

Children's Moment

January 12, 2014

Title: SLIDE I Am Proud of You

Theme: Baptism of Jesus

Object: Photo Album

Scripture: SLIDE "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17 NASB)

I am sure that you will recognize what I have in my hand. It is a photo album. Most parents have several photo albums, which are full of pictures taken of their children as they were growing up. We have always been very proud of our children and everything they did. We took pictures of them in school, at church, pictures of them playing, at Christmas time, on their birthdays, and many other occasions. We were proud of them as they grew up and we are proud of them today.

Do you think God was proud of His son, Jesus?

I know God was, because the Bible tells us that He was. SLIDE When Jesus was baptized, the Bible tells us that there was a voice from heaven that said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Why do you think God was pleased with His son?

I think that one reason God was proud of his Son is that the Bible tells us that, SLIDE "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." It

makes a father proud to watch his children grow in maturity and become wiser. And, of course, a father wants his child to be well-liked and respected by other people. I think the main reason that God was proud of Jesus is that Jesus always did what his Father sent him to do. Do you always do what your father or mother tells you to do? I doubt if any of us could answer "yes" to that question -- but Jesus could answer "Yes". Jesus said, **SLIDE** "I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38) That would make a Father proud, wouldn't it? We are going to study this verse this morning.

When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, we become the children of God. Our baptism is like an official adoption ceremony. God is proud of us from the very beginning when we become His children because that is what He wants us to be. And like a good parent – Fathers and Mothers - God is there to help us do all the other things He asks us to do - things like loving our brothers and sisters - and forgiving and helping one another - and sharing the good things that He gives us with those who are in need.

Wouldn't you like to be the kind of child that would cause God to look down from heaven, as **SLIDE** He did with Jesus, and say, "My child, I am proud of you?" I would like to be like that - and every day I try to be, knowing that God loves me and is there to help me be the kind of child He wants me to be.

Father, we want to be the kind of children You want us to be. Help us each day to do the things that are pleasing to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Slide Divine Grace

These four verses, just read by brother **Phil**, should fill our minds with the grace and sovereignty of God in all things. These verses teach of man's sin and inability to save himself. They teach of God's electing and irresistible grace. Contained in them we see God offers the gospel freely and it teaches of His ability to keep all saints for eternity. This doctrine of man's depraved condition and of God's sovereignty is reflected in many Christian creeds. Last week we began using the acrostic **Slide** "TULIP" which stands for: **Slide** Total depravity of man, **Slide** Unconditional election, **Slide** Limited atonement, **Slide** Irresistible grace and **Slide** Perseverance of the saints. Today we will finish studying the meaning of TULIP. This acrostic is meant to help us understand man's lost condition and God's grace, it is **not** meant to be a complete definition of God's plan of salvation. Today's teaching is filled with many scriptures and stories to illustrate what I believe God wants us to understand. I will try and keep all the slides in sync. Lets begin by taking the time to explore the meaning of what each of these parts of TULIP means. We begin with -

Slide Total Depravity

First, there is man's total depravity that we began studying last week. Simply put, it is not that within us there is both good and bad, but rather every part of our being is affected by sin - our intellects, emotions, desires and hearts. This total depravity affects all that we are and do. The Apostle Paul said, **Slide** "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not." (Romans 7:18 NASB) Concerning the difference between the

saved or elect, and those who are unbelieving, Paul wrote to Titus, **Slide** “To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.” (Titus 1:15 NASB) The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah understood the condition of the heart of fallen man, writing, **Slide** “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick...” (Jeremiah 17:9 NASB) apart from what God does in our hearts by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when God calls us to Jesus, we are like any other unbeliever **Slide** “Darkened in their (our) understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart...” (Ephesians 4:18 NASB) As C. S. Lewis wrote, **Slide** “A world of nice people, content in their own niceness, looking no further, turned away from God, would be just as desperately in need of salvation as a miserable world -- and might even be more difficult to save.” There it is straight and to the point; just because someone is religious, nice, honest and caring does not mean they are saved, and as C. S. Lewis argues this person might be even more difficult to save for he sees no need for God or thinks a relationship with God is under his power and his efforts, and at least in part a relationship with God is dependent on his works and efforts. However, the scriptures are clear, **Slide** “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD.” (Romans 3:10-11 NASB) My brothers and sisters, without Christ people are hopelessly lost in their sin.

Slide Unconditional Election

Let me begin by reading a definition of “Election” and why it is unconditional. **Slide** “Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.” This definition comes from *Systematic Theology*, page

670, by Wayne Grudem. Election is sometimes also called “predestination” and this doctrine is taught throughout the New Testament. Romans chapter eight is one of the clearest passages of this doctrine in scripture, **Slide** “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. **Slide** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and **Slide** these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” (Romans 8:28-30 NASB) As corrupt and fallen as mankind is – it is by complete grace that God choose anyone to be saved, so we understand that people are saved by God’s grace and for His pleasure. At the same time the Apostle Paul made it clear that unbelievers are responsible for not believing when he wrote, **Slide** “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20 NASB) Unbelievers or the non-elect have no excuse for not believing. D. L. Moody said it this way, **Slide** “The elect are the whosoever wills, the non-elect are the whosoever won'ts.” As believers we are to look to the cross and it is there that we see in the wounds of Jesus the purpose and reason for the truth of predestination or election, it is here that it is found and understood, and it is found nowhere else.

Slide Limited Atonement

When Christ died on the cross, did He pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who He knew He would save throughout history? Is salvation for everyone or for those whom God chose before the foundation of the world and gave to Christ? If Christ’s death paid for the sins of every person who

ever lived, then there is no penalty for anyone to pay and then all people will be saved, without exception. A just God could not condemn to eternal punishment anyone - for all people's sins have been paid for. Since redemption was agreed upon before the foundation of the world in the Trinity; then those whom God planned to save are the same people for whom Christ died and are the same people whom the Holy Spirit regenerates and indwells their souls. Christ **did not** die for everyone's atonement. Paul deals with this when he wrote, **Slide** "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." (Romans 8:33-34 NASB) Jesus died for the redemption of the elect and for His church as it is written, **Slide** "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25 NASB) Christ died for His church and the true church of Jesus Christ is populated with the elect. In the scripture passage we have been studying Jesus speaks of those whom He came for, listen as I read again in John chapter six and hear the absolute terms used by Jesus, **Slide** ³⁷ "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." If Christ died for the atonement of everyone's sins and for everyone's redemption then the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God is meaningless. Whether we like the fact that only some are called to salvation does not matter for God is in charge, He is the Creator and He has a reason and purpose for everything and all, all that God does is right for He is the only truly

righteous being. Our response is that we must submit to Him for He is God, very God and a God beyond our imaginations. **Blank**

Let me relate a simple story of how atonement works and how it is unmerited.

There was a small boy who was consistently late coming home from school. His parents warned him one day that he must be home on time that afternoon – it was critical for him to be on time for they had an important appointment. Nevertheless he arrived later than ever. His mother met him at the door and said nothing, but her look spoke volumes. At dinner that night, the boy looked at his plate. There was a slice of bread and a glass of water. Then he looked at his father's full plate of meat and potatoes and then he looked at his father, but his father remained silent. The boy was crushed.

The father waited for the full impact to sink in, then quietly took the boy's plate and placed it in front of himself. He took his own plate of meat and potatoes, put it in front of the boy, and smiled at his son. When that boy grew to be a man, he said, "All my life I've known what God is like by what my father did that night." I too remember my earthly father's wrath, but I also remember his great love and atoning acts on my behalf. I was filled with great love for my father and yet, this is but a glimpse of what God does for those He calls.

Slide Irresistible Grace

God effectively calls people and also gives them regenerated souls, and both of these actions guarantee that the person will respond in saving faith voluntarily. This effectual calling process of God is called "Irresistible Grace" and it is a mystery, but we do know that we **Slide** "were dead in your trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1 NASB) and that we have been made alive in a very real sense by being born again

spiritually, as the scriptures record Jesus saying, **Slide** “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’” (John 3:3 & 7 NASB) As Paul wrote, **Slide** “even when we were dead in our transgressions...” God came and graciously gave us life. Man’s inability to believe is not physical, but spiritual. However, man’s inability to believe lies so deep in his nature that for all practical purposes the “will not” actually means “cannot.” This is why verse 5 continues, saying, God **Slide** “... made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” Amen! (Ephesians 2:5 NASB) When Paul wrote to the Colossians he was crystal clear, saying, **Slide** “When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.” (Colossians 2:13 NASB) Even though the process of our salvation is a mystery – we know that God calls us out of spiritual death into spiritual life. There are questions that we cannot answer, like this one, “Why salvation for me and not others?” But having faith that God is a God of purpose and He alone knows His reasons and His plan - we can be at peace without having to have an answer. For those of us who He has saved the proper attitude is to be grateful and to serve Him all the days of our lives. Augustine said, **Slide** “God's mercy ... goes before the unwilling to make him willing; it follows the willing to make his will effectual.” I love reading many of the earlier giants of the Christian faith and their writings, for example Martin Luther wrote, **Slide** “Although out of pure grace God does not impute our sins to us, He nonetheless did not want to do this until complete and ample satisfaction of His law and His righteousness had been made. Since this was impossible for us, God ordained for us, in our place, One (Jesus) who took upon Himself all the punishment we deserve. He fulfilled the law for us. He averted the judgment of God from us and appeased God's wrath. Grace, therefore, costs us

nothing, but is cost Another (Jesus) much to get it for us. **Slide** Grace was purchased with an incalculable, infinite treasure by the Son of God Himself." Have you sat back and meditated on the fact of what Jesus did for the elect, for you – making possible your salvation, for you to be reunited with God and be His child of full inheritance?

Slide Perseverance of the Saints

The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their mortal lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again. It is clear that continuing in the Christian life is one of the evidences that a person is truly born again. John 6:39 and 40 tells us, **Slide** "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of **all** that He has given Me **I lose nothing**, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that **everyone** who beholds the Son and believes in Him **will have eternal life**, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." Those who truly believe will never be lost and they will begin eternal life with God at the time they are born again and will come to full fruition with spiritual bodies in heaven, living in the presence of God forever. John chapter 10 says, **Slide** "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one." (John 10:27-30 NASB) No one, absolutely no one can take someone who has been born again away from the Father or the Son. One reason we know this is absolutely true is what is written in the scriptures, the written Word of God **Slide** "He who believes in the Son has eternal life..." To believe, to be born again, is eternal. To not believe is also eternal as the verse continues, **Slide** "...but he who does not obey the Son will not see life,

but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36_{NASB}) The second half of this verse also speaks “Limited Atonement” - Jesus did not die for everyone’s sins, some will experience the eternal wrath of God. God knows who He will save - but we do not. We are called to be faithful in sharing the gospel and praying for the salvation of others. Joyce prayed for 13 years that I would come to know Jesus as my Savior – she persevered in her faith and her prayers. Her prayers were answered. George Muller, the great preacher and pastor of the 19th century began praying for five of his friends. After many months, one of them came to the Lord. Ten years later, two others were converted. It took 25 years before the fourth man was saved. Muller persevered in prayer until his death for the fifth friend, and throughout those 52 years he never gave up hoping that his friend would accept Christ! His faith was rewarded, for soon after Muller's funeral the last friend was saved. For me, my beloved **Slide** “I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.” (1 Timothy 1:3_{NASB}) My beloved not a day goes by that I do not think of you and lift you up to our Lord, I treasure each of you, as Muller did his friends. Remember as you lift up those in your life to God and plead for their salvation; first, that God hears, second, that He cares and finally, that the prayers of the righteous accomplishes much. Do not lose heart, for like Joyce and George Muller you will see the results of many prayers, but some prayers, you may not see how they end until you are in heaven. Perseverance is difficult and we need to lift each other up to keep discouragement at bay. **Slide** I remember reading that William Wilberforce was discouraged one night in the early 1790s after another defeat in his 10-year battle against the slave trade in England. Tired and frustrated, he opened his Bible and began to leaf through it. A small piece of paper fell out and fluttered to the floor. It was a letter written by **Slide** John Wesley shortly before his death.

Wilberforce read it again, "Unless the divine power has raised you up... I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that (abominable practice of slavery), which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might." We know from history that Wilberforce persevered and in 1807 the British Empire outlawed the slave trade.

Faith and perseverance, how do we define true faith? Chapter 11 of Hebrews gives a number of examples of faith. The chapter begins with, **Slide** "Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1 NASB) Do we have faith enough to be obedient and persevere, even if we do not understand, believing God is God **Slide** "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His purpose*." (Romans 8:28 NASB) Will we live by faith persevering until then end?

Let me close with the story of Telemachus, a monk who lived in Italy in the late 4th century and who died in 404 AD. There are a number of variations told of this story, but the end result is the same – here is the story I will tell. For months as Telemachus prayed he felt the Lord telling him to leave his community, a community he had served for years and loved, but God was calling him to go to Rome. He finally gave in and traveled to Rome. After sometime on the road he approached the city gates of Rome. As Telemachus approached people were running through the streets and the Lord said to his heart, "Follow them – this is what I called you here for." As he followed the people, he came to the coliseum and as he entered the gladiators were walking out onto the freshly raked sand preparing to do battle. Telemachus

continued down towards the field of battle and leaped into the arena. He began shouting, “In the name of Christ – stop!” If you know anything about the design of the coliseum then you know that you can hear someone speak from any point. As Telemachus continued to shout, “In the name of Christ- stop!” the crowd began to jeer. The two gladiators stood on each side of him. The crowd began to yell, “Kill him, put him to the sword!” Finally, one of the gladiators stepped forward and ran his sword all the way through Telemachus and with his final breath he shouted, “In the name of Jesus Christ, you must stop.” As he stumped to the fresh sand and it began to turn red with his blood the crowd became quite. Telemachus died and as he lay there the gladiators backed away and the silent crowd began to withdraw and leave the coliseum. That was January 404 AD, 1610 years ago, and it was the last time the gladiators met to do battle in the coliseum and Telemachus’ faithfulness began an awakening within people in Rome to seek and to know Jesus. Telemachus died not seeing the result of his sacrifice, but he had **Slide** “*faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*” This is what God wants us to see and understand – Our depravity and that He loves us so much He called us to salvation, Christ died for the elect, it is by the grace of God you have been saved and He will keep you until you join Him in heaven. So, how do you respond? Are you living by faith, if so you will persevere until the end – I pray that both you and I will, by the power of the Holy Spirit that indwells our souls, persevere to the end. I believe the scriptures of God are true and know that **Slide** “*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me.*” (Philippians 1:21-22 NASB) Will your life bring fruitful labor to the glory of God? By God’s grace may you and I bring Him honor and persevere to the end. Amen!