

## Further Answers to Questions from Sermon 10.25.2020

By Ryan Jorgenson

- I am merging 2 questions together here because there is one answer that answers them both. It sounds like God plays favorites with the nation of Israel and also in Romans 9:13 - "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." What do we do with that? How do we balance us not showing favoritism with God showing favoritism to Israel and also Jesus having an inner circle of disciples, and among that inner circle John being the one He loved?

Favoritism is doing something special for someone and not others due to reasons that are irrelevant to the purposes at hand. The purposes, then are what is important. Allow me to give an example. If someone is a team captain in a dodgeball game and they choose teammates only due to their skin color or whether they just like them or not and not based on how they could help achieve the purpose of the game, to win, then that is showing favoritism. Think about it, no one ever has a problem understanding why professional teams are scouting the best players.

Now, to why God has elected to save some and not others. Why is that not showing favoritism? Well, one purpose of God electing some and not others is recorded in Ephesians 1. Listen to this.

*Ephesians 1:11-12 "...also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory."*

God has elected to save some and not others according to His plan and will so He would receive glory. And get this, it is based solely on His plan, NOT on anything about a Christian! It is utterly irrelevant about a person's haves and have nots, actions, and so forth, past present or future. This means that somehow God receives more glory in His election plan than other possible scenarios. We cannot possibly fully understand this being human beings but somehow it works this way and it is a place to have faith in our Supreme Omniscient Lord.

That is addressing God's plan of election and salvation. What about Jesus choosing disciples? Well, we come back to the purposes. If the purpose of disciple-making is to make disciples who will make disciples, Jesus knew the only way to assure that purpose will occur is you must take a handful of people and pour into them over a period of time. Classes with large numbers do not work. It's how God has made man, the ability to teach, how lessons are not just learned but caught through modeling, etc. Therefore, Jesus asked the Father whose hearts were in the right place at that time and He chose to disciple them so that everyone else would eventually be blessed through them. And today you and I continue to reap that blessing if you think about it.

What about Jesus being close to the 3 and then John the most? When it comes to friendships and being close to some and not others, the purposes are to be poured into with love, held accountable, prayed over etc and the ability to return the favors. Again, God designed humans to only be able to do mutual ministry with a small handful of people. If one wants to argue against this, I challenge them to go do mutual ministry with 100 people and see how that goes. It just will not work. Jesus knew that and He found 3 men where that worked the best and even one who became His closest. Again, as that happened, these disciples were used by God to change the world and I'm thankful for that.

- Does CFC acknowledge Halloween? I never celebrated it.

CFC does not have an official stance for or against Halloween. We do carry out an annual Trunk-or-Treat event that is occurring this weekend. It is to celebrate children having fun to dress up as characters and a way for us to reach out with the Gospel through Gospel tracts, interaction, etc to those who need Christ. If one approaches Halloween in order to celebrate evil or worship Satan, for example, those would be wrong reasons, of course. Search your motive. That is what God is always aiming for. And follow your conscience from there as Romans 14:1-23 teaches.

- I feel convicted over how I have preference for where I shop for groceries/ other items at some stores and not others because of the neighborhoods they are located within etc. is this wrong? Should I start forcing myself to shop there?

There is not going to be a specific verse that speaks into this situation other than the ones about not showing favoritism. And in those verses they do not speak to which grocery stores in certain areas we should or should not frequent. So, this is an area where a believer needs to take the principle taught concerning favoritism and ask the Spirit what He wants you to do in this situation. One thing to ask God is to search your heart about your motives. Are your motives godly or sinful? If one is concerned about their safety or others with them at some locations, that is a godly motive to avoid those areas. But if one's motive is because they simply do not like certain people in certain areas or think they are better than them, these would be sinful motives. Ask the Spirit and He will guide you what He wants you to do. He is our great Counselor.

- How should we respond if we find ourselves in a position of BEING favored? What if we find ourselves being favored even if we seek to please God and not man?

You could approach this a couple ways. First, possibly have a gentle conversation with the person or people who are favoring you and thank them for their love but ask that they please stop favoring you and spread the love to others more. If after such a conversation you do not see that changing, you could take the extra attention and rewards of the favoritism and share them with others so that in the end, everyone is benefiting.

- How am I to love others as I love myself when I shouldn't have self love?

You can have self-love and God assumes in the Scriptures you will love yourself. The problem comes when we love ourselves over loving God and others. The focus we are called to in Leviticus 19:18 and Mark 12:31 among other passages is to make sure we are loving others well because sin causes us to not naturally do so. Spend your energy, prayers and attention doing that and the loving yourself aspect will happen automatically.