

Election - obedience and sprinkling (Quality: Average)

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- [0 : 00] We turn this morning to the words found in the first epistle of Peter, in the first chapter, and at the first verse.
- The first epistle of Peter, chapter 1, at verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.
- In act, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. Now, we're considering together the nature and the character of the people to whom this epistle was addressed by the apostle Peter.
- Like all Christians, they're people of contrasts. On the one hand, they are strangers. On the other hand, they're elect. As strangers and pilgrims, they're filled with uncertainty.
- [1 : 13] As elect, they're filled with certainty and assurance and hope. Paradox. Contrast. Apparent confidentiality. Confident confidentiality. But, um, there are people who have come into circumstances of trouble in the world.
- They're scattered out of their own land and nation into the various provinces of Asia Minor that are here indicated in the first verse.
- And the apostle Peter is writing to them with a view to comfort, establish, control. He does it by the simple expedient of explaining to them their position as Christians.
- He doesn't minister comfort that's some kind of easy, glib, soporific. Comfort that's some kind of cheap feeling that comes and passes afterwards.
- But he does it by explaining and expounding to them what they are as Christians. He gives them the comfort of the gospel. And the comfort of the gospel is the comfort of truth.
- [2 : 26] The comfort of the sheer fact of being Christian at all. So, his method is to show them how they became what they are.
- And, um, we have been looking at this, and I have indicated that, um, there are three great steps. First of all, they are elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.
- Then they are elect through the sanctification of the Spirit. And then they are elect unto obedience in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Then last Lord's Day we looked at the first of these.
- The foreknowledge of God the Father. Which means that God set his heart upon his people in eternity. Place them in a position of enormous favor, gracious privilege.
- And then on Tuesday evening we looked at the second of these things. The fact that these people, like all Christians, are elect through sanctification of the Spirit.
- [3 : 38] Which means, essentially and basically, that they are separated. So that's the meaning of the word sanctification. Separated, separated, set apart. Both in eternity and in time.
- From sin to God. From hell to heaven. And so this morning we come to the third and the last of these three steps.

These three things. Where the apostle ministers this comfort to distressed Christians. By explaining to them that they are elect unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Well now here, as we said before us, is the object of God's electing grace. The object.

Once all four. Where it all leads. It is according to the foreknowledge of the Father. It is through or by means of the sanctification of the Spirit.

[4 : 46] But it is unto or with you to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. There are not a great many mysteries surrounding the doctrine of God's elect.

We must be content to allow God to know more than we know. The election, said John Calvin, is a high mystery. And we must not pry into it.

But one thing about which there is no mystery. About which there is no uncertainty or vagueness or doubt whatsoever.

Is the object that God has in view in electing or choosing a people for himself. Elect. What for?

What to? Unto. Obedience. And the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. There is then a twofold object.

[5 : 52] In God's election of his people. Better to look at them in that order. First of all, God's people are elect unto obedience.

That is to say, the obedience of faith. God has in view. God has in view a people who will hear the gospel call.

Who will obey it. Whom he will enable to recognize their father's word. Their father's call. Believe it. Honor it. Obey it.

And trust in him. In other words. God elects his people to a life of obedience and faith and trust in himself.

He makes them. He makes them, as Peter puts it in verse 14 of this chapter, obedient children. They are elect in order to obey.

[6 : 54] Elect to believe. Elect to trust. Elect in order to exercise faith in their heavenly father. And this, not as something exceptional or unusual, but as the normal feature and characteristic of their daily life.

Elect unto obedience. Elect to trust. That is where God's election leads.

and here surely is the answer and indeed the refutation to and of a common popular misunderstanding of God's election if a man is elect then it doesn't matter how he lives because nothing can overturn his election so if he's elect and knows he's elect he can sin, he can behave as he likes it doesn't matter what he does that is a caricature that is a slander commonly thrown at the doctrine of election and there are actually professed Christians who argue that God's election is not to be believed because it leads to this kind of irresponsibility but if a man is elect and he knows he can never be overturned he is elect to license he is elect to what in theological terms is called antinomianism he can overturn the law of God he can do what he likes doesn't matter if that argument has risen in your mind for the first time lately or even from my lips this morning my friends let me tell you there's nothing new about it there's nothing novel about it it's as old as the hills it's an argument that was levelled against the apostle Paul and he answered it twice in Romans chapter 6 and this is what he said shall we continue in sin that grace may abound

God forbid perish the thought if you are ever tempted into thinking that belief in the doctrine of election makes the Christian life easy and slick because seeing that you are elect you can do what you like and nothing will ever overturn your election remember the object in view the object of election is obedience the object of election is faith trust commitment to God and to his Christ this is what Peter says here you have the same thing from the lips of the apostle Paul who in Ephesians 1.4 says God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world what for?

that we should live as we like that we should live in the gutter and claim to be heirs of heaven oh no God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without life the one thing that any man proves who says I am elect therefore I can do as I like nothing will overturn my election the one thing that man proves is that he is not elect because election is to obedience election is not to license election is not to sin it is to holiness election is to the love of God and the obedience of God and my friend if you ever get to the point of thinking that you have nothing to do concerning your salvation it's true that you have nothing to do to save yourself that is something you can't do but having been saved if you then get to the point at which you think there's nothing you have to do about it then I bid you listen to the apostle Peter here in our text and again in the first chapter of his second epistle where he says beside all this give all diligence add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and to knowledge temperance and to temperance patience and to patience godliness and to godliness brotherly kindness and to brotherly kindness charity for if these things be in you and abound they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off and hath forgotten that he was perched from his old sins wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure election is not a license to sin election is a call to believe and obey and to live in faith under the gospel here is the explicit answer to that misunderstanding that caricature of God's election

[12 : 27] God's object in electing grace is to furnish himself with a church with a believing trusting obedient people far from leading into slackness into indifference into apathy if you want the assurance that God has chosen you as his own apply this test to yourself am I obedient to what God says do I obey his word his law his command what is the object of election well first of all it is the object of obedience but then the second object that the apostle sets before us here is this that the people of God are elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ in his election

God has in view not only the people that he will lead and bring to himself but he has in view also the way and the means by which he will do it so the life and the death and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are included in the redeeming purpose the cross of Jesus Christ was not an afterthought there are professedly Christian circles where it is held that the cross of Jesus Christ was an afterthought there are certain dispensational systems of teaching so called where you will be told that God tried this way and it failed and God introduced then another dispensation and there was another principle of salvation and that failed and another and another and finally God said I know what I will do I will send my son the cross of Jesus Christ was not an afterthought the cross of Jesus Christ was ordained from the foundation of the world from the beginning

God ordained that his people should be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ so the object of God's election on the one side is that sinners should obey the gospel on the other side that the blood of Jesus Christ should be sprinkled upon them should be shed for them and applied to them for their eternal salvation elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Christ so before I go any further I can't but point out the fact that here Peter nails yet another misrepresentation of God's greatest election there are people who will have nothing to do with God's election of his church and people because as they say it bypasses the cross if God chooses men from the beginning of the world well there's no need for the cross

Jesus Christ needn't have lived needn't have died if the choice was made there at the beginning of the world there's no need for the cross but the scripture the scripture makes the cross indispensable the scripture has such a lot to say about the cross and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ so therefore election cannot be true that's the argument it's a pathetic argument it's a distortion of the word of God holy scripture teaches God's eternal election and the same holy scripture teaches the indispensability of the cross of Jesus Christ holy scripture doesn't teach one and not the other it teaches both and it never sets the one against the other God's election is always in Christ there is no election in scripture that isn't in Christ says Peter elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ says Paul in Ephesians 1:4 chosen in him there it is chosen in

Christ before the foundation of the world does election bypass the cross of course not of course not the object of God's election is to put sinful men into Christ for only in Christ can they be saved if men could be saved without Christ they could be saved without faith yet Peter here brings the both sides together and both alike are indispensable elect unto obedience there's the call for faith elect unto the sprinkled blood there's the object of the belief and the faith now let us just stop because this is Peter's object in writing the whole epistle let us just see the comfort of this glorious salvation this is what Peter is saying to these pilgrim

[18:06] Christians who are unsettled and in trouble consider your privilege you have been enabled to obey the gospel whereas your neighbors have not you have had the blood sprinkled upon you but your neighbors have not and why to you for no reason of merit no reason of good in you but only of faith in God's sovereign grace because he foreknew you because he laid hold upon you because he separated you in eternity and now in time he has given you the obedience of faith and he has applied the sprinkled blood says Peter to these pilgrim Christians you're tossed about you're strangers nobody wants you nobody loves you so you say in the world no man cares for your soul maybe no man does care for your soul oh but what does he do what has he done for your soul he has brought you to obedience he has brought the sprinkled blood to you and in the union of those two things your erection has borne fruit doesn't it astonish you doesn't it amaze you doesn't it leave you speechless with wonder and with gratitude don't you find your comfort here says Peter in effect you remember how much

Jane put it chosen not for good in me wakened up from wrath to flee hidden in the saviour's side by the spirit sanctified teach me lord on earth to show by my love how much I am the object of God's electing grace is first obedience the obedience of faith and second the sprinkling of the precious blood of Jesus Christ but let us stay for a moment with this matter of the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ let us ask the question why is the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ referred to in this particular way well it is referred to in this particular way in order to remind these and all

Christians that salvation is a covenant salvation that all God's dealings with his people are covenant dealings where do we read of this sprinkling of the blood except in the institution of the Old Testament sacrifice and where do we read particularly of the people the people being sprinkled with blood but in the sealing of the old covenant in the chapter that we read Exodus 24 in chapter 20 of Exodus Moses receives the moral law which is the ground of the covenant in the next three chapters Moses receives what is called the book of the covenant the terms and the conditions of the God's gracious favour towards his people and then in Exodus 24 verse 7 we read he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people and they said all that the

Lord hath said will we do and be obedient and Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you they were literally sprinkled bespattered with the blood the animal blood it was a seal it was a bond it was a token to them that their God was a covenant keeping God and that aspect of the covenant in its old form in the Old Testament is ratified and confirmed in the New Testament as concerns the New Covenant listen to the Apostle Paul in Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 19 when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law he took the blood of calves and of goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book and all the people saying this is the blood of the testament which

God hath enjoined unto you and then he goes on to contrast the old and the new forms of the covenant verse 24 in Hebrews 9 for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the truth what in heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us nor yet that he should offer himself often as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself he contrasts the old and the new forms of the covenant Christ he says was once offered to bear the sins of many and this is a matter of covenant the covenant is still there now it's sealed and it's sealed once and for all it doesn't need sealing again the blood of

[24 : 22] Christ is once offered a sufficient sacrifice unrepeatable now what Peter is saying by way of comfort and consolation to these erect strangers these Christians who were redeemed by the blood of Christ is this you are elect by the sprinkling of the blood the covenant has been sealed and sealed to you the blood that was shed has been shed on your behalf it has been sprinkled it has been applied by the spirit of God to you in regeneration what he's saying to the main effect is this you are in the covenant the covenant of redeeming grace and surely this is the source here is the basis of gospel comfort this is the comfort of the truth what does it mean let me just spell it out a little bit what this sprinkling of the blood shows first of all the sprinkling of the blood is evidence that the covenant is sealed when

Moses sprinkled the people they were sprinkled literally and quite obviously they were marked they were stained there was blood upon them on their persons and upon their clothing it was visible it was obvious to the child of God it is invisible but not less real it is not on the external person but on the conscience and on the heart now you may say but how does a Christian know that he is sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ how does he know that he is within the covenant well one way of answering that question is this ask this question is he also obedient because those who are elect to the sprinkling of the blood are elect to obedience the obedience of faith does he trust in the Lord does he trust in a precious saviour and nothing and no one else how does a man know that he is sprinkled with the blood well another way of answering that question is to ask does that man have the witness of the spirit within him does the spirit of

God bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God because the sealing of the spirit is essentially the application of the blood of the covenant as an evidence and sign and therefore the comfort and the assurance that for me the covenant is seen the sprinkled blood is evidence that the covenant is seen again the sprinkled blood speaks of the transference of merit it speaks of the transference of Christ's merit to his people the whole idea of the Old Testament sacrifices was that the animal blood temporarily and in a limited way cleansed the offending

Israelite in its effect the law of ordinances was kept and God was satisfied for the time for the time being that's the whole point about the Old Testament sacrifices they didn't last the effect the virtue didn't last very long that's why they had to be constantly repeated so Paul says writing to the Hebrews chapter 9 verse 13 if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinklingly unclean sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God the blood of Christ the perfect sacrifice so fully so completely satisfied

God that Christ's merit is reckoned to those on whom it is sprinkled God looks on his people in Christ he cannot he will not look on sin but he sees his people in Christ and in Christ they are purged purified justified they are elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Christ blood the virtue merit power of which is imputed reckoned accounted to stranger pilgrims for their eternal salvation and for their comfort in the world but then again I would put it like this the sprinkled blood initiates the people of God into their priestly service the sprinkled blood initiates

[30 : 09] God's people into full access into God's presence it makes them intercessors it is the mark of their priesthood Hebrews chapter 10 verse 19 having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest how by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way which he hath concordated for us through the veil that is to say his flesh and having an high priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith hadn't our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience here is the believers priestly office under the official priesthood of the Old Testament this was a limited office but in the

New Testament in the New Covenant all God's people are priests he hath made us kings and priests unto God entrance into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus and only they who are sprinkled with the blood can come in only they can discharge this ministry of intercession they who are elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Christ now what an honor that is what a distinction that is the stranger pilgrim the Christian who is so out of step with the world the stranger pilgrim Christian who is so tossed about as these to whom the apostle writes he bears on his heart a passport into the holy of holies and there he intercedes for his brethren he intercedes for his neighbors he intercedes for the lost he intercedes for all sorts and kinds and conditions of mankind he has a power he has a prerogative in priesthood that no other has and believers cannot intercede they cannot intercede because they cannot get in they cannot come in to the audience chamber they are not priests but my dear friends as Christians if you are a

Christian you are a priest you can go into the holiest of all you are tossed about in this world you are a pilgrim you are a stranger you are a misfit but that isn't the whole of the proof of that there is another side to that part coin you may not be welcome in the world but you are welcome in the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus now that's the comfort of the gospel that's the comfort of the truth doesn't it help you to see things in perspective doesn't it bring all heaven down much nearer to you than the world in which you live and the world that hates that's the message says Peter here it is here is your comfort here is your strength well here it is this is how a man becomes a Christian this is why being a

Christian is to have the highest possible form of gospel comfort this is why being tossed about as a pilgrim in this world is never the whole truth about any Christian it's never the last word in the matter because although he is in the world although he's got to live in the world although he should live in the world and should live responsibly and honorably as a Christian man that isn't the whole truth he's not only a stranger and a pilgrim he's elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Holy Spirit out of obedience from the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ the Lord give us evidence of our failure evidence of our strength and boldness in the holiest will for his name sake amen