

## T.U.L.I.P.\*

(The Doctrines of Sovereign Grace)

### Irrresistible Grace

So far in these mailers we have looked at the Biblical doctrines of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, and Limited Atonement.

By “Total Depravity,” we mean that all men, left to themselves, outside of Jesus Christ, are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil. Man is spiritually *dead* – dead in sins and trespasses (Eph. 2:1, Rom. 3:9-18; Jer. 17:9).

By “Unconditional Election” we mean that God, in His sovereignty, has chosen, merely of grace, out of the whole human race, a certain number of particular individuals to be redeemed in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4-5; Rom. 9:13-16; John 17:9).

By “Limited Atonement” we mean that Jesus Christ’s death on the cross did not blot out the sins of every man, but only the sins of those for whom He died, the elect (John 10:11, 15, 25-28; Matt. 1:21). For those for whom Christ died, there is a complete covering for sin (Col. 2:13-14).

In *this* mailer, we come to the beautiful, glorious truth of Irrresistible Grace.

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What is grace? The simplest understanding of grace is this: grace is undeserved favor. Grace is God’s favorable attitude to those who in themselves do not deserve it. Not everyone has this favorable attitude of God upon them. In Noah’s time, Noah and his family were the only ones that found grace in the eyes of God (Gen. 6:8). God’s grace is upon His elect people, whom He looks upon in Jesus Christ (Rom. 11:5).

But grace in the Bible also refers to the power of God. Grace is the power of God that He exercises

to actually save His elect people. Grace is the power of God that not only accomplished the redemption of God’s people through Jesus’ death on the cross, but grace is the power of God that also brings His people to Jesus Christ, and regenerates them. It is God’s grace that performs a radical change in His people, so that they are brought out of spiritual death, and into spiritual life (Eph. 2:1-10; 1 Peter 2:9). It is God’s grace that breaks the chains of sin, and that brings a sinner to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:29). God’s grace is an astonishing, delightful, and mysterious power!

This grace as a *power* of God to save His people, is part and parcel of, and flows out of, the favorable attitude of love that God has towards His people. God loves His people in Christ, and that is exactly *why* He exercises His power to save His people.

Those whom God loves, He saves! (Deut. 7:6-8) God’s love will not be denied! (Isaiah 46:9-11; Romans 9:19; Eph. 1:11).

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And that is exactly what we mean when we say that this grace of God is irresistible. Man cannot resist the grace of God – it is too powerful for man to resist.

Really, God’s grace needs to be irresistible. For man is totally depraved, by nature. By nature, man *hates* God (Rom. 8:7). If God’s grace *were* resistible, man *would* resist it. And then no man would be saved! This is what Jesus says in John 6:44: “*No man* can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...” (See also John 6:65; Jer. 31:3; John 3:27).

Second, God’s grace needs to be irresistible, simply because of who God is. God is God! He is the

almighty, omnipotent God, who does whatsoever He wants! And when God wants to save a man (because God *loves* that man), God sees to it that that man is saved (Rom. 8:29-30).

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Really, the issue of irresistible grace centers on this question: “What do you think of God?”

Many, ultimately, think of God as a kind of weakling, who is often frustrated by man’s rejection of Him. Many present Jesus as one who cannot enter our hearts, unless we first let Him in. Many, in fact, present Jesus as one who begs with people to accept Him, and be saved. And when many reject Jesus, Jesus is helpless and sad.

Imagine that for a moment! Imagine the Son of God returning to His heavenly Father in the ascension and saying to His Father, “Father, I tried. I died. I offered Myself. I said, ‘I would if they would.’ But the stubborn fools decided to reject the offer. I come back to You, heavenly Father, with a list of maybes. We’ll have to wait and see if there is anyone out there who is willing to take up the offer.”

That is simply blasphemy. That’s not the God of the Scriptures. Psalm 115:3 says it plainly: “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” Ephesians 1:11 says, “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” (Also Isa. 46:9-11; Dan. 4:35; Phil 2:13)

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How comforting for God’s people! What assurance! God’s grace is more powerful than my sins! God’s love is stronger than my stubborn sinful nature!

By His grace, He brings me out of death to life. By His grace, He makes me a new creation. By His grace, He gives me a new birth. He even sweetly bends my will, so that once I hated God, now I love Him and enjoy Him. And by His grace, He leads me every day, and is leading me to where He is in heaven.

That is the power of God's irresistible grace!

So that all the glory may go to God alone! (1 Cor. 15:10)

\*T.U.L.I.P. is an acronym for what is commonly called the five points of Calvinism. We will be going through these doctrines topic by topic in this mailer.

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