit long enough, He will leave you and let you have your sin.

Romans 1:28-32 - And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge (they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God or thought it was foolish to acknowledge God), God gave them over to a reprobate mind (depraved mind), to do those things which are not convenient (to do things that should never be done); Being filled with all unrighteousness (every kind of wickedness), fornication, wickedness (evil), covetousness (greed), maliciousness (depravity); full of envy, murder, debate (quarrelling) , deceit, malignity (malicious behavior); whisperers (gossips), Backbiters (slanderers / backstabbers), haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things (inventing new ways of doing evil), disobedient to parents, Without understanding (they refuse to understand), covenantbreakers (they don't keep their word), without natural affection (heartless), implacable (relentless), unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of

God, that they which (who) commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them (encourage others to do them too).

This is a great passage showing what happens when you love your sin more than God. He will turn you over to it. And I'd say this pretty well sums up where we are at today in the world. The world looks just like what is described here.

CLOSING

Some believe God's grace is something we cannot resist. It is a force that overpowers us. Does He force us to serve Him?

Listen to what Stephen told the religious leaders just before they stoned him:

Acts 7:51 - Ye stiffnecked (stubborn) and uncircumcised in heart and ears (heathen in your hearts and deaf to the truth), ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers (ancestors) *did*, so *do* ye.

God does not force anyone. His grace or His Spirit can be resisted. We just read several passages that proved that out.

In the Old Testament, God was continually calling Israel to come back to Him and they continually rejected Him. They rejected Him right after He delivered them from Egypt and that is why He let that generation wander around in the desert until they died off. They saw all those powerful miracles and they followed His cloud by day and His pillar of fire by night and He supernaturally provided manna for them and water from a rock, their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell and yet they complained against Him and went instantly into idolatry against Him.

King Saul is a good example of someone resisting God's Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament God's Spirit would be upon those He anointed and called to be His ministers or His righteous kings. They did not have the Holy Spirit on the inside all the time like true Christians do today. He kept sinning against God and was being a people pleaser instead of a God pleaser and God removed His Spirit from King Saul (1 Sam.16:14). He resisted God's Spirit and God's plan for his life.

God does not force anyone to serve Him. His Spirit can be resisted.

PRAYER