



7-9-17 Sermon Discussion Guide

"Election - Elected for what?"



Context

Throughout this summer we are talking about words and ideas that we often hear in church but rarely define. This summer provides a chance to hit "pause" and reflect upon these ideas, their importance, and their impact upon life. This series began by asking the question, "What is theology?" In answering that question, we studied the Trinity – God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. After discussing the doctrine of creation, how God reveals himself to us, and hamartiology, we are moving to the doctrine of election.

Checking In

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

Introduction

Throughout the centuries, some have used the doctrine of election to explain places in Scripture where it seemed as if God had chosen specific people to be God's people, and others to be condemned. At it's worst, the doctrine of election could say "some people are predestined to go to heaven for eternity, and other people are predestined to go to hell for eternity and nothing we can do can change that."

When we think about the doctrine of election through a Trinitarian lense, we see that the content of this doctrine is not dreadful news- that the purpose of God from all eternity is not to save a certain number of elect and condemn a certain number of reprobate. The mystery of election is the mystery of God's will from the foundation of the world to share with others God's own life with us. God freely sent his Son so that God might have a relationship with us.

Leslie Newbigin, in *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, writes, "To be elect in Christ Jesus, and there is no other election, means to be incorporated into his mission to the world, to be the bearer of God's saving purpose for his whole world, to be the sign, and the agent and the firstfruit of his blessed kingdom which is for all" (87).

Discussing the Text

1. Did you have any understanding of the doctrine of election before this sermon? What was it? Was anything clarified? Was anything made unclear?
2. How does your understanding of yourself and God change knowing that you are elected for service and elected to be a witness in this world?
2. Rev. Dr. Darrell Guder, in an interview with Christianity Today (October 10, 2011), said, "The gathered life of the Christian community is, then, not an end in itself but the way in which God's people are equipped for their vocation as witnesses in the world." How does being gathered in corporate worship each Sunday equip you for your vocation?

Prayer

Share something you for which you are thankful and/or something for which you need support. In particular, invite people to pray this week that God would show them how they can serve in their contexts. We are elected to serve- pray that we would fulfill this calling well.