

## **Series: Calvinism-What Does the Bible Say?**

### **Lesson: Responding to the Good News of Jesus**

1. In **Romans 1:16**, the Bible clearly states, *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*
2. The gospel of Christ is said to be the power of God. What is the good news?
  - According to **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, it is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
  - Our sin has alienated us from a holy God.
  - How can we go from alienation **from** God to reconciliation **with** God? Only one way – turning in faith to God’s provision – Jesus!
3. Calvinism is a man-made theological system that teaches that due to man’s total depravity, he **cannot** respond to the gospel of Christ, he cannot choose to believe on Christ. They equate total **depravity** with total **inability** to accept God’s gift of Jesus.
  - Why would anyone believe this? Because the foundation of this theological system demands it.
  - It teaches that God predestined vast multitudes to eternal damnation without allowing them any choice. Also, God chose an elect few to salvation. He has limited His grace and mercy to a select few. But what does the Bible teach?
4. The Bible teaches that every person can and should respond in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why is this?

#### **I. Because it is necessary for our salvation.**

- A. The Bible is clear: We are lost in our sins and in need of a Savior. Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins and then triumphed over death. We simply need to turn to Him in faith. He then saves us. Sound simple? It is!
  - *“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”* **Acts 16:31**
  - *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*  
**Romans 10:13**
  - *“And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*  
**2 Timothy 3:15**
  - *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”* **Galatians 3:26**
  - We turn in faith to Jesus Christ and He saves and regenerates us by His Spirit.
  - *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also **after** that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”* **Ephesians 1:13**
- B. Calvinism reverses the Biblical order.
  - It teaches that the elect are regenerated by God’s Spirit and then after this they place their faith in Christ. But, not one verse in the Bible can be cited that clearly states this.

- By placing faith **after** regeneration, they remove from the lost the only way God has provided for them to avail themselves of the grace of God.
- C. **Romans 10:13-14** makes it clear that in order for lost people to be saved, they must hear the gospel.
- A Calvinist would read this verse, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not been regenerated? And how shall they be regenerated unless God sovereignly elects them?”
  - This is why God commanded that the gospel should go to every creature. Does this not mean that every person **can** be saved?  
*“Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:4*
- D. You can know beyond any shadow of a doubt, God wants you to be saved.

## II. Because God commands every person to repent and believe on Christ.

- A. What is repentance? It is a turning. Turning from sin, self, and unbelief to Jesus Christ.
- *“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye **turned** to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” 1 Thessalonians 1:9*
  - *“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and **turned** unto the Lord.” Acts 11:21*
- B. How many people does God command to repent and turn to Christ? Everyone.
- *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” Acts 17:30*
  - According to **Acts 22:15** Paul was to be a witness unto **all** men of what he had seen and heard.
  - Paul was commissioned by God to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make **all** men see the great mystery of Christ and the gospel. **Ephesians 3:8-9**
  - Paul took this commission seriously and sought to obey it. **Acts 20:20-21**
- C. Would God command people to repent if they were incapable of doing it?
- This is exactly what the Calvinist teaches – God commands people to do what they cannot do without His grace, and then God withholds the grace they need and then punishes them eternally for failing to obey and turn to Christ. He pleads and strives with mankind to repent knowing full well they can’t.
  - If this is true, the entire history of God’s dealing with man as recorded in the Bible loses credibility. This makes a mockery of God’s Word, of His mercy and love and it libels God’s character.
  - A Calvinist may say: “He’s pleading with the elect” – that would be useless and senseless since God has already predestined them to salvation and will affect it sovereignly before any faith is exercised by them.
- D. God is not playing games with mankind – He truly desires for every person to be saved, has commanded them to repent and turn to Christ and has commissioned us to tell the world this message.

### III. Because God has given every person the ability to respond.

- A. Is mankind sinful and depraved? Absolutely – through and through. Is sin universal? Certainly! Mankind is enslaved by sin and by nature does not of his own initiative seek after God.
- But is mankind incapable of hearing the gospel preached and being convicted of their sin and believing the good news of Christ? Certainly not.
- B. God has revealed Himself to every person on this earth through creation and through the giving of a moral conscience. **Romans 1:20 & 2:14-15**
- According to **Acts 17:26-27**, people have the ability to seek the Lord.
  - God sent His Holy Spirit to reprove the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. **John 16:8**
  - According to **Titus 2:11**, the grace to believe the gospel has been given to all men.
- C. Salvation is said to be the gift of God – mankind cannot will it, cannot work for it, and cannot earn it, but certainly he can receive it. To believe the gospel and receive Christ requires no work or worth on man's part.
- Sinful mankind cannot contribute one thing to his salvation, but he can **receive** the salvation freely offered in Christ. **Revelation 22:17**
  - The Roman believers are good examples. They were slaves to sin, but responded to the gospel that was preached. **Romans 6:17**
- D. The Bible is very clear. The reason why people do not respond to the gospel is **not** because they are incapable, but rather they are not **willing**. **Matthew 22:37**
- *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.  
He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.  
And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”*  
**John 3:17-19**
  - Why will people spend eternity in hell separated from God and eternally condemned?
  - According to Calvinism – because God predestined and elected them to eternal torment. They are totally depraved and can't believe the gospel and God elected them to eternal torment.
  - But according to the words of Jesus, it's because people love their sin and refuse to believe on Him.

### In Conclusion:

1. **John 3:16** sums it up beautifully.
  - How does God feel about the world? **He loves it!**
  - To what extent? **He gave His Son.**
  - What gift is God offering the world? **Everlasting life.**
  - How does a person receive it? **Believe on Christ.**

2. Only a man-made complex theological system could confuse the simplicity of that verse. You understand it, I understand it, a child understands it.
3. God isn't playing semantic word games with you. He means it. He loves you and wants you to be saved. He's already made the first move by sending His Son Jesus Christ to die for your sin (**2 Corinthians 5:19**). Now the choice is yours. As Jesus said in **John 3:18**, "Believe" or "Believe not."
4. One author wrote, "If there is anything the Bible shows, it is that God **does** hold men responsible for their actions. God's 'thou shalt' is spoken to free persons, not to puppets."