

# **Romans 9–11, Part II – The Predestination Predicament**

## **Brief Summary:**

In this message, we explored one of the most debated tensions in Christian theology: God's sovereignty versus man's responsibility in salvation. Pastor walked us through the historical doctrines of Calvinism and Arminianism and their differing views on predestination, free will, and grace. Using Romans 9 as a launching point, we were reminded that while we may not fully understand how divine election and human choice work together, we are called to respond in faith, walk in humility, and trust God's justice and mercy.

## **Key Themes:**

- God's sovereignty does not erase our responsibility
- Salvation involves both divine initiation and human response
- The goal is not to divide over doctrine but to unite around Jesus
- God's grace is available, and every person is invited to respond in faith

## **Key Scriptures Used**

- Romans 9:13–19
- Romans 9:31–32
- Romans 8:29–30
- 2 Peter 3:9
- John 3:16
- Revelation 22:17
- Romans 10:13
- Luke 14:26
- Joshua 24:15

## **Study Questions & Answers**

**Let's start here — What's the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism in simple terms?**

A: Calvinism emphasizes God's control. He chooses who is saved. Arminianism emphasizes human free will where we choose whether to respond to God's grace. Most believers land somewhere in between.

**2: How should this discussion affect our evangelism and prayer life?**

A: If God is sovereign, we pray with confidence. If people have free will, we evangelize with urgency. Believing both leads us to faithful action—pray like it depends on God, go like it depends on you.

**3: What danger do we face if we focus too much on one side (either sovereignty or free will)?**

A: Overemphasizing sovereignty may lead to passivity where we play no part in evangelism or witnessing to anyone. Overemphasizing free will may lead to pride or pressure where we begin to hold the false theology that we are the ones that are doing the saving and not Jesus. Holding both in tension keeps us humble and dependent on God's grace.

**4: How should a believer respond when they don't fully understand doctrines like predestination?**

A: With humility and trust. Instead of trying to "figure it all out," we cling to what we do know... that God is good, just, merciful, and wants all to be saved. We walk by faith, not full understanding.

**5: How do we reconcile the tension between "God chooses" and "we must believe"?**

A: God initiates salvation, and we must respond. Scripture clearly teaches both. Theologians may debate how it works, but the personal call is clear: believe in Jesus and follow Him.

**5: What does "foreknowledge" mean in Romans 8:29? Does it mean God causes everything?**

A: No. Foreknowledge means God knows in advance, not that He forces every outcome. God sees the full timeline and works through it, but He doesn't override human choice.

**6: Why is the concept of God's sovereignty difficult for many people to accept?**

A: It challenges our need for control. We like to think we're in charge. But recognizing God's sovereignty means submitting to a plan and a wisdom far greater than ours.

## **Family Spotlight – “The Tug-of-War”**

Object Lesson for Kids and Families:

Grab a rope and have a friendly family game of tug-of-war. As they play, talk about how both sides are pulling in different directions. Then explain:

“Some people say that God is totally in control and we don’t make choices. Others say we have full control and God just watches. But really—God’s power and our choices work together. The Bible shows us both!”

Discussion Question for Kids:

“If God invites everyone, what does it mean for you to say ‘yes’ to Jesus?”

Memory Verse:

Romans 10:13 – “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”