

T.U.L.I.P. (Part IV) ... Irresistible Grace

I. Preliminaries

- A. Trinitarian work in salvation demonstrates unity.
 - 1. Father chooses a people. (U)
 - 2. Son dies for those people. (L)
 - 3. Spirit regenerates those people. (I)

- B. “Irresistible Grace”

- C. There are two calls, one resisted and the other not.
 - 1. There is a general (resistible) calling. (Matt 11:28; John 3:16)
 - 2. There is an effectual (irresistible) calling.
 - 3. “Called” means more than being invited to receive Christ; it means to be summoned to and given salvation by grace through faith. (1 Cor 1:23-24)

- D. Irresistible Grace defined and/or described:
 - 1. Steele and Thomas: “the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ. He inevitably applies salvation to every sinner whom He intends to save, and it is His intention to save all the elect.”
- *Romans: An Interpretive Outline*, Appendix D
 - 2. Westminster Shorter Catechism, 31: *What is effectual calling?* Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.
 - 3. *The Cambridge Declaration: Thesis Three: Sola Gratia*
We reaffirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.
We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerated human nature.
 - 4. Providence Church Statement of Faith: VIII. Regeneration - Regeneration is a change of heart, wrought by the Holy Spirit, who brings to life the dead in trespasses and sins enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God, and renewing their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone, apart from which humanity is powerless to positively respond to God.

II. Irresistible Grace is necessary.

- A. Irresistible Grace keeps together the (5 unbreakable) links of the Golden Chain of Redemption. (Romans 8:29-30)
 - 1. The elect are the *objects* of each link in the chain.
 - 2. There are differing perspectives on the *ordo salutis*.
 - a. **Reformed:** foreknowledge/election → predestination → effectual calling → regeneration → conversion (faith & repentance) → justification → sanctification → glorification.
 - b. **Arminian:** outward call → faith/election → repentance → regeneration → justification → perseverance → glorification.

T.U.L.I.P. (Part IV) ... Irresistible Grace

- B. Humans are unable to come to Christ apart from the Spirit's special work. John 6:44 ... No one (universal condition) can (ability; δύναμαι) come to me unless the Father who sent me draws (ἔλκω) him.
- C. None CAN come to Christ (John 6:44), but some will (John 6:37, 39).

III. Operations of the Spirit in Irresistible Grace

- A. Regeneration is a sovereign work of God's grace that is prerequisite to conversion. (John 1:12-13; 3:3-8 *cf.* 1 Pet 2:9; 5:21; Titus 3:5)
 - 1. It is making the dead alive. (Eph 2:1-5)
 - 2. It is necessary for spiritual discernment. (1 Cor 2:14)
- B. Irresistible Grace changes the heart/affections through Regeneration. (*cf.* Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections; Ezek 36:26-27; Phil 2:12-13)
- C. Because of regeneration, the elect believe & repent.
 - 1. Conversion is described as a gift granted by God. (John 6:65; Acts 5:31; 11:18; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim 2:25-26)
 - 2. The elect are effectually called to justifying faith. (Acts 13:48; Acts 18:27; Rom 8:30)
 - 3. Faith is evidence of new birth, not vice versa. (1 John 5:1)
 - 4. Because of God's choice, He effectually calls. (John 10:25-28)

IV. The God who ordains the ends also ordains the efficacious means.

- A. Regeneration is through the Word. (1 Pet 1:23; Is 55:11)
- B. Humans have a responsibility to do what they cannot naturally do, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, turning their backs on their sin(fullness).
- C. Christians have the responsibility as God's children to proclaim the good news to those who are (spiritually) unable to positively respond, knowing the Spirit will call the elect to the Lord Jesus.
- D. There are human elements in the conversion process, but God is responsible, for He alone causes growth. (1 Cor 3:5-7, 8-9)

V. Application

- A. Fish for the elect among the sea of humanity. (Matt 4:19)
- B. Study and make use of reason and apologetic arguments, but put no confidence there. (1 Pet 3:15)
- C. Confidently rely on God in evangelism, leaving the results to God.
- D. Live for Christ since your life may be a means of helping or hardening an individual with regard to coming to Christ. (1 Thes 1:5)
- E. Proclaim the good news to all, leaving the results to God.