

New Testament History, Literature and Theology

Session 24: Romans, Part II

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Introduction [00:00-

This is Dr. Ted Hildebrandt in his teaching on New Testament. This is session number 24. Romans part two. Last time we're laying out the book of Romans and we're kind of going out chapters one, two and three showing that humankind was sinful. The Gentiles were sinful, and we showed the Jews were sinful. Then chapter three, basically all are sinful sending and come short of the glory of God. Then having worked through the sinfulness of humankind, God doesn't leave us there. Basically we moved on to salvation. Salvation is the study of soteriology. So last time we went through these different aspects, in other words, when Jesus died for our sins, what did he really do? And what happens is it's really multifaceted. So when Christ dies for our sins, we went through these things of justification, the being made righteous before God, redemption being bought back, atonement that our shame has covered, propitiation that God is wrathful angry at our sin and that wrath needs to be appeased. So he needs to be propitiated his wrath needs to be peace, propitiation. Expiation the need for washing to become clean. Reconciliation, we are enemies with God now being reconciled back with to God. Then lastly, adoption that we are now called the children of God. We address God as our father. It's a wonderful, a wonderful thing. This is fictive kinship terminology of father/child that God gives to us and it's beautiful. So these are all ways in different ways that Jesus saves us, so to speak. So salvation is a, as a manifold concept.

Today, I want to move on to some things that are really pretty tricky. By the way, it's okay to disagree with these things. Even in our own faculty, we disagree over some of these things. I'm going to kind of go through different perspectives on things then I'll give you what I think and of course that's the right answer (joke). So we'll go through some of

this stuff that's pretty hard today. So Paul's view on the law.-- You want to pick up here and go down a little bit. Paul's view of the law according to the old view of this was that there was a tension in the book of Romans and with Paul, between the law and grace, There's this tension between law and grace. The Jews were seen as hypocritical in that they use the law to establish their own righteousness. Christianity is now the way to God. So there's this conflict between Judaism and Christianity So Judaism is actually a foil to Christianity. The law and grace in tension, the law and faith tension that the flesh and the spirit and the Jews were more interested in the flesh that is with circumcision versus individual salvation. Then the focus has kind of long term was on individual salvation. If you confess with your mouth, you believe in your heart about Jesus you'll be saved. So that we took that in very individually. This is the kind of the old view of Romans, the old view of Paul.

What's happened is that there's a new view that's come into play. This new view is put out by a guy named James Dunn and EP Sanders. Basically what they're saying is, no, there's not this tension between law and gospel, so to speak. Rather it's inclusion and exclusion that the Jewish people, that these things have circumcision and the law, those were exclusive ethnic markers. Those were ethnic markers for the Jews. What's happening is Paul is trying to transcend those ethnic markers of circumcision, of the law, of eating kosher. He's trying to supersede those things. In Christianity goes beyond Judaism and these ethnic markers. So now Christianity can become more universal. Christianity can become more universal and inclusive, whereas Jewish Judaism was exclusive. You had to do their things to be included in their group. Now the group is spreading out. So this is more talking then about this Jew/Gentile and the coming together as a church that's more the point of Romans in a lot of ways than individualistic salvation. So this is a big shift. I'm not sure where I stand on this. I like the old way myself that talks about sin because sin is taught and individual salvation, individual participation. Sin and salvation are individually focused. So I like that. But I like some of this new stuff too that I think he's

making a good point that that it's Paul's working with Jews and Gentiles and trying to bring them together into one church.

That seems to be behind some of his teaching here in Romans 7:12. Basically Paul gives his view of the law. He says, "the law is holy, righteous and good." So Paul tells us flat out. Paul is not lambasting the law and saying the law is gone. Now in Christ we have grace. We have no need of the law anymore. and dismissing it. Paul says, no, "the law is holy, righteous and good." So that's a very interesting thing that he says there. The law, Paul says, was meant that "man is justified by faith apart from observing the law, through a righteousness that comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." There was no difference. Jew or Gentile all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That's kind of the context for that verse. So what we have here is "therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law, rather through the law, we become conscious of sin." So we're talking about sin last time and how we weasel our way around sin in our culture. Sin has actually evaporated. People don't like to talk about sin anymore. It's not ever discussed much. But we said Jesus Christ came as the lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. So if you do away with sin, you're doing away with the whole need for salvation and the work of Christ. That's a pretty big thing. and that's what people are trying to do today. It seems to me in a lot of ways, the law was meant to expose us. Through the law, we become conscious of sin. So through the law, we become conscious of sin and that's its function. So the function of the law is to expose and to quicken our conscience, to make our conscious come alive so that we're aware that we are sinning. But again, in our culture we're told what? I'm okay, you're okay, we're okay. We're not really sinners. You're a good person. I'm a good person. We're all good people and that kind of thing. Paul is saying, "No, the law was meant to expose us to the fact of sin and that we are sinners. And so this is a big deal. And again, it's really counter-cultural to what we experienced today.

The Jews flipped the law on its head. So the Jews took the law and rather than allowing it to expose their sin, the Jews used the law to show how righteous they were. So they subverted the function of the law which was to point out sin so that they would need a savior. But instead they took the law to show how good they were. I've been in churches, you may have been in churches too where the people in the churches, you do it their way and then you're the right way. If you do it not their way, then you're the wrong way. They basically use their little legal system to show whether you're approved or not approved and very tight in there. I know I grew up in that kind of an environment. What Paul is saying is, "No, the law is meant to show us a consciousness of sin." It's not to meant to show us our righteousness. It's meant to show us our sin and to expose sin. He uses our father Abraham. Dr. Wilson's book "Our Father. Abraham" is based on a lot of the book of Romans. Here Paul says Abraham was justified before he was circumcised. So before circumcision came on Abraham that he was identified with this ethnic marker of circumcision, before circumcision and before the law, because Abraham did not have the law. The law came through Moses over 500 years later. So what you have is before the law and before circumcision, it says that "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness." So this is a big thing-- faith. Then Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness before he was circumcised as a Jew and before he had the law. Abraham was justified by faith alone. That is the way then that all humanity, now we come to God the way Abraham did. Abraham went by faith and he was justified by faith before he was circumcised and before he had the law. That's how we do too. And so in Abraham, Jews and Gentiles find a common father, so to speak.

He actually takes it back further than Abraham. He goes back to make it universal to Adam. He says that we are all dead. In Adam's sin the whole human race died in Adam. If we are all then dead in the Adam, then we are all made alive in Christ. And so there's this really interesting comparison between Adam, which brought death to all humanity and Christ who now brings life to everyone. So there's a comparison. Adam brought death. Christ brings life. So he goes back to that particularly in chapter five. In the

universality of sin the law is not a means of justification. We're not declared righteous before God by keeping the law and by keeping all these things. Rather it's a misuse of the law to say that the law shows us how good we are. The law is meant to expose our sin and the sinfulness of our lives. So that's part of what Paul's view of the law is. Next I want to hit this notion of sanctification that Paul develops here, particularly in Romans chapter seven. What is this about? Sanctification, let me get down to, Sanctification. We talked about justification. Justification was basically God attributes righteous, imputes righteousness, to us. Sanctification is actually our sanctifying. Sanctify means to make something holy. So what we have here is basically, how do individuals become holy in God's sight? We are told to be perfect even as our father in heaven is perfect. Does anybody remember that passage in Leviticus, "Be holy as I the Lord your God am holy." So we're commanded even in the New Testament to "be holy as the Lord your God is holy." Sanctification has to do with this process of holiness. Are some of you from Wesleyan churches? Wesleyan churches, Wesley and churches are known for, they're called part of the holiness movement. So this is kind of a big deal.

Now, Paul struggles in Romans 7. He's worked with sin and now salvation through Jesus Christ. In chapter seven, Paul really struggles with his own sanctification. We'll have to look at that in terms of what it is. Here's what Paul says in Romans 7:15. He says this, "for what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do." But anyways, we're stuck. Paul makes this comment and he as he struggling with his own life. He says, "for what I would I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do." If I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. There Paul says, I want to do good, but he says, when I want to do good, I ended up doing what I don't want to do. "So I find this law at work." Paul says, "So when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being, I delight in God's law. But I see another law at work in my members of my body waging war against the law of my mind, making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work in my members. What a wretched person I am who will rescue me from the body of this death.". So the question comes up here about Paul's sanctification. Is it possible for a Christian to

become perfect? We would say, no, because we're kind of comfortable with the fact that we were sinners. We just don't care that much anymore. But the scripture says, "Be perfect as your father in heaven is perfect." What does that mean, "be holy as I the Lord your God am holy. So Paul struggles with this and he says, "the things I don't want to do, I do are the very things that I do.".

There are basically four approaches to this passage in Romans 7. This is different in different churches. They will take different approaches on this and what the sanctification means. How do I become like Christ? Sanctification is how do I become holy? How do I become like Jesus? Some people would say that Romans 7 is Paul talking about before he was a Christian. So Paul says, before I was a Christian, I struggled with these things. So the things I didn't want to do, I end up doing because Paul was not a Christian at that time. So this kind of avoids the whole problem and says it's pre- or before he knew Christ. He's describing what his soul was like without the power of the Holy spirit, without the power of redemption in his life and reconciliation with God and all those things. This was his struggle before he was a Christian. Some people hold the second view that this is a young believer's struggle. This is a young believer's struggle. When a person's new in Christ, they struggle because they come in with all this baggage of sin in their life. They struggle with it then until they come to know Christ. So there's this growth, development and they struggle and they grow into maturity. As they grow into maturity, then the struggle with sin dies down. A third view is some people suggest that this is Paul describing his struggle in his flesh, not in the spirit, not in the spirit, but in his flesh. So this is Paul talking as a fleshly person saying his struggles in the flesh and that in the spirit. So that again, three positions people have held at various times.

I take a real simple position on this. I think think many of you that are in this room would probably think the same way that I think. This is Paul's struggle as a mature Christian, that Paul is a mature Christian. He is an immature Christian. Sometimes they are not even aware of their own sin. It Is somebody who's young in the Lord, not even aware

sometimes of their own sin, but as a person becomes more mature in the Lord, they become more and more aware of their own sinfulness. So what I'm suggesting is that we'll quote a guy named Watchman Lee. This is the Normal Christian Life that what Paul is saying is his current struggle. The stuff that I don't want to do and I'm doing and the things that I want to do. I don't do." Paul is describing the Normal Christian Life. The struggle in sanctification that we have. Yes, God has imputed righteousness to us, but they're still in living life. There's a struggle. The knowing, knowing of God in the now, as you go from class to class is important, How do you experience the presence of God as you go from class to class? That's a struggle. You'll say, well, I need to walk with God. I need to walk with Christ at every moment. But then you go into a physics class and you'll say, Holy cow, you know, how does this relate? Then all of a sudden you're off into that stuff. Well, it does relate. Can you experience the presence of God while you're doing physics? Can you experience somebody working, say in Lane Dining Hall doing dishes? Can you do dishes for the glory of God? again, I come back to that book by Brother Lawrence called, Practicing the Presence of God. He was a monk who washed dishes, but he decided he's going to wash dishes for the glory of God. And that's a practicing the presence of God.

So what I'm suggesting here is that in Romans 7 is Paul's struggle as a mature Christian. He's telling us that when a person becomes a Christian, actually the struggle intensifies. Because before that we were dead in our trespasses and sin. So we didn't struggle against sin because we're dead in our trespasses and sin. Sin was okay. But when we become alive, we're regenerated. We've come alive to Christ. Now all of a sudden we have all these struggles that we didn't use to have. That's why sometimes it gets me, you hear people, preaching and saying, You follow Christ and Christ will give you all these wonderful things and you won't have any more struggles in your life. What I'm suggesting to you is the Bible, and what this says is, no, no, and there will be that actually some of the struggles will actually intensify. The closer you get to Christ, the more intense the struggles will get. By the way, did Jesus Christ himself struggle, "Father, take

this cup from me." So what I'm saying is struggle is part of the Christian life. . I think what Paul manifests then in Romans 7 I think there'll be times in your life you will struggle with different things. Each stage as you move through different stages of life, the struggles change yet in some senses though the struggles that you have now will continue. I've always thought of the things that I've struggled with that I thought when I was a younger person, I got ahold of it and then all of a sudden I realized here I am 10 years later struggling with the same thing that I struggled with 10 years earlier. But it's wearing a different mask. So it's kind of like, it's different Then all of a sudden I pull off the mask and I see no, it's really the same thing I was working with 10 years earlier. So what happens is as you go through life, you'll see these things pop up and they pop up in different stages of life in different ways with different masks. It looks like it's different, but it's really the same core thing. So what I suggest is that as early as you can get onto those core issues. What are the real core things in your being that move you and that leads you away from Christ. Those things they'll take different masks as you move through life.

So this is Paul's struggle. This is the doctrine of sanctification then how do you become Holy before God? You wrestle with that. You wrestle with that sometimes successfully sometimes not. 2 Corinthians 10:5 is a beautiful passage, it says that we take every thought captive to Christ. We take every thought captive to Christ. This means then that our thoughts and intents of our heart we monitor those things and we commit our thoughts and intents of our heart to Christ. So those are take every thought captive and a lot of the battle takes place in the thought life. What types of things you're thinking about and that then I'm thinking about now. All right. We had to get this. Finally at last, we're going to end up talking about predestination and election and some things that are very debateable. Now, this is where the debate kicks in. Predestination and we'll give you the answer to that. Election now, I think, I believe in election. Is anybody from New York? Is anybody from New York here? Yeah, do you believe in election? I think they're having the election today as a matter of fact. Did you vote? So I'm being facetious here. When

you talk about election, we think of, the elections going on in New York city, between, Bernie and Hillary and between Donald and the rest of the world. And so, anyway, so sorry. I say that just, you believe me, you don't know what I think on these political issues, our family, we do how should I say? Other families do like a football, you know, the Patriots Brady and did he really deflate the ball. Then other people, do you know basketball? We did the Bulls at one time in our life. They do baseball. Of course you gotta do the socks around here in Boston. my family, our family does politics like most families do football. There our family's quite into it. We have a big arguments but I realized after last semester it was really funny. I made some comments and students totally. They didn't catch what was my drift. So they thought I was going off like this and I was really going off like that. So I decided I'd better not do many more jokes like that anymore. Election. What is election? Okay.

Election is where God chooses. God chooses those he will redeem. God chooses and election has to do with the choice of God. So in Romans 8:28 it says, "for we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called" notice they have been called. They don't come to Christ and believe in Christ on their own. Now it says "you have been called according to his purpose for those God for knew." So God apparently foreknew them beforehand. "For those God foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called." So God kind of foreknew them ahead of time. He then predestines them and then he calls them. He personally calls them and he also called them. "Those he called, he also justified." So there's this succession here from he foreknew them, he predestined them, he called them, and then he justifies them. "And those he justified, he glorified." So you get this notion that a person is righteous before God and then they participates in the glory of God themselves. So this is Romans 8:28 largely cited in this notion of election. I should read some other passages here from Ephesians 1:4 these are passages that are used for the doctrine of election or predestination. Ephesians 1:4 it says, "for he chose us in him

before the creation of the world." "He chose us in him before the creation of the world." So that's predestination. Before the world was even made, he's already chosen us before the creation of the world "to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, he predestined us to be adapted as his children through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will." So in Christ we received adoption, but that adoption was for known before the world was created. So this again shows this kind of predestination/election before the world was created, God chose us in him.

Romans 9:11 "yet before the twins," who are the twins? Jacob and Esau. Jacob and Esau, yet Romans 9:11, "yet before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad in order that God's purposes in election might stand not by works, but by him who calls. He was told, the older will serve the younger, as it is written. Jacob, have I loved Esau, have I hated" -- before they were even born? "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated, before they were even born. Before they did anything. They were predestined. They were elected, chosen to do these types of things. There are other passages. Let me just use the Jeremiah 1:5. Jeremiah was told this, "before I formed you in the womb, I knew you," "before I formed you in the womb, I knew you," "And before you were born, I set you apart. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah, before you were even born, I knew you. I set you apart as a prophet to the nations Jeremiah, before you were even born. And Jeremiah says, "Well God, you know, what kind of choice did I have? You know, I didn't have much choice there." And God says, "no, before you were even born, I predestined. So, election has to do with God's choices. Now, one of the Puritans' terror then was, am I chosen of God? Did God choose me? Did God predestined me to God? Now what happens if God didn't choose me? I mean, I thought I could choose him, but now he chooses me before I was even born, I don't stand a chance. What of Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated. What if it's Hildebrandt I hated? They say, but I didn't do anything. And he said, well, I hated you before you were even born. You say, "well I don't stand a chance then.".

So the Puritan kind of terror am I chosen? Am I part of the elect? Am I part of the elect? Those that are chosen and this kind of terror comes on them. At times in my life, I think I've felt that. How does human choice then fit with divine election that God chose us before we were born? How does that fit with human choice? By the way, some of you guys have been in my Old Testament class. Hilderbrandt really pushed the thing of human choice. Yes, right from the garden of Eden. Human choice is a really big thing. So then how do you match that with this divine election? It seems to be God did all this before the world began and then yet we're, Adam makes choices, Eve makes choices, Cain makes choices. So how do you put those two together. So what I want to do next is work through different ways that people explain how these two things go together. It is rather, I should say it is rather complex. So, how should I say this too? That's what that noise is. It's the projector. We should shut that off probably. With this topic, we should shut this whole lecture down. So I'm going to go through and explain these positions now. By the way, some of you may be from some of these traditions actually the truth be known. I'm from several of these traditions. I grew up in one church. I was ordained in the Presbyterian church and then I now, who knows where I'm at, Gordon College now and anyways, and so it's just different. So what I'm saying is you're going to meet people where there's going to be big disagreements on this topic. People throw people out of churches for this. By the way, so I want to make sure you come away with the right answer--that was a joke. So, I have to be honest with you, I'll give you what I think about this, but I'll also, I'm more interested. that you catch my attitude then that you catch my cognitive content because you're going to have to work through the cognitive content of how you put divine election, and predestination together with human choice. You're going to have to work through how you put that together.

So how do you work with these things? Well, the first thing I want to call hyper-Calvinistic. Now, this is not what John Calvin held, I think, but this is what I would call hard determinism--that God does everything. In other words, this view pushes what I want to call it ultra-reformed position. There are people who are this ultra-reform kind of

position. They push the good part. What I like about the reformed tradition, what I love about the reform tradition is they pushed the sovereignty of God, Now what is the sovereignty of God? The sovereignty of God means God is King, that God rules the universe. God is King, the sovereignty of God is that God is King and that he rules the universe. Is it God versus Satan? No, no, no. Is it God versus Satan? No, no. It's not that way. God is overall. It's not God versus Satan. There is one God and he is over everything. So sovereignty is the kingship of God that he rules and reigns. that's, One of the good points here. The divine, because of this is the ultra view, they basically see God is his choosing. predestining doing all this work. God does everything and the human beings don't do much of anything. So things are pretty determined. So when I call this kind of determinism where God does everything and we're just kind of like almost like robots going through,. I am sinful now I choose because God makes me choose and things like that and it's very predetermined. The problem I see with this position of the ultra reformed is that there are a lot of, whosoever will, passages. "For God so loved the world that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have a real lasting life."

Whosoever will. So a lot of it has to do with human choice. I tried to show you guys that in the Old Testament human choice after human choice. God actually dealt with human beings in a very interactive, organically connected way. Moses prays to God and God changes his mind. God says, I'm going to wipe them out. Moses says, Oh God, please don't wipe them out. If you wipe them out, that's going to be bad for both you and he doesn't wipe them out. He says, I won't do it. So Moses goes off in Numbers 13 and 14, and God says, then 10 verses later, God says, Moses, I won't wipe them out as you asked. So God actually opens himself up to a human being having impact on God. He says, I won't wipe them out as you asked Moses.

So what I'm wanting to suggest is then this ultra position I think doesn't account for some parts of Scripture. Now there's, what I want to call these lucky Calvinists. Is anybody from the reformed tradition. Actually, I am sorry I do this with a smile on my face. The Calvinists don't like the term "lucky." So I just want to use it just to be annoying. I

shouldn't do this on tape too. This is terrible. But anyway, I call them lucky Calvinist, which would be really offensive to them. So let me just say contingency. I'll call it contingency Calvinism. What is this? These people are more reasonable and they work with categories. I'm thinking of a guy now, knowing God who wrote, a book called "Knowing God," J. I Packer. Anyway, Knowing God is a superb book written by a guy who teaches at Vancouver at Regent College/Seminary. But anyways, what he does is he introduces these terms and let's look at some of these terms. An oxymoron, what's an oxymoron? If I said a wise fool, a wise fool, that's an oxymoron. Oxy, what's moron mean? What does Moron mean? We're not allowed to say it anymore. It's politically incorrect, but moron means fool. Oxy means like wise. So oxymoron means wise fool. By the way, those terms clash. Oxymoron. So something is actually moronic. It's like hot cold or something like that. Meanings that don't work together. You know what I'm saying? That's called an oxymoron.

These contingency Calvinists, these are, maybe I get a better word for them. Maybe let's call them calm, Calvinists. The ones that are really hard, are deterministic. They're the minority, but most of them work with this what I call soft Calvinism. Or we could say the one is reformed with a big R and that these, these soft ones are reformed with a little r. I think that's maybe the way some of them described themselves too. With the big, R Reformed with a little r reformed people. They talk about this second category, which is this category of antinomy. Okay. Do you see the second term here? It says antinomy. Antinomy means you've got two things that seem to be contradictory. You've got two things that seem to be contradictory and you don't know how they fit together. So you believe them both but you can't fit them together. This is called an antinomy. There are two things that look like they're contradictory, but they somehow must work together, but we don't understand how they fit together. So this is the position of J I packer. Thank you. This antinomy the two things, God's sovereignty in terms of he elects and predestines people and people still choose. How do you fit those together? He says, basically, we've got to believe both of those things. We've got to believe both of them,

but how they fit together, we don't have a clue orf how to fit them together. So therefore this is what he calls an antinomy.

What I like about this view is that it leaves you with mystery and wonder. You realize you've got two things here in Scripture that you wonder about. They cause mystery and wonder. I like this antinomy approach. It has some really good things about it. Now, what's a paradox? A paradox is different than an antinomy. Antinomy has two things that look opposite, that we don't know how they fit together. A paradox goes something like this. Let me just read you this story is kind of an interesting thing for a paradox here. It says, for example, this is a paradox. Consider a situation in which a father and a son are driving down a road. The car crashes into a tree and the father is killed. The car crashes into a tree. The father is killed and the boy is rushed to the nearest hospital where he's preparing for an emergency surgery. T The surgeon says, I can't operate on this boy. He's my son. That's a paradox. Now, what's a paradox? A paradox is what makes you think? You say, wait a minute. A paradox is something that looks like it's totally contradictory, but does it call you into it in order to try to understand it? There's something that's missing here that we're not told that we need to figure out. So it's like a puzzle a paradox puzzle. It's like a puzzle. It calls you in to say, Hmm, I wonder how this works? You know, but you it, you just told me that the father was killed in the accident. How if he's killed in the accident, how does a dead person operate on his son? And then your brain starts thinking, Hmm, how can this person say, then they

take him to the hospital. I can't operate on my son, It was his mother. A lot of you guys came to that conclusion, that it was his mother? I'm seeing some heads shaking. You're smarter than I am. . I was, you know, when I was actually, so there was a mother in there. So the father was killed. The mother says it's my son. And that's how the two were explained. was I thinking because I was stuck on the father thing and see that's what a paradox does. I was thinking it was a stepfather. Did anybody think stepfather? Thank you. I just so worried. I totally missed the mother thing. And then I felt like a dingbat.

But that's called a paradox. Something that calls you in that you try to wrestle with is a paradox. What I like about what J I Packer does in this book, *Sovereignty and the Will of God* is basically that, he sees it as an antinomy two things that are opposed that we don't know how they fit together. So it draws us to mystery and wonder and to think about God. So that's the contingency or lucky Calvinists. Don't you ever use that term lucky Calvinist, they'll be really be upset with you. Just know actually, I should probably take it out of here. Now I want to run you through the basics of Calvinism and I'll give you kind of a reformed, used to be approach. In other words, I used to be reformed, but I kind of have migrated off that now. So I say that and then people say, well, then they know not to trust me. That's probably right. You need to trust the Bible and not what I'm saying. But here's, here's basically what they call TULIP. This is when you get into Calvinism these are the five points of Calvinism. This is a big thing. So TULIP, is entry level Calvinism,.

They'll say, first of all, Calvinism, total depravity. Total depravity that people are sinful. We are sinful to the core of our being. We are sinful, totally depraved. Romans 1, 2, and 3, where we engage the vices of life and we miss the virtues. S So basically, we're totally depraved. Now I'm going to critique each one of these just because I'm ornery, but how should I say? I do believe people are depraved. But when I look at totally depraved, what I noticed growing up was when people that held the view that people are total depravity, they were often looking at everybody else saying these students are, these millennial students are totally depraved. They're always looking outward at others. What I'm saying is I think a much wiser thing is to look inward with the total depravity perspective. So when I look outward, I try to look at you guys as actually made in the image of God. By the way, is that totally negative or is that really positive? It's really positive. So what happens is that I choose to look at other people's as made the image of God. When I look at myself, I have to process and I say, "Man, some of your thoughts. I need to do this. I need to think about this and my thoughts aren't right. I need to work on and things. So anyways total depravity is the T. I liked deproivity, but I don't like the word "total"

depravity. By the way, can even a secular person who doesn't know Christ, can there be some good there?

I told you I worked in a maximum security prison. The guy in Indiana that holds the state record for the number of life sentences against him. He's been on America's 10 most wanted. I'll tell the story. I better be careful with the tape though. But anyways, I'll tell the story. He actually escaped from the maximum security prison. I better not even give his name because it's on tape, but I'll just call him Charlie. Charlie's a good friend of mine. Is he has 11 life sentences against him in the prison. They call him Mr. Charlie. Now when they call you Mr. In the prison, that's maximum security prison. Does that mean something? They don't call anybody Mr. They call him Mr. that means he is a bad dude. Everybody knows this guy. He's got quite a reputation. He's a personal friend of mine. Now, even with Charlie, is there goodness in him? Is there goodness in him? You say he did all that bad stuff, those people and he's lucky he didn't get executed. Is there still goodness in him. Let me just do this and I use the name and I better not say any of the rest of the stuff. He escaped from prison. You know what he did? He went, now you say, well, this guy's multi-murderer, and this guy's terrible individual. What did he do when he got out of prison, he went to New York City and he was working with

the poor and the homeless in New York city trying to help them. He was so successful at helping the homeless and poor people in New York City that he was standing, with the mayor. The mayor of New York didn't know who he was. He was honoring him, having him on the platform and old Charlie was on the platform. The news media came, showed a picture, and the guys in the prison said, look at there, there's Charlie. They went and picked him up. But he was helping homeless people. The mayor of the city of New York city, he had him on the platform, didn't know who he was. They caught him as a result of that. By the way, was he doing that out of the goodness of his heart helping people, I'm serious was he doing that out of the goodness of his heart? was he totally evil person? What I want to say is he did some really. and I mean, really, really, really bad stuff. But

then he also does some really good things as well. So what I'm saying is be careful of with that word total depravity idea. So you say Hildebrandt just doesn't like the word "total." You know what I'm saying is, yes, we're depraved, but don't do the "total" thing. Now the second is called unconditional election. This is going down our TULIP. This means that God chooses us. There is nothing good in us that God says, "well, I want some people that are there. This is good and therefore I choose him because I know that he's going to be such a good person. I choose Jacob because Jacob was such a man of character. Jacob, do you remember Jacob? Do you remember Esau? Which one had character as far as truthfulness and integrity? Esau, and God yet chooses Jacob. Jacob's going to be a cheat and a liar. He's going to lie to his own father, et cetera, et cetera. So unconditional election means that there are no conditions. God chooses. God chooses whom he will choose. There is no condition on that. There's no, how should I say, he looks in a person and sees their goodness in them. No, no. It's unconditional election. Predestination is based on divine choice alone. There is nothing else. It's God's choice. He chose him. Why did he choose him? We don't know. God just chose him. Did he choose them because they were so good? No, no. God chose him because he chose him. So this is called unconditional election. I have, I don't know how the mind of God works, so I don't, I don't like the word unconditional. I want to say God elects people chooses people, yes. Does God probably have his reasons? God probably has

his reasons. So I don't want to call it unconditional. There may be conditions by which God makes choices like that. I don't know that. So I want to, again, I like the word election, but I just don't like the word unconditional. Because there may be conditions there that we just don't know about. Now, one more, actually, let me just hit these next ones quickly. Limited atonement. Limited atonement. And this is basically that the atonement is given for those for the elect. That the atonement is given for the elect. In other words, for whom did Christ die. For whom did Christ die? Christ died for the elect, for those who would be saved. Christ died only for the elect. So there's limited atonement. The atonement applies only to those for whom Christ died. My problem with

this again, I liked the notion of atonement, that Christ died for our sins to take away our sins, to cover our shame -- that's beautiful. The substitutionary atonement. Isaiah 53 is beautiful. You know, on him our iniquities were laid on him as a lamb before the slaughter and Christ takes our iniquities away, our sin away. That is beautiful. So I love the concept of substitutionary atonement and the various theories of atonement, but but to say limited atonement, I just don't like that word "limited." Here's what it says in 1 John 2:2. For whom did Christ die? It says here, "He," Jesus "is the atoning sacrifice for our sins and that only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.," -- "for the sins of the whole world." So in other words, the Bible does not portray atonement as limited, but rather Christ dies for the sins of the whole world. And that's what I think. Therefore, I love the atonement idea, but I just wish they'd get rid of the word "limited."

Then there is irresistible grace. That when grace comes on a person, it's irresistible. It's irresistible grace. Now, by the way, am I into the grace of God? Big time. For 20 years of my life, I worked at a school called Grace College. When I left that school Grace in Winona Lake Indiana, when I left that school, it broke my heart because I was leaving Grace. I was leaving Grace and that meant something to me because the grace of God that's where it's at. The grace of God is where we all are. So but when they say irresistible grace, what's my objection? My objection is the word, once again, "irresistible." Why don't they just say the grace of God and why do they put this Irresistible on that. Now God can be irresistible. Jeremiah, you're going to see him say, God, you know, you're doing all this stuff to me, God and I just don't like it but I, you know, you're doing it. who am I to fight you? God, I can't do this. So he faces irresistible grace, but I want to say is grace always irresistible? Do we have the ability to make choices? And when you say irresistible grace, it takes away from the human choice. So what I'm suggesting is then I love the concept of grace. I'm in totally in love with it. Actually. If you want to hear somebody do grace, one of the best people to do grace on the website. I taped a guy named, actually he's a brother of mine by a different mother though. His name is Dr. Dan Darko in his course on The Prison Epistles he explains the grace of God as well as I've

heard anybody in my life. It was just, I mean, I was literally, I was taping this guy and I was almost in tears because he was describing the beauty of the grace of God in Ephesians and other places so well. So if you ever went to the Darko's lecture on The Prison Epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, Colosians, they are wonderful lectures on the grace of God. So grace of God is really where it's at. But let the irresistible go.

Then finally the perseverance of the saints. Now this one, I like the whole thing, the perseverance of the saints. This is good and this has to do with eternal security. In other words, if you're once saved, are you always saved? And is it possible to fall away? Is it possible to fall away? The perseverance of the saints? I like the phrase perseverance of the saints. In other words, if you're a Christian, you will persevere. I like that better than eternal security. Eternal security kind of sounds like social security. It's also security, really solid right? You guys will never ever see that thing. When you start making paychecks and they take that out a big chunk out of your pay, say, old Hildebrandt was laughing because he knew you'd never see a penny of it. I'm sorry, that's really sick on my part. But what I'm saying is a social security. We talk about that and so when we talk about eternal security, that kind of makes me sit down and I'm eternally secure. I like better the perseverance of the saints that the saints will persevere and that's more descriptive, But by the way, are there people in the Bible that actually fell away? Are people in the Bible that fell away? Did Judas, did Jesus send Judas out to do miracles in his name? Matthew chapter 10 he sends the 12 out. Judas is doing miracles in Jesus name. As Judas turns on Christ and goes away. What about Solomon? Do you guys remember Solomon, the wisest guy that ever lived, God came to him and said, Solomon, whatever you want to ask for it. Someone says they want a wisdom and, and I want a listening heart that can discern right and wrong. And God gave him what he wanted. Solomon, at the end of his life is worshipping pagan idols. He's creating a temples for his wives and worshiping idols Solomon at the end of his life. So you get these kinds of things. Did the Israelites fall away? They came out of Egypt and they go with God in the desert. God rains down manna from heaven. And what do they do? They say, Hey, we

want to go back to Egypt. And so the Israelites fall away. So what I'm just raising the notion, is it possible for a person to know God and fall away? Does anybody remember Balaam Numbers 22- 24. Balaam knows God and yet ends up doing some really bad stuff going away from God.

So what I'm saying is, but let me just put it more personally. Do you know people in your family? I'm talking to myself now, do I know people, my family, that claimed that they knew God at a certain point in their life and then turned away? The answer is yeah, yeah. I'm still working with some of that myself. It's really, really hard when it's your kids. So anyways, perseverance of the saints that the true saints will persevere. By the way, that doesn't mean a straight line too. How do you persevere in your Christianity? Sometimes it's up. Sometimes it's down to you get it. You know what I'm saying? You've seen Christians crash,. But this is called TULIP and these are the five basic points of Calvinism. Did you see what I did with almost every one of them? I took the "total," I took the unconditional, the limited and the irresistible and kind of pull those off. I love the concepts that they have, their perseverance of the saints. I like the way that stated that there's a perseverance there because is it possible to fall away? That's a big question and something you want to think about. So these are what's called the five points of Calvinism. And we're five points past the hour. So let's take a break while I'm working with these concepts. A lot of times there are the theological concepts like TULIP that has some wonderful truths in it and I'm trying to modify it. I don't get off into theological constructs a lot because theological constructs, it seems like they build things off of the scriptures in logical forms and in history and they build this construct. I try to stay mostly closer to scripture and what scripture actually says is what I believe. Therefore when you start building these logical constructs, I guess my problem is I don't trust logic. I used to teach logic. I just don't trust it. So what I'm saying is I try to fly low to the text rather than building hierarchies of, this is related to this because you can deduce this and you can deduce that and you build this this construct on top of Scripture. I kind of try to fly real close to Scripture because I don't trust myself. I'm totally depraved and I'll trust my own

brain to build these kinds of constructs. therefore, I stay with the stories and you'll notice in a lot of my classes we do a lot with the stories because the stories keep us kind of with our feet on the ground. .

So unconditional election and things like that are Calvinistic. There's a view, the opposite of reformed would be this Arminian perspective. If I say reformed, it would be more Presbyterian churches. Reformed coming out of Calvin into puitanism and that kind of thing. The Arminian perspective, basically they work a lot with, foreknowledge of God that God knows. The Arminian is kind of the opposite. Whereas the reform stresses the sovereignty of God, which is a really good thing that God does all this. The Arminians basically stress, human choice. Then basically they look at foreknowledge that God for new what you would choose. There was before the foundation of the world, God looked down history and he knew what you would choose. So then therefore God chose you on the basis of his foreknowledge of what you would choose. So the Arminian perspective emphasizes the more human side of things more and that prevenient grace is open to all. Grace is open to all. They stress more human choice and that type of thing. Now, what happened to me was a couple of years ago, there was this movement called the openness of God that was really condemned very strongly at the ETS (Evangelical Theological Society) meetings. I just want to say, I think it was an overreaction. The reform people really get upset with these people and went after them, particularly John Sanders and some other people. I want to say, I think there was an overreaction there to some of this. What the openness people say is that the future is open and that we partner with God in shaping the future. That we make choices, that we partner with God as we move into the future. And so God chooses special tasks. God chooses special tasks for certain individuals. That is, Paul was called to be an apostle. Isaiah was called to be a prophet. Jeremiah was called before he was even born. God told them.

But do you remember in the Old Testament, how I tried to suggest to you that there are mutual futures. There could be multiple futures and that God chooses to know these

multiple futures and in various ways. Sometimes God gives us his word that Jesus Christ will be born in Bethlehem of Judea. Once God gives us a promise that Jesus Christ, Micah 5:2 will be born in Bethlehem of Judea, Jesus will be born in Bethlehem of Judea because God gave us his word. But there are many other things that would be like me saying, "I'm going to go home to Niagara Falls, New York. I'm going to go home to Niagara falls, New York. Are there several ways I can get there? So I know the end destiny is Niagara Falls, but there are several ways that I could go. So what I'm suggesting is that God may fix certain things in the future, but other things are left open and that human beings participate with God who himself participates as well. So there may be multiple possible futures. What I'm suggesting is then that God knows not just a singular future, I guess that's maybe the way that God doesn't know A, B, C, D, E, F, G, as a singular future line. Instead he chooses to know the future as possibility. We showed some places in the Old Testament like 1 Samuel 15 when David runs to the city of Keilah, where God knows something that never happened. God knew something that never happened. And so therefore God knows something that is possible but never really happened. Do you remember what he said to a King Saul? First Samuel 13:13 he tells, Saul, he said, Saul if you would have obeyed me I would have made your descendants over Israel forever. You would have been King and your descendants Saul, would have been kings over Israel if you had obeyed me. So that even with God, there's these if/then statements. Saul decided to go against God and therefore God says, Saul you're done. I'm going to go after a person after my own heart, David.

So this openness openness movement itself, John Sanders said that God can't know the future because the future is not there to be known. It was God can't know the future because ... Now by the way, does that run into some problems with Scripture? Does God know the future? Yes he does. So there's where I have some major problems with the openness people, but what I think is going on is this multiple future thing and then it opens up things for possibility. The election and rejection of Israel. and this is another aspect of this. So the way I see it now, and I'm not saying this is right, I need to come

back to, it's my favorite verse on this. Here is what I think that God chooses to know the future as possibility. There are literally billions of possibilities and God knows all the possibilities of the future. Some of those things he has specified in the future, Jesus will return. When Jesus returns, he returned to the Mount of Olives just as he went up from the Mount of Olives. He'll come back to the Mount of Olives. That's where he's coming back, Jesus will come back, God has given us his word on that. But how that happens, there's millions of ways that that can happen. God chooses to know the future as possibility rather than fact. By the way, can God choose how he knows something? Can God choose how he knows something? What I'm saying is that he has chosen to know the future as possibility and therefore we can make choices that impact how the future is shaped.

So now, once I've said that, let me just say this. I don't have a clue what I'm talking about. And the truth is, Isaiah chapter 40 says, God says this. "No one understands my understanding." "No one understands my understanding." I think that's my biggest problem with a lot of the people that I see that are reformed. When you talk to reform people, it's like they think they know. They think they know God is like this. God elects people. God justifies people and they think they've got it all down. What I'm telling you is, no, God says, "no one understands my understanding." So at a certain point you have got to back off and say... So John Piper understands things this way. I understand things this way. You know, Dr. Green, who I really respect, he understands things a different way. I've got to give Dr. Green space, I have got to give John Piper space even though I don't agree with him. I would hope that he would give me space. That's been part of the problem. It is that people get so dogmatic about these things that they end up, really going after their brothers and sisters in Christ. By the way, what is the greatest principle? I do know, I do know this, that Jesus told us to love one another. If somebody's going after another person like that in a really dictatorial and dogmatic way and destroying another person in Christ, I get to really question that. So I want to say love is, by the way, his love is a multifaceted thing. Is it hard to love another person? Is it hard to love

another? I'm talking about your roommate. Is it hard to love another person? The answer is yes. When you actually start living with a person day in and day out, you see all their flaws. So it's really hard to love another person. What I'm saying is you just

So let's get back to this thing here then. There is a movement in the book of ... Yes, the sign in sheets that's a good question. No. Actually Ben, let me have you pass these around while you're back there. This guy is so talented. He not only does the videos, but he does everything. Actually, I probably should let him teach the class. Very talented guy. Thanks Ben. In the first part of the book of Romans, there's this thing of the Gentiles are sinful, the Jews are sinful, and all are sinful. Then basically it moves to the grace of God. Then what you have in chapters 9 through 11 basically 8 through 11 it's building this where God's showing His involvement in the process and basically showing the wonders of the grace of God. Moving to Romans chapter 11 verse 33 and I think this is the pinnacle of where it's moving. It's not moving to a big dialogue over trying to understand all the intricacies of the epistemology of how God's head works. Here's where it goes for Paul. The end of Romans 11 says, "O, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out. Who has known the mind of the Lord," when he asks, "who has known the mind of the Lord?" What's the answer to that question? "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" The answer to that question, it's a rhetorical question, right? "Who is known mind the Lord." The answer is nobody. He's God. "Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor, who has ever ever given to God that God should repay them for from him and through him and for him are all things." Question, is the world about us or let me put it more specifically. Is the world about me? Is the world about me? Yes, of course. It's all about me. What's this say? No, no, no. The world, the universe, is about God and that's a shift.

So what is the chief end of people? What is the greatest? What is the ultimate goal of people? The chief end of people, as they say in the Westminster Confession, is to glorify

God and enjoy him forever. That's a beautiful statement actually, "to glorify God and enjoy him forever". That's the essence of what it is to be human. So "from him and through him and for him are all things, to him be glory forever. Amen." He ends there. So it's a beautiful doxology. So Saul, Paul struggles with all this stuff and all these counsels of God and he ends up then with the glory of God, he ends up in doxology. I think that's really an important place to end up. Now some difficulties that come up reading Romans, rereading Romans 9 through 11 the election, some people see this as basically the Israelites versus the Gentiles. What he's showing in 9 to 11 is that the Israelites and the Gentiles coming are coming together in Christ. So a lot of people E. P. Sanders and others I think are correctly seeing the book of Romans is not about individual salvation. We read these passages and we apply them to individuals. What Sanders and some other people are saying is no, these are more about corporate groups of the Jews coming together with the Gentiles. If that this is talking about not individual salvation necessarily of how can I get mine with God? So this is a different way of looking at it.

What do you do, by the way, with the problem of evil. If God is so totally sovereign over everything, what do you do with the problem of evil. Let me get you caught up with myself here. If, if God is sovereign over everything and there's no one else, he makes all the decisions, everything is determined, then what do you do about evil? If God is over everything, then what do you do with evil? Did God make evil? If God is over everything and everything is working, according to his counsels, what do you do with the problem of evil. It's called theodicy -- God and righteousness. How can God, who is a righteous, holy God, how can there be evil in the world? How can God make a world that has so much pain and suffering? I just had a student in my office, we were just talking about this. How can God make a world that's full of pain and suffering? What about God himself? Does God himself suffer? He makes a world of suffering. Does God himself suffer? Remember those passages in the Old Testament where it said that God, it grieved him that he had made humankind on the earth, that it grieved him. Jesus did what? Jesus wept. Can you tell me the verse where it says, Jesus laughed. Where are the verses with Jesus

laughing. The verse that I remember, it says, Jesus wept. And so what I'm suggesting to you is that God enters into our pain. What I try to suggest to people, it's called the pathos of God, that God is the most suffering being in the universe. God is the one who designed this good and gave us free choice and gave us the choice. People rather than choosing God, they what did they say, we want anything but God. We don't like you. God, we're out of here. God, how do you think that feels as far as rejection? Have you ever been rejected by someone you love? Does that hurt? Does that hurt to the core of your being?

I know a young man who told a woman he was married to and he said she was wanting a divorce. He said, "I love you. I'll go to counseling, I'll do whatever it takes. Just tell me what I need to do. I'll do it. I love you." She turned to him and said, "We've been married six years." She said, "I don't know whether I ever loved you." What did that do to that kid? It ripped his gut out, ripped his gut out. So what I'm saying is, have you ever felt rejection of love like that? It hurts big time. What I'm suggesting is that as his love is huge, humongous, bigger than our love for him. God has felt that rejection for millennia. So there was the love of God. Is there anything better than the love of God? You know what I'm saying? It's like the best and then we're commanded to do. What did Jesus love us? How do you know Jesus loved us? Jesus loved them because he sacrificed. How can you tell whether somebody loves you or not? How can you tell? You can tell by how much they're willing to sacrifice on your behalf. Do some of you know that your parents love you because your parents have sacrificed and you've seen their sacrifice on your behalf? You know that they love you. When you have somebody that just wants to use you, they want to use you for themselves. There's that love or lust that's--consumptive stuff. A lot of love has to do with self sacrifice So this is the problem of evil. How can God be a good God and yet be a world that's created with its evil?

Then there is the problem of prayer. If God's going to do what God's going to do and everything's predestined, then why should you pray? Why should you pray? Some people say you pray because you're commanded to pray. God commanded you to pray. You say,

"Okay, we will pray now because I'm commanded to pray." Really, when you see people in Scripture, are they praying because they were commanded to pray or do they pray because they're wanting to wrestle with God? God, please help me. So the problem of prayer, does prayer really change things? Does prayer change things? Do you remember in the Old Testament I showed you place where Moses prayed and God changed the situation. So when I say his prayer changes things, prayer is powerful. Prayer is powerful where we address the God of the universe and it's not, it's not all fixed. It's not all fixed and determined. We can interact with God and God listens. God listens, which is incredible to our prayers. So the problem of prayer, if everything is fixed, you've got a problem with prayer. You've got a problem with God changing his mind. We showed you places, Numbers 13 and 14 and Exodus 32 where God comes down, he's going to destroy Aaron and all the people because they were worshiping idols and then God changes his mind. God says, I regret that I have made humankind on the earth in Genesis 6. So can God change his mind? And the answer is what I tried to show you is a really dynamic God. God is dynamic and he can change. He can do all sorts of things. Stories of you've got Moses making choices, God, David making choices. We went through a ton of those kind of stories of choice. The if passages we mentioned with Saul. I don't want to go over those again, but those are in 1 Samuel 13. The stories of choice would also include Adam and Eve by the way.

There are so many passages in the scripture that say whosoever will may come. Whosoever will make come. Regardless, to love the world that "whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life." And so the call of God seems to go out broadly, and whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved. So you've got to be careful about systems. You've got to be careful about these theological systems and whether you're in a reform camp, or you're in the Arminian camp, or if you're in openness camp or whatever camp you're in. What I suggest is that you learn to have grace to people and that you allow for a person that sees things from a reformed perspective and they're from that tradition, you allow them to do that. When you're from a more Wesleyan

position, you and you're Presbyterian, you don't go up to the Wesleyan and say, well, when you understand Scripture a little more deeply, you'll become reformed like I am because we understand it so much more deeply. That's a really arrogant position to be in. What I'm suggesting is, that you work more on what do we really know about God? What we know about God is in the scriptures. We know about God from the scriptures. What I would suggest is that mystery and wonder that we wonder. Have you ever looked at something that's really, really beautiful? Have you ever seen a hummingbird go into a flower. They have these flowers, you know, hosta. The hummingbird will come up and go on the flower and you just sit there and say, wow, that is so cool. I wish I could get that on a video camera. Or I wish I could understand what's going on there. So you're left with mystery and wonder that this, it's fascinating. What I'm saying is, do we get fascinated about God? What I'm saying is rather than trying to prescribe him theologically, he's like this, and this is the way God is, that we look at him with mystery and wonder. And let that mystery and wonder attract us and it get our focus. It gets our focus because we're so enthralled with that transcendence and imminence of God.

Now, these are just two theological concept. Transcendence means that God is totally other, that God is, is different than we are. And so there's a sense in which God is disconnected from the world. He's bigger than the universe. I mean, he created the universe and so he's, he's makes these, he's different than anything we've ever known. He's different than anything. So that's called the God's transcendence that he transcends the whole universe and our brains as well. Imminent imminence means that God is so close. He's as close as our breath, that God is so close to us. Do some of you walk around this campus experiencing the presence of God? Yes. God is close to us and so you get the sense that God is transcendent. He's as grand and as the ocean and big as mountains. But yet God is so close to us. He's still what?. A still small voice. So these kinds of concepts,. Holy other, but yet he's relational. He's different than we are, but yet he's chosen to love us and the love of God, is just the richest thing in the world. I ask, my kids are growing up. My kids love me. Yeah. Do you remember saying some things to your parents? That

you can't actually, one of my children, and it's no big deal, you'll never meet, my daughter has told me to go to hell more than any other individual in the world has ever told me where to go. When she was young, that was her. I mean, how should I say? She would just blow up. She knew no limits. just when she was it just blow up and, you know, go to, you know, boom. I would try to understand her and never did. I tried to understand her and work with it. That was a really rough time in our existence. There was really a rough time. I'll never forget it. Yet, what now she's she's an old lady. She's in her thirties. What do I love? My daughter. I hope she loves me, but she, and we've had, we've come back and we have a relationship.

So what I'm saying is God is relational and there may be times where a person comes through and has some really bad times. I had a friend who taught philosophy. I used to teach at a really, really conservative school and this guy taught philosophy there and he was a good solid believer, went through, theological training, seminary training kind of thing to study philosophy. I remember he went through a divorce and in the divorce his wife got the child. He loved this daughter. When the wife got the daughter and he got nothing, he just, he just blew up at God. He was so angry at God and it was like he said, F God, F God, I don't know how many times we talked for 30 minutes. I swear he said F God, 30 times in 30 minutes. Now, by the way, did that mean he was throwing God away and at that point in his life? Yeah, I don't want to see God. God's screwed my whole life up. Look at what happened. I lost a child. The only thing I loved in this stinking world was that child and now my wife's got the child. She won't let me see her except on very restricted terms. So he was just totally angry at God. Now, by the way, you could give somebody a lecture like you shouldn't talk like that. But is it possible that he was expressing his rage? Is it possible 10

years later that what I'm saying is he may come back to the Lord. You don't know. You just don't know. So what I'm saying is that we as Christians, it seems to me we need to listen. We need to listen to people. When people are throwing rage allow them, love does

what Jesus says. What? What do you do with those that weep? You weep with that weep and you rejoice with those that are, is that right? I thought it's, "you rejoice and a hundred people rejoice with you. You weep alone and no one's there." Isn't that the way it goes? You weep and there's no one there. You rejoice and you have all sorts of friends there. So, God is relational. What he's suggesting is we as Christians, if we're going to love other people, we need to be relational. Like God is. God listens to us, God listens to us in the highs, God listens to us in the lows. Some of you may be depressed right now. You're coming up the final exams, and you may get depressed and down. You may really get down. What I'm saying is, how should I say, the Christian life is alive? I think that's, Christian life isn't meant to be steady state. The Christian life is life. Sometimes its like 1 million bucks. Other times you'll be really down. What I'm saying is Christian life goes like that. Christianity is alive. And your relationship with God is alive. Your relationship with other people's alive too. Sometimes other people hurt you badly. Sometimes you'll be feel betrayed even by God. Sometimes you'll be feel portrayed even by God. What I'm saying is, it's part of loving somebody else.

On breaking boxes be careful about heretic hunting. Some people their theology is so tight that they think that they're the only ones who are right. They go after other people. What I'm suggesting is be careful about the heretic hunting. Learn to love, learn to love. By the way, love doesn't mean, my daughter goes off on me like that. Does that mean she got disciplined? The answer is yes. She got disciplined. Part of that was for her own good. So what I'm saying is be careful about heretic hunting though. Learn to love. Learning to love doesn't mean you except, the things that they're saying are wrong, but you do what you can do. . I'm basically working away from arrogance. One must work from a position of arrogance to a position of humility. I think that's a really important thing that you come to another person and you try to listen to them and understand them and love them in Christ. So all these things are in Romans and have raised really good questions. The importance of the sovereignty of God. It's one of the greatest things in the world. Who wins in the end and some people, get upset when you say this, but who wins

in the end? We're in America. We don't talk about winning anymore. But, I'm sorry, but who wins in the end as the Bible tells us that God wins in the end. Evil does not triumph. Suffering and pain, what happens to them? It says what? In the end, in book of Revelation, it says, he wipes away all tears. By the way, when he's in the book of Revelation at the end of all time and he says he wipes away all tears. Does that mean there are tears in heaven to be wiped away? Yes. So actually Eric Clapton was right. There are tears in heaven. No, seriously, there are tears in heaven and Christ says that someday there'll be wiped away. That brings us brings us hope. So these things in the book of Romans bring us hope and choice.

Now, Christian living, let's just hit these things quickly here. Self -sacrifice in Romans 12 is a beautiful passage. I don't know whether I got you guys memorizing this, but it's one worthy of memorization. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, Holy and pleasing to God. This is your true and proper worship. And do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is. His good and pleasing and perfect will." So it talks about the transforming of the mind. Hopefully it's what happens at Gordon College. This Romans 12:9 is another one I like. It says, "love must be sincere" and I'm going to flip it. It says, "cling to what is good." Cling to what is good in our society. Sometimes do we like to put evil things in front of people all the time and get them to wrestle with evil. It says, cling to what is good and it says, "hate what is evil." It seems to me, if I were to critique our own community here, that we're good at clinging to what is good, but the hatred of evil, I don't see that too much. The hatred is toward what is evil. I think that's a really important thing there. The hating of evil. I think Christians can get in some sense too nice, overcoming evil with good. How do you respond to evil? How do you respond to evil? It says, "do not be overcome by evil. Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." I think that's a beautiful thing. How do you fight evil? You fight evil by doing good. So that's one of the things actually that really motivates me. I get up and I think,

how do I do the most good that I can do in a single day as an individual? And what can I do? Evil, do I go out and fight evil or do I go out and try to do good and let the good overcome the evil? So those are important things.

Now, Romans 13, is an important passage and government, and this is significant. I want to read this passage here on government and governmental choices. About government it says this verse one, "Every man must submit himself to governing authorities. For there is no authority except that God has established. The authorities exist, have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted. And those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For the rulers hold no terror to those who do, right, but those who do wrong." So its is actually saying we need to submit to government authorities. Do we like government authorities? It says here, rulers hold no terror to those who do, right. Any of you get followed by a police car and you get the terror feeling then you say, are the policemen really there to protect me to do what is right? Of because they think I'm a college student running down Grapevine Road. They're going to give me a ticket. But notice the Bible has a high view that the governing authorities. They have been placed in authority by God. Therefore there is a submission to government that happens. Very interesting consequence, by the way, did the early church submit to the government? Did the government persecute the early church? Many of the early Christians were killed. The 12 apostles, all 12 of them except Judas hanged himself, but the apostles were killed by various means. So submit to government.

Chapter 14 has a thing about judging brothers and sisters in Christ. One person's faith allows him to eat everything. This is talking about being a vegan. Thanks Josh for smile, I just am worried people take me serious. A one man's faith allows him to eat everything and another person's whose faith is weak eats only vegetables. A person who eats everything must not look down on him. Who does that? "A person who does not eat everything must not condemn the person who does. One person considers one day more

sacred than another, another considers every day alike." He's saying you have got to be careful about this weaker brother. Therefore what I do causes my brother or sister to sin, then I'm going to stop doing what I do. Even though I have the right to eat meat and I know it's not going to offer it up to idols. I don't eat that because I know it's offensive to my brother and sister. And so this is talking about the weaker brother or sister. It's saying that yes, you have freedom to do all sorts of things, but you curtail that freedom because you're concerned about another person. You don't want to lead them astray. So this is called the Christian Liberty passage and the weaker brother. Therefore, do you guys celebrate the Sabbath? Are some of you really strict on how you celebrate the Sabbath? I know there are faculty members who are very Sabbitarians here. Other people, like myself, and actually my wife ended up, she's a CPA. She ended up working last Sunday. She ended up working the whole crazy day. Now do we like that? We don't like that, but that's just the way her business is. My daughter's a nurse practitioner. There's a nurse practitioner. You have to work in the hospital on Sunday. "No, no," she tells all the people, "don't get sick on Sunday." I mean, if you're a nurse, you're going to have to work on Sunday because people get sick on Sunday it depends. So therefore, don't be judgmental of other people on some of these things that don't matter that.

So that's the book of Romans. You guys will be working on Corinthians this week, and when we get back, we'll start on the book of 1 Corinthians. Thanks. This is Dr. Ted Hildebrand in his teaching on New Testament. This is session number 24. Romans part two..