

Perfect Will of God and Human Free Will

The prayer is readers will recognize their true potential in Christ and be free in Him, ever learning, ever growing, and then paying it forward (John 8:36). The enemy seeks to keep the church divided, inspiring finite humans to argue over issues they do not fully understand. Those who are stuck in their view tend to argue sternly against those who believe contrary to their settled position, and as a result the church is not united. Christ prayed for all believers to be one just as the Father is in Him and He is in the Father, so the world may believe that the Father sent Christ (John 17: 20-23). Until all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of Christ, only then the faithful will no longer be misled and confused by cunning, crafty, and deceitful schemers (Eph. 4:14). Hence, all believers must speak the truth in love, and then in every respect the church will become the mature body of Christ (v. 15). Consequently, the issue concerning human free will and the perfect will of God must be addressed, for this issue can be logically resolved and is therefore no longer worth arguing about.

God is in no way limited because of human free will, but every day human minds are manipulated by the enemy of truth. Since the hypothesis to be shared here is neither an Arminian nor Calvinist view, one might falsely presume it to be Semi-Pelagianism at best, a view held by the Roman Catholic church.¹ Pelagianism teaches the fall of Adam did not affect all of humanity, and this view is clearly unbiblical (Rom. 5: 12-21). Additionally, contrary to this view, only by accepting Christ can one enter Heaven, thus good works alone cannot save any human (Acts 4:12, Rom. 5:12-21). Likewise, Pelagianism is wrong about there being sinless men before the death and resurrection of Christ (Isa. 64:6, Rom. 3: 22-24). God does not bless humans based on

¹ Erwin Lutzer, *The Doctrines that Divide: A Fresh Look at the Historic Doctrines That Separate Christians*, (Grand Rapids MI: Kregel Publication, 1998), 161.

good works alone, and when one may not be sinning with their lips, their heart may be guilty of distrusting God (Job 1:11-12, 1:5, 2:10, 3:3-5, 22). Even a righteous person may be guilty of misjudging the character of God, and the Father disciplines those He loves (Job 42, Heb. 12:6, Matt. 12:6). Therefore, where Pelagianism claims otherwise, a human cannot choose to change their fallen heart by their own will alone. Good works cannot make up for a heart that does not truly trust in the love of God. Only Christ could heal the heart of a broken man, hence why the Christian is called to spread the gospel, teach the commands of Christ, and thus make disciples of all nations (Gen. 8:21, Jer. 17:9, Mark 2:17, Rom. 1:21, Matt. 13: 1-5, 28:19-20). The only belief in Pelagianism one should support is unbaptized children will be saved if they die, for as Christ makes clear the kingdom of Heaven belongs to children (Matt.19: 13-14). When considering how Christ spoke of the children one will find the truth about why God is not limited because of human free will, and those who think otherwise apparently believe their Heavenly Father is limited.

Christ made clear the kingdom of Heaven is for the little ones, and He warned listeners to not hinder the children from coming to Him (Mark 10: 13-16, Matt. 19:14). When the disciples were inquiring about who was the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ called a little child and had him stand among them (Matt. 18:1-2). Imagine all these adult disciples suddenly look down at this little child as Christ said, “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (v. 3). After this Christ declared, “Therefore whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven” (v. 4). Therefore, like a child could understand, readers must humbly accept they are in a narrative, and the Triune God is the author. In this story those destined to believe in God, will seek after Him, trust in Him, draw near to Him, and will be rewarded in Heaven (Heb. 11:6, 1 Pet. 2:2).

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child, or whoever hinders the children from coming to Christ shall not enter, and those who cause a child to sin will be greatly punished (Luke 18:17, Matt 18:3-6).

Any doctrinal belief regarding salvation in Christ which would compel a child to distrust in the love of God must be reconsidered (Prov. 22:6, Luke 18:17, Eph. 6:4). Hence, a child can understand the parable of the lost sheep and easily trust their Father in Heaven does not will for any of His little ones to be lost (Matt. 18: 10-14). The enemy will find much value in a lazy parent who fails to train up their child properly and will likewise be grateful for the parent who often provokes their child to wrath, (Prov. 22:6, Eph. 6:4). Sadly, many parents tend to be one extreme or another. The Scriptures are clear the right way is to *bring* the child up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, so once grown he will not depart from it (Eph. 6:4, Gen. 18:19, Prov. 29:17, 2 Tim. 3:16). The faithful child understands why those who came to Christ seeking answers with regards to His parables were the ones given an understanding for the secret of the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:11, Matt. 13:11, Phil. 1:29, Heb. 13:20-21). The child understands one must humbly approach their Father with their questions if one hopes to receive wise counsel. The faithful one trusts in Christ, for the author and founder of their salvation was made perfect through suffering [bringing to maturity the human experience necessary for Him to be perfectly equipped for His office as High Priest] (Heb. 2:10). The faithful child understands since God is all-powerful, He is morally perfect, therefore God must be the most fair and loving Father, hence whoever rejects Him as their Father chooses to reject life.

The perceived reality is one where God opposes the proud, bestows grace on the humble, but even the proudest of men may be humbled for God's perfect will to be accomplished through imperfect humans (2 Cor. 12:7-10, Prov. 3:34, 16:18-19, 1 Pet. 5:5-6, Phil. 2:3-9, James 4: 6-10,

Isa. 66:2). There are obvious boundaries in this world, such as gravity, boundaries set in place providing the opportunity for life to emerge and flourish while also placing a limit on life's capabilities. Boundaries, much like discipline, do not take away human free will, but on the contrary help define the free mind. Without recognizing the absolute truth of their being boundaries and accordingly respecting those boundaries, every human is in danger of choosing death instead of life. Free will is the ability to make a free choice within consideration for natural boundaries and recognizing how preordained circumstances, environmental influences, have helped mold people into being prone to making one choice over another. Therefore, God molds His humbled children in an obvious manner, for any human who swallows their pride can recognize how character is built in every person (2 Tim. 2:20-21, 1 Pet. 1:6-7, Isa. 64:8, 45:9, Rom. 9:21, Jer. 18:4). Thus, the one who has faith like a child takes the account of God warning Cain to be self-explanatory. Cain was not too depraved to fail at understanding when God said to him, "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you refuse to do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires you, but you must master it" (Gen. 4:7). Indeed, at times God will directly stop the proud sinner on their path, as in the case with Paul who was once an enemy of Christians. Yet this once proudful persecutor of Christians is clear about how the faithful must take responsibility to not let sin reign in them, lest they obey its desires (Rom. 6:12).

Christ spoke in parables because He did not want proudful disciples who would begrudgingly serve Him, or who just wanted His free meals (Matt. 13:9-29, John 6:66). The system is designed for humble seekers of truth to become children of God (James 4: 5-7). God will have mercy and compassion on whom He wills (Rom. 9:15, Exo. 33:19). Likewise, no human by their own desire or effort alone can gain mercy from God (Rom. 9:16). For if not knowing of the moral truths from God, one could not choose to confess and repent for their

transgressions to obtain mercy from God (Prov. 28:13, Isa. 55:7). For the Jews who initially heard salvation comes from Christ and not by one's effort to follow the Old Testament laws, this change was difficult to accept. The Jewish nation was not the promised seed, but Christ was the one promised, for through Christ the Father chose to reach the Gentiles. Pride can be most dangerous, hence why the Jews who worked hard to follow the customs and laws of the old covenant might ask, "Then why does God still blame us? For who can resist His will" (Rom. 9:20). However, to make His power known, with great patience God endured a stubborn people who consistently rebelled against His will (v. 22).

The irony is rich for those who misread Romans 9, for since Christ fulfilled the law one is now free to accept the love and mercy of God or reject this truth that sets one free (Rom. 3:21-26, 6:14, 7:4, Gal. 4:4-5). Grace and truth are realized through Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to all who believe (John 1:17, Rom. 10:4, Phil. 3:9). Thus, ever since Christ resurrection every human by their own freewill can accept salvation which is available because of the work of God or reject this obvious Truth. Perhaps God chose to make the riches of His glory known through Christ death and resurrection for this was the best way to share His love with those not of the Jewish community (Rom. 9: 23-24). The Scriptures show those who rejected Christ and pursued the law as the way of righteousness did not attain their goal because they did not pursue it by faith, but by works (v. 30-32). The humble child can understand under the law one is never free from sin, for only the work of God can set one free.

For freedom Christ sets the captives free, and thus the disciple of Christ must stand firm and not be subject to the yoke of slavery again (Gal. 5:1). Self-righteous pride hardened the hearts of those destined to betray Christ and have Him killed. Yet the actions of those proudful teachers of the law led to salvation through faith in Christ alone. Christ did the work so people

can receive compassion and mercy from God. Christ explained those who did not seek to understand the parables had become calloused and thus could hardly hear the truth, and *they* closed their eyes to the truth (Matt. 13:15). If these people did not have calloused hearts Christ said, “they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them” (v. 15). Surely, several from the crowds who heard Christ parables later yelled ‘crucify Him.’ The disciples asked Christ why He spoke to the people in parables, to which Christ replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them” (v. 10-11). Only those who swallow their useless pathetic pride will come to Christ. Freedom from the lies of this world, which causes people to feel they can never be good enough, is found in Christ alone. Hence, after being set free, the grateful one who has received mercy from God will show mercy to others.

The merciful shall receive mercy, and thus God blesses those who are merciful, and shows favor to those with humbled hearts (Rom. 9:15, Matt. 5:7, 23:12, Job 22:29, James 4:10 etc.). Out of the same lump of clay God can make some for special purposes and others for common use (Rom. 9:21). The vessels of dishonor can become vessels of honor though if they choose to cleanse themselves by surrendering to Christ and trusting in the promises of God (2 Tim. 2:20-21, 2 Cor. 7:1). In Revelation readers see the overcomer who does the will of God till the end will be given authority, but others will be dashed to pieces like pottery (Rev. 2:26-27). The faithful one in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position, for those who love God will persevere under trial and receive the promised crown of life (Jam. 1:9-12). As for those destined to perish, such as Judas, Cain, Pharaoh of Exodus, Pontius Pilate, or the devil, they all had their parts to play regardless of *choosing* to rebel against the truth, after being warned (Gen. 4: 6-7, Exo. 8:32-9:12, Matt. 26: 24-25, 27:19, 2 Cor. 4:1-18). Proudful men prone

to boasting in their works choose to complicate the truth of salvation. Where the idea of righteousness through faith in Christ is a stumbling stone to the proudful, the humble one who trusts in Christ will never be put to shame (Rom. 9:30-33).

As the clearest case is Christ death, what others will for evil can be used by God for accomplishing His perfect will, even “the saving of many lives” (Gen. 50:20). Furthermore, the Scriptures make clear God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked but is pleased when they turn from their ways and live (Eze. 18:23). Romans 9 and other such passages can be read with these biblical truths in mind. Therefore, there is no conflict between humans potentially having free will and God’s perfect will, regardless of the depraved fallen nature of man (John 6:44, 6:65, Eph. 2:1-3, Rom. 3:23). No fallen human can accept or understand wisdom from the Spirit of God, but some being molded by predestined circumstances respond to the call and are saved, while others choose to harden their hearts (1 Cor. 2:14, Rom. 1:21, 3:9-19, 9:18-24, John 5:40, Isa. 53:6, Eph. 2:5, Matt. 22:14-15, etc.). A most dangerous sin blinding humans from accepting the truth is the sin of pride, which is in hand with envy, a key weakness the enemy shares with humanity. This sin of pride is quite often in the hearts of religious leaders, as was seen with the Pharisees (Jer. 49:16, Matt. 23, Luke 18:11-12). The proudful leaders are often responsible for misleading the church, and often seek to silence those who share the uncomplicated truth of Christ love.