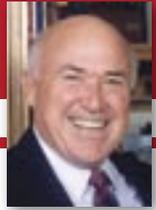


A Word from Pastor Chuck

C A L V A R Y C H A P E L D I S T I N C T I V E S



STRIKING THE BALANCE—PART 2

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

Another example of maintaining a balance on debatable issues is our approach to Calvinism. People get very emotional about the issue of Calvinism. We’re neither Five Point Calvinists, nor are we Arminians.

We believe in the security of the believer, but we also believe in the “perseverance of the saints.” We don’t believe that just because you are a saint you will persevere but that you need to persevere because you’re a saint. Jesus said, *“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed”* (John 8:31), and *“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned”* (John 15:6). So, we seek a balance. Hard stands on these non-foundational issues only empty a church of members from Methodist, Nazarene, and other Arminian-influenced backgrounds.

The issue of eternal security is debatable at best. There are Scriptures on both sides. In John 3:16, what does *“Whosoever believeth in him”* mean? Can anybody be saved? It appears so; therefore, we don’t take the hard-line Calvinistic position of limited atonement

kingdom of God” (verse 21). I’ll direct him to Corinthians and Ephesians where we read how those who live after the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God.

However, if I’m speaking to a saint with an oversensitive conscience, I’m going to take them to the Scriptures assuring them of God’s love.

The very fact that there is an issue demonstrates that there are two sides. If there was a clear, definitive teaching, there would be no argument. If Scriptures did not declare, *“... Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”* (Revelation 22:17), then you’d have no argument. But Jesus also said, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain ...”* (John 15:16).

Like every other student in Bible college, I wrestled with this issue. When reading through Arthur W. Pink’s “The Sovereignty of God”, stating that man has no choice in the issue of salvation and that it is

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that says Jesus didn’t die for everybody, but only for those who would believe in Him. We do not accept the position that God has ordained some to be saved and some to be lost. This is a denial of the free moral agency. Instead, we believe that God has given us the capacity of choice so that our love for Him might be meaningful.

I tell people that, of course, I believe in eternal security. As long as I abide in Christ, I’m eternally secure. As long as I abide in Him, He’s going to keep me from falling and present me faultless before His glorious presence. I believe that and I experience God’s security.

Scripture teaches both God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility. Taking either of these to an extreme creates a real problem. How can I reconcile them? I don’t. God didn’t ask me to. He just asked me to believe. When a person living in fornication or drunkenness says, “Don’t worry about me, man! I accepted Christ at a Billy Graham crusade. Once saved, always saved!” believe me, I’m going to rattle that guy’s cage as best I can. I’ll take him to Galatians 5 where the Bible declares, *“... they which do such things shall not inherit the*

all up to God, I got so confused that I finally threw the paperback across the room. I felt like Martin Luther throwing an inkwell at the Devil, and I said, “God, I can’t understand it!” Then the Lord spoke to my heart and said, “I didn’t ask you to understand it; I only asked you to believe My Word.”

God is greater than what can be confined to our minds. He said, *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”* (Isaiah 55:9). If God says that His ways are beyond our finding out, then it’s futile to try.

We need to accept God’s limitlessness. When I come to these crisis points where my intellect dead ends, I simply stand and worship God who is so awesome I can’t reduce Him to my understanding.

When you come across those Scriptures that speak of God’s sovereignty, teach it. When you come to Scriptures about man’s responsibility, then teach that. This gives people a well-balanced spiritual diet. ☺

In the next issue, we will consider the topic of Ventures of Faith.
All verses above are quoted from the King James Version.