

Chosen // Ephesians 1:1–14 // *Love Incorruptible* (Ephesians) 1

Here at the Summit Church, we challenge every college student to **give at least one summer** to missions. The 'Go Now Initiative' is how you can do that.

It's not just for students called to be pastors and missionaries. It's designed to take **any of you**—no matter what profession God sends you into—deep into the Bible and teach you how to become a disciple-maker

- You'll get a **lot of great training by Summit pastors and seminary professors**, and go on at least 2 mission trips over the summer.
- **We didn't have "Go Now" way back when I was in college**—we barely had email or airplanes (we did have running water, which a lot of our UNC students can't say)—but I did take a season like this and devoted myself to **learning more about the Bible and missions** and I can say it was the most valuable part of my college experience.
- **If you want to know more**, talk with your campus pastor after the service or check it out on the website—**deadline is Feb 10—so, don't slack around!**

Today we start an 8-week study on the book of Ephesians.

- Our church planters did a great job giving us a little teaser, last weekend, covering Paul's prayer in the **middle of Ephesians**...

Works Consulted:

Ephesians 1, Joby Martin

"Our Ransom," Tim Keller

"Divine Tensions," Matt Chandler

"God Predestined Us unto Sonship Through Jesus Christ," John Piper

John Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*

John MacArthur, *Ephesians*

Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters--Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*

Tony Merida, *Exalting Christ in Ephesians*

- (They were **supposed to start with chapter 1**, but they saw the word 'predestination' in there and got scared, so they skipped ahead to a touchy-feely section)

Just kidding. But I do want to give you a little warning...

- I hope you brought your theological big-boy pants this weekend. In this chapter, we're going to wrestle with **one of the most difficult**—and most precious—of all biblical truths.

I **memorized the chapter** with some of our pastors earlier this year. Let me see if I can quote vv. 3–14 for you:

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[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, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- That is one, long sentence in Greek—**202 words**; a sentence that theologians love and English teachers hate; one long, Spirit-inspired, run-on sentence.

(But I love this passage: It's been so awesome to have it bouncing around in my heart.)

- Here's my challenge for you: **What if you memorized it**—these 11 verses, through the course of this series? You have **2 months**—starting right now. Go.

A few things you should know about the book of Ephesians:

- **First, the book of Ephesians is considered to be Paul's theological masterpiece**—because Paul packs everything essential for you to know about the Christian life in 6 short chapters.
 - If you understand these pages of this book (hold up Ephesians), you'll be a Bible expert.
 - And dudes, chics totally dig that.
- **The first 3 chapters are filled with truth about who God is and what he's done in the gospel**; the last 3 chapters offer some of the most practical instruction you'll find anywhere in the Bible—on marriage, forgiveness, conflict management, family, workplace relationships and a **host of other** day to day issues.
- **But that's partially where people read it wrongly**. They treat primarily as a book of doctrine or a practical guide for living.
- **Ephesians was written first and foremost, however**, as a survival manual for a church in a very hostile environment.
 - **Ephesus was one of the most impressive and intimidating cities of the ancient world**. It was on a seaport right at the

intersection of Europe and Asia, which made it one of the main trade-hubs of the Roman Empire.

- It was **cosmopolitan and multi-cultural**. It boasted one of the largest libraries in history, and many of the world's most prestigious scholars lived there.
- **Religiously, it was a smorgasbord**. The city housed 50 different temples, including the largest Temple of the ancient world, dedicated to Artemis, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world.
- **Sexual immorality was a literal industry**. Most of the temples offered some kind of prostitution as part of the worship ritual.
 - **What happened in Ephesus stayed in Ephesus**, unless it was contagious, and then you carried it around with you for the rest of your life...

All this to say, it was not a Christian-friendly place. **Which is what makes the letter so timely and relevant** for us. Many of us are in environments not friendly to Christianity. For some of you that's your school, your workplace, maybe even your family.

- For some of our church planters around the world, who listen in each week, they are literally in places where it is illegal to live out your Christian faith.

So, **we're going to dive into this book** because it will show us how we can survive and thrive *in those places*.

1:3–14

So, here we go: Paul opens up this letter with a concept many of us find difficult: **Predestination**.

In vs. 4 Paul says, "God... chose us in him before the foundation of the world," and throughout the chapter he repeats:

- vs. 5, "*he predestined us for adoption,*"

- and, vs. 11, “he predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.”

Which raises all kinds of questions for us, such as:

- *What about free will?*
- Or: *Why does God choose some people and not others?*

Those are **great questions**, and we’ll deal with those in a minute, but first, let’s just ask: “**What exactly** is Paul teaching here and then, and then, **WHY** is he teaching it?”

Because, you see, let me give you a little ground rule for approaching the Bible: There are some things about God that we’ll never fully understand.

The Bible tells us that in a verse that really helped me when I was struggling with many of these same questions: **Deuteronomy 29:29**, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

- Do you see there is a **distinction** there between a “revealed thing” and a “secret thing?” **Our responsibility**, Moses (the writer of Deuteronomy) tells us, is to believe and obey what is *revealed*, not to figure out all that is hidden.
- (And, **that some things remain hidden really aggravates a lot of theologians**, who insist on having it all figured out.
- But **we’re talking about God**, so it should not surprise you that there remains a realm which our minds can scarcely fathom.
 - I mean, **imagine trying to explain quantum physics** for a 4-year-old! Or imagine someone **trying to explain it to you**.
- Because you can’t explain it fully, doesn’t mean it’s not true.
 - **And what is greater**—the gap between a 4-year-old’s understanding and ours, or the gap between our understanding and God’s?

- So, **we approach this subject understanding that we are delving into realities** that our minds can barely grasp!
 - Sometimes we **read passages like this one** and think, “Wow, that is really deep.” But when we say that **we’re like the 10-year-old boy who runs out into the ocean** and goes 20 yards out to where his feet can’t touch and he says, “Oh, it’s so deep!” In 7 feet of water he feels like it is really deep, but just a little way out and the depth goes to several miles.
 - **Keep in mind our subject:** God.

So again, “**What exactly are the Scriptures saying here?**” and “**Why does God tell us these things?**” (Why does he want us know them?)

First, vs. 4: notice *when* it says we were chosen. **Vs. 4, “Chosen in him before the foundation of the world.”**

- This is an awesome thought. **Before the world was ever established, God knew you and loved you.** There has never been a time in eternity when God did not know you and love you.
- For as long as God has been in existence—from eternity past—he has known about you, cherished you and planned to redeem and save you.

Sometimes people think that this verse means that God simply just “knew beforehand” who would choose him, as if he looked down the corridors of the future and said, “Oh, I see that J.D. will choose me, so I choose him back!” But that is **not what this verse says**.

- It says he set his love on us and chose us before we were even a twinkle in our daddy’s eye.
- From **vs. 3 when the process of our salvation begins to vs. 14 when it is over**, God is one taking all the action!
 - (BTW, I told you this is one, long 202-word sentence.
 - The sentence has **48 pronouns: 30 of them** belong to God
 - There are **24 verbs, or action sequences** in it: God does 20 of them, and only 4 of them we do.

- Vs. 3, God blesses; vs. 4, he chooses; vs. 5, he predestines and adopts vs. 6, he bestows grace; vs. 7, he redeems and forgives; vs. 8, he lavishes; vs. 9, he makes known and he purposes; vs. 10, he unites together in Christ; vs. 11, he works; vs. 13, he seals.

○ Listen to the 4 that we do: **we listen; we receive; we believe; and we hope.**

- **Isn't that beautiful?**

- **You say, "What part of salvation are we responsible for?"**
We did all the sinning. Jesus did all the saving.

You say, "**Well, why did he choose me?** What was it about me?"

- **Was it my potential?** Did God see that I was going to make a great Christian and say, "Man, I gotta have that guy on my team! He's such a great debater, or she has such potential for leadership—I want them!"

Not at all. In one of the most **beautiful and mystifying passages** of the OT, when God was explaining to Israel why he chose *them*, he said, **Deuteronomy 7:7-8**, "*It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you...*"

IOW, it's not your potential. I didn't choose you because you were great, Israel; you became great because I chose you.

You say, "I know—maybe it was that I wasn't as sinful as other people; God saw that deep down I had a good and teachable heart."

- Well, that's not true either.
- Look again, at Deuteronomy: "*Know therefore that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people.*" (**Deuteronomy 9:6**)
In other words, "Yeah, it wasn't your good heart either. Actually, your heart was even harder than most."

- God didn't look down and say: "I know there's still some good in you! I'll save you." **That's a scene from STAR WARS, not the gospel.** No, you had no good in you.
- **In chapter 2, Paul explains**, "You were dead in trespasses and sins." Dead is dead. There's not levels of dead.
 - There's that scene in **The Princess Bride**, one of the great movies from the 1980's, where Inigo Montoya and Andre the Giant are distraught because, Westley, their hero is dead. And so, they take Westley's dead body to the little wizard, who says, "No reason to fear, boys. He's only mostly dead." And then he works some magic on him and revives him.
 - That might be good entertainment but it's **bad science** and **bad theology**. There's no such thing as mostly dead. You're either dead or you're not.
 - **Jesus did not go** around Jerusalem saying, "Oh, there's some life in that one, I can still raise him!" No. Every person he raised from the dead was fully dead.
- *God didn't choose us because we were loveable. In fact, chapter 2,* Paul is going to tell us that *sin had made us God's enemies, sons of disobedience, objects of his wrath.*
 - And I know we say, "Well yes, I made mistakes, but I am still mostly loveable."
 - What you are underestimating is the sinfulness—**the disgustingness**—of sin.
 - J. Edwards, "*The slightest sin has an infinite amount of hatefulness in it, enough to outweigh whatever loveliness the creature possessed.*"
 - So, yes, there are loveable things about us, but the **hideousness of our rebellion** against God so outweighs those things that we are classified as God's enemies.

So, what was it then, about you, that caused him to choose you? This is the mystifying part. Did you see that phrase in **Deut 7:8?** "*It was not because you were more in number than any other people that*

the Lord set his love on you and chose you... but it is because the Lord loves you..."

- *See the redundancy? He loves you just because he loves you. **Fatherly love doesn't really have an explanation.** I think of it as the way I love my kids. My 3 daughters used to stay in the same room... I often ask them: Does Daddy love you because you are beautiful?"*
- That's **the one relationship where I experience love for someone that doesn't have an explanation.** I don't love them because they are lovely, I just love them.

Before we'd ever done good or bad, before the foundation of the world, God set his love on us. I love **Spurgeon's words here:** "I have no questions that God chose me, because I am quite sure that if God had not chosen me I should never have chosen him; and I am sure he chose me before I was born, or else he never would have chosen me afterwards; and he must have elected me for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why he should have looked upon me with special love. So, I feel like I am forced to accept this doctrine."¹

- I love my **7-year-old daughter's understanding of this...** VOICE

You say, "Well, didn't that violate my free will?"

- **No. The Bible says his choice is never against our will but always in concert with it.** In some places, God says "I chose you before the foundation of the world," but in others Jesus said, "Whosoever *will* may come."
- Jesus explained how it works in **John 6:44** when he says, "**No one comes to me unless the Father draws him.**"
 - Our **choice to come and the Father's drawing** go hand in hand.
 - The **Greek word for "draw" there, *helkuo***; it carries the idea of a desperately hungry man being drawn to food.

- That is what God did to us: **he created a hunger** in us to know Jesus. And that hunger drew us to Jesus.

- You see, **our problem is not that we wanted to choose God and we couldn't**; our problem is that deep down none of us want to choose God—we prefer to rule ourselves and be the center of our own universe. Our "wanter" that is all out of whack.
 - That's what it means to be **spiritually dead.**
 - So, God, through the preaching of the gospel and the power of the Spirit, changes our hearts so that we begin to want God.

You say, "Well, why didn't God choose everybody?" That's a big question—let me just say two things:

- **First: Keep in mind that God is not *obligated*** to extend salvation to anyone. What is fair is that we all perish. That any of us have a chance to receive forgiveness is a free gift of undeserved grace.
- But, **second: This is the part of this discussion where a certain amount of mystery sets in,** because Scripture *never presents a lack of God's choosing as the reason why someone didn't come.* Not once! It's always on us.
 - **Matthew 23: 37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"**
 - **2 Peter 3:9, The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance!"**
 - The Bible itself ends with, "**Whosoever will may come.**" (**Rev 22:17**) It's your choice! The last voice you'll hear...
- And I realize there is mystery there, but here is what is **revealed:**
 - If you're a Christian, it's because God chose you. If you're not, it's because **you have chosen** to reject God, and the Lord is not willing that you should perish, but that you should come to repentance.

¹ Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures, book 2, page 47*

- **Are you chosen?** In one sense, you have the power to decide that.
 - **If you choose to repent** and believe in Jesus, you're chosen. The choice is yours.

Paul continues, "In love (5) he **predestined us for adoption** through Jesus Christ..."

- **Adoption:** What another beautiful concept! Adoption means that we weren't part of his family, but he made us part of his family.
 - We weren't his "mostly good but wayward kids." We were rebels, members of a traitor race. And he said, "I'll make you mine."
- And he did that *joyfully*.
 - The word translated "purpose" in verses 5 and 9 is actually "kind intention." God didn't just plan and execute the process of our salvation; he *enjoyed* this process.
 - **It cost him everything—the blood of Jesus**—to accomplish it, but he enjoyed every second of it.
 - **I have several friends who have adopted.** One of the things they've told me... When you walk into the nursery and see the one who is to become your child—even if they have some physical or emotional problem—immediately love wells up in your heart and you say, "They are mine!"
 - This is **just a taste of the love God showed to us**. God walked into the orphanage of sin, to the sons and daughters of the traitor race, deformed by sin, and love welled up in his heart and he said, "I'll make that one mine!"

Verse 13–14, Paul finishes his explanation of what God did when he saved us: (13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- **Did you notice in this chapter that we see the whole Trinity involved in the process?** The Father purposes; the Son redeems;

now we see the Holy Spirit seals. Our salvation is an affair of the whole God-head!

- Specifically, **the Holy Spirit, Paul says, is the one who ensures** to us that God is going to finish what he started.
- **That's why, in vs. 14 Paul calls him, "guarantee of our inheritance."** What he's referring to is the concept of **earnest money**.
 - When you are **trying to give someone a promise that you're going to follow through on a deal**, you give them enough money that they know you'd never just walk away from it.
- **What has God given us as earnest money?** He's put part of himself into us.
 - **How do we know that he is going to complete his work in us** and take us to heaven? Because he's already put the best part of heaven into us.
 - I think of the **HS in some ways like the moon**. Every night the sun virtually disappears from sight...
 - The Holy Spirit's work in our lives assures us that Jesus is coming back to finish what he started.

There's one other phrase I want to make sure that we see before I close this section—because until you learn this, a lot of the rest won't make sense. That is **the repeated phrase, "to the praise of his glory," (vv. 6, 12, 14)**

- **Why does God do things the way that he does them?** For the praise of his glory.
 - **He saved us the way that he did to demonstrate** his glory
- **This is not the only place we see this in the Bible, btw.** Not by far.
 - To Israel, God said: **"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone." Ezekiel 36:22**

- Even in a verse I memorized with my 7-year-old son the other night for AWANA: **Psalm 23:4**, “He leads me in paths of righteousness *for his name’s sake*.”
- **A handful of really quick thoughts** here:
 - First, if I had to pinpoint the primary corruption sin has had on our thinking, it is our unquestioned idea that we are the center of the universe, that the whole universe exists for us—that the most important thing is *our* wellbeing *and* good.
 - **Even when we think about God**, we think about God can complete us, and help us, and take us to heaven.
 - But **you are not the center of the universe**. Even your salvation was pursued in a way that brought glory to God.
 - **Second, until you understand this—that’s God’s glory is the center of everything—nothing that God does will really make sense** to you.
 - Your life won’t really make sense and you’ll never find fulfillment until you live for his glory.
 - God is **like the sun in the middle** of our solar system. Our world only thrives with the sun at the center. Our lives only thrive with God at the center.
 - *Third*, that means that there is **a lot more at stake here in your salvation than just you**. *God has bound up the glory of his name in your salvation, and so even when you falter he’s going to pursue his work in you for the sake of his name.*
 - **It’s also why God sometimes saves impossible people—people you’d never think could be saved, because he likes do some things where he alone can get the credit.**
 - For some of you, when God saved you, the angels were like, “Well, I didn’t see that coming” and God was like, “I was just showing off.”

- Raise your hand if you think that’s what probably happened with you...

*So, believer, here’s what Paul wants you to thunder in your ears as you read this first chapter: **You are chosen: according to the purpose of God, by the power of God, for the glory of God.***

- And that’s the greatest, most empowering, most life-giving truth in the universe.
- It is supposed to fill you with **4 things**

(1) Assurance during struggle

- **If we know salvation began in the purpose of God**, then what God starts, we know *he will finish*.
- Listen, **every God-seeking Christian I know struggles sometimes with whether** or not they could really be saved.
 - You look at what is going on in your heart and you think, “Can I really be a Christian and still sometimes think that?” “Can I really be a Christian and still struggle with *that?*” I have thought that.
- **If God didn’t choose us because of our goodness, he’s not depending on our goodness to keep us following him.**
 - **One thing I have learned over** and over... my flesh is evil. And if God takes his mercy from me for even a second, I will turn away.
 - But **I have this assurance that what he has begun in me** he surely will finish (Philippians 1:6).
 - **Pastor friend in a moral failure**... disappointment. “The idea that God chose me has become the sweetest doctrine to me... after how badly I messed things up; I realize that if it were about me holding on, I’d surely perish.”
- Now, I know some of you may say at this point, “Well, how do you know you are chosen? Maybe my lack of progress in your spiritual life is proof that I am not chosen.”
 - **V’s struggle**...

- **Here's how you can know:** If you **recognize that Jesus** is Lord, and want to submit to him, that's the evidence of his Spirit at work in you [1 Cor 12:3].
 - **If you even want to be saved**—to be reconciled to God, that's the evidence of God's working in you...
 - **Just say yes** to it. That's all it takes.
 - I've described it before like **waking up in an AMBULANCE**: "I recognize the problem, feel the pain... but you must do it."

(2) Strength after failure

- **This truth gives us the power to get back up again after failure.** *If I know that what God starts, he will finish, I can be sure that even though today was consumed by defeat, God's decree for my tomorrow is victory.*
- Look at vs. [4] ...he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
 - **What did he choose us for?** *To be holy and blameless.* Believer, that will happen!
- **Or the verse I gave you a couple of weeks ago:** *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand (predestined) that we should walk in them."* (2:10)
 - He **predestined that I would be someone** whose life would be *filled* with good works and my life would be to the praise of his glory!
- **Listen, that means that the burden of "fixing"** my life is not on me. God has already decreed and supplied the power for it!
 - **You see, many of you feel so defeated!** You think, "How am I going to get over my lust? How am I ever going to fix my marriage? Be bold and a fruitful witness..." (YODM—Each one, reach one)
- **But that's the wrong picture of the Christian life.** The good works God has for you, he has already predestined for you, and already provided the power for you to do.

- You can be **confident in his plan to use you** because that's why he said he chose you... John 15:16, You did not choose me, but I chose you...
 - You just have to say yes and *let him do it*.
- **He saved you to use you to bring other people to Jesus.**
- *Let me go back here again and make sure you understand that this is why the Scriptures teach us we are chosen.*
 - **It's not to unravel the mysteries of how God has worked in your past**, it is to give you confidence of what God wants to do your future.
 - **You shouldn't sit around pondering why** God saved you instead of your non-believing friends; you should understand that he saved you *for the sake of your non-believing friends*.
 - **Did you get that?**
- Finally, all this means that when you fail miserably as a Christian—and you will sometimes—you can have the strength to get up! **Prov 24:11, "The righteous man falls seven times, and gets back up again."**
 - 7 is the # of perfection. Imagine being behind a man in the mall that fell 7 times...
 - Some of you are **discouraged by how much you fall**:
 - The **righteous man shows his righteousness** not by never falling, but by what he does when he falls.
 - **Falling just demonstrates that you are not perfect.** Getting back up when you do demonstrates that you believe the gospel.
- **So, you've messed up, you've failed, you've disappointed** yourself again, you've fallen flat on your face... **so what?** Get up and believe the gospel!

(3) Hope in trials

- I know that God is working in every area of my life to make of me a son that is to the praise of his glory, and that he has harnessed literally every molecule in the universe to that end.

- See vs. 11? [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, **All things**.
- Even in those things where I feel victimized, or hurt, or just unlucky, God is working for my good.
- I had a **test on whether I believed this literally right as I was writing this point... Mad**.
 - Then I thought: Is it really **ALL** things?
 - *Even in a random computer crash, I have a Sovereign God who guides every faulty electronic circuit.*
 - I can **still be mad at Steve Jobs**, but I know God is sovereign.

(4) Confidence in disciple-making

- People say, "Well, if God has already chosen those who will be saved, then why do we share Christ?"
- Good question. Ironically enough, For Paul, the fact that God had chosen some was *where* he had the confidence to witness—and that is key to understanding why it's here in the book of Ephesians.
 - Right about the time Paul went to Ephesus, he stopped in a city where he was getting a lot of opposition (18:9). God told him in a vision, "*Go on preaching, because I have many people in this city.*" Can't you hear Paul? "Well, where are they then? I could really use some support right about now."
 - So, Paul kept preaching, knowing that soon they would come. *That* God had chosen many more people motivated Paul!
 - I heard a missionary say once that when he first became a missionary, he didn't know how he could be a missionary if he believed God had chosen people. But after serving on the mission field for many years, he said, he didn't know

how he could go on being a missionary if he didn't believe God had chosen some.

- I certainly felt that when I was a missionary... Peoples' hearts were so hard... he said, "Unless I believed that *God* would change someone's heart, I'd be convinced people would never believe and I'd give up."
- **The idea that God chooses some to salvation doesn't discourage sharing Christ, it empowers it.**
- You say, but **why share if they are chosen?**
 - That's one of those things where we are not supposed to try and figure out the secret things.
 - All we know is that the more we share Christ, the more people seem to keep getting elected.
 - BEST SHORT EXPLANATION: **A.A. Hodge**: "*Does God know the day you'll die? Yes. Has he appointed that day? Yes. Can you do anything to change that day? No. Then why do you eat? To live. What happens if you don't eat? You die. Then if you don't eat, and die, then would that be the day that God had appointed for you to die?*"
- **(New slide) ...Quit asking stupid questions and just eat. Eating is the pre-ordained way God has appointed for living.**²
 - If I don't share Christ with them, does that mean that ultimately they weren't elected? Stupid question.
- You say, "That makes my head hurt." Of course it does. It's a paradox, but a tension we live within: I share Christ with people like it's all up to me, and I pray to God that they'll receive Jesus like it's all up to him.

PRAYER / BOW HEADS—MUSIC

² Adapted from Charles Ryrie, who stole it from A. A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology* (1890), 92–93.

Christian, you are chosen. Can you feel the confidence that gives you? To get back up? To know that God has appointed you to be fruitful. Where can you say, “God, by faith, because I believe in your work in me... I am going to say ‘Yes, use me for your purposes.’”

To those not Christians—You can be chosen! The choice is yours. Jesus said, “Whosoever will may come.”

- Realize that some of you are here because he is drawing you. He’s put in you that hunger, that desire to know God.
- Say yes—receive his offer of forgiveness and submit to him as Lord and he will save you, right now!

