

**TULIP:
THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM**

by

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Is the faith of our fathers living in your life? In your church? We sing the song: "Faith of our fathers living still ..." and no doubt the faith *is* living. But the question is, "*Where* is that faith living and confessed?" And, "*What* is the faith of our fathers?" It was expressed over 350 years ago by our church fathers at the Synod of Dordt (in the Netherlands). We use the familiar acrostic: **TULIP** to help us remember what our fathers said the Bible teaches:

Dead in Sin?

T - Total Depravity

That means simply **MAN is DEAD**. The Bible says that you and I are dead in trespasses and sins ([Eph. 2:1-6](#)) unless we are born again. **DEAD!!!** More than that, the man or woman who is dead in sin hates God, and his "carnal mind" is "enmity against God" ([Rom. 8:7](#)). His will is stubbornly steeled against God. This Biblical idea changes a lot of modern talk about salvation.

Consider what that means:

1. Can a man do good works then, if he is not a Christian who is born again? No. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" ([Rom. 14:23](#)).
2. Can a man *want* to be born again and follow instructions on "how to do it?" No, for that would be like saying that a man in a grave can desire to come out of the grave, or follow instructions on how to be made alive. It would be like trying to lure him out of the grave. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" ([John 6:63](#)).
3. Can any man "accept Christ" as his personal Saviour, so that he becomes saved after that? Of course not. Accepting Christ is a good work done only by a Christian. Only **AFTER** God makes a person alive, can he and will he accept Christ. "No man can come

unto me, *except the Father* which hath sent me *draw him*" ([John 6:44](#)).

4. Can you "offer salvation" to anyone? That is surely impossible. One might as well offer food to a dead man than salvation to a dead sinner ([Eph. 2:1-2](#)).

ONLY GOD CAN MAKE US ALIVE. AND GOD DOES THAT SOVEREIGNLY - WITHOUT OUR AID, WITHOUT OUR ASKING. From beginning to end, "Salvation is of the Lord" ([Jonah 2:9](#)). This is the faith that *we preach*, because it is Biblical, because it is the **FAITH** of our fathers, which we love, still living in our hearts, and because it gives God all the glory!

Not My Choice

U - Unconditional Election

This means simply: God *chooses* to give some people eternal life, *without* looking for anything good in them *as a condition* for loving and saving them.

Before any man or woman is born—in fact, before the world was made—God decided who would go to heaven and who would not. Before they did good or bad, God chose some to be His people and rejected others.

"CONDITIONAL election" would mean that God chooses to be His those who *first love and choose Him*. But the Bible says: "You have not chosen me, I have chosen you" ([John 15:16](#)). (Please also look at [Romans 9:11-21](#).) [Acts 13:48](#) says that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Only, when we speak this language is the horse placed before the cart. CONDITIONAL election puts the cart before the horse, because it says that man believes and THEN is ordained to eternal life. Read carefully [John 10:26](#) for another plain "horse before the cart" passage. Can one imagine what the *denial* of this doctrine would mean? If we remember that before we are saved, we can *do nothing good* ([John 15:5](#); [Eph. 2:1-6](#)), the only conclusion is that *we* could never choose God. And never would. And never would be saved.

But God is sovereign and chooses whom He will choose. And after He chooses us, we choose Him daily. All we are and all we have is given us by God.

Again, this is the faith that we preach, because it is Biblical, because it is the faith of our fathers, living still in our hearts, and because it gives God all the glory!!!!

For All Men?

L - Limited Atonement

The great gospel message that so many today are urgently carrying to distant lands is that *Christ made atonement with His death*. But there are two critical points at which this message is so severely distorted that it no longer carries the gospel message.

THE FIRST DISTORTION concerns what Christ's death *did*. The Biblical truth of the *Atonement* is that His death *paid for sins*. Yet so many today teach that Christ's death was only an example for us to follow, and if one merely follows His example he will be saved. Or it is taught that Christ's death did not actually pay for any specific sins, but made it *possible* for all sins to be paid for.

But the Bible says that Christ's death on the cross actually paid for sins. [Acts 20:28](#) says that God bought the church with His own blood. See also [Matthew 26:28](#), [Hebrews 7:26-27](#).

THE SECOND DISTORTION of this biblical truth is that Christ died for all men. Some teach that Christ made it possible for all men to be saved. But the questions that must be asked are: "If Christ died for all men, why are not all men saved?" "Can not God do what He desires to do?" "Is there something defective in Christ's death?" "Must man desire to be saved first?" But a man who is totally depraved can not will to be saved. He hates God and wants nothing to do with Christ's death. So it must not be said that Christ died for all men.

The Bible says that Christ laid down His life for His sheep, and only them ([John 10:11](#)). The *ATONEMENT* is *LIMITED* to the elect of God. Every sin of every one of Christ's sheep is paid for. Those sins and those alone have been paid for. That is the only gospel because that is the Bible.

Dragged Kicking & Screaming to Heaven?

I - Irresistible Grace

The fourth Biblical truth in the five points of Calvinism teaches *that God's grace to save a person cannot be resisted*. Grace is God's *free and unmerited power* to save a person from his sins which would otherwise lead us to hell. Grace brings him to heaven who naturally would end in eternal hell.

That grace is irresistible. That means that if God gives grace to you, there is nothing in the world that you can do to resist it and thwart God's intention to take you to heaven. The certainty of salvation for God's elect is seen in [John 6:37](#) where Jesus says: "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me ..." There is no doubt that they will be saved. Verse 44 says that those who come to God come *because God draws them*. Not our will, but God's will is first and powerful.

Now, some ridicule this truth of the Bible and say that it makes man go to heaven against his will. "He kicks and screams all the way to heaven." But that is not how the Bible presents God's grace. God makes His people "*willing* in the day of His power" ([Ps. 110:3](#)). For a wonderful illustration of that truth, just consider the converted Apostle Paul. "By the *grace* of God' he was what he was ([I Cor. 15:10](#)). And immediately after his conversion he said *willingly*, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" ([Acts 9:6](#)). That surely was not against his will.

God's grace is sweet and irresistible. He makes us love it and want nothing else. He is as irresistible to us as a husband to his newly-wed bride. Come with us and hear God's wonderful grace proclaimed in Christ any Lord's Day.

Living Like the Devil?

P - Preservation of the Saints

The last of the five points of Calvinism teaches that *God preserves His people so they can never* be lost. To put it simply, it means this: "Once you are saved, you are always saved."

God's Word is full of proof for this beautiful truth. And though many deny it, and tell you that you can be lost and saved many, many times, and therefore can never be sure of your salvation, the Bible says otherwise. Talking about His elect sheep, Jesus said: "And I give them eternal life; and they shall *never* perish, *neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*" ([John 10:28](#)). See [John 6:39](#); 17:2, 11-12; [Romans 8:37-39](#); [II Tim. 1:12](#); 4:18, etc., etc.

Some object to this doctrine because it supposedly makes men "carnally secure" in their salvation. That is, if I know nothing can make me go to hell once God has saved me, I will "live like the devil." There have been some who have used this beautiful truth as an excuse to live like the devil. But they are not Christians. Nor do they understand this truth. Because this truth also implies "PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS." Those who never fall away are *saints*. They are *holy*. And they are given power to live holy lives. They "continue in well-doing." Anyone who says he can "live like the devil" has not experienced the saving power of Christ and does not know the meaning of [Philippians 1:6](#), "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." God will continue working good works in us until Christ returns. Don't think otherwise.

Is there any hope for Christians without this doctrine? We don't need to be "scared to heaven." We need comfort. Because we know that if it were up to the Christian to remain saved, he would never be able to do it. You know yourself!!!! There is no power in me apart from God's grace.

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