

## Year B 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 15

Sunday August 18, 2024

1 Peter 1:1b (1883)

***To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, and Murray Bridge.***

Who are the elect? Who are predestined to be saved?

***Jesus says "no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day."***

There it is – “no one” is saved unless the father “draws” them.

Does that mean if you're not saved it's because the Father didn't draw you?

This is called “double predestination” - some are called to salvation and some are called to damnation.

That's the Calvinists teaching in divine election.

We are not Calvinist.

We cannot and will not attribute the damnation of anyone to God.

1 Timothy 2:4 ...*God our saviour, ...desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

How do 2 groups form 2 totally differing doctrines from the one text?

Well, isn't this out dilemma right now with the women's ordination debate – 2 groups looking at the same texts and hold 2 opposing views.

So potentially, depending on synod, we will move forward having 2 teachings on ordination.

It's a bit like Divine election the whole of Christendom has moved forward having 2 teachings.

One is where God elects who is to be saved and damned from before time.

The other God elects all people to be saved and we elect whether we are damned or not.

Which one can you live with?

It begins with our text and how we interpret it - like every other doctrine.

Before we move on, we must know that God has given all people a free choice.

Free choice is the power of love. If we do not have a free choice, we could never love each other, our wives or husbands, our kids, our friends, and most of all God.

If we did not have free choice, we would be robots programmed to love – but never having the will to love.

It goes back to the beginning.

We are charged, ordered, to have “Dominion” (Radah) over the earth.

Dominion is a royal term given to a King.

At King Solomon's coronation, God explained what dominion is - they used psalm 73 (v8):

*“May he have dominion from sea to sea . . .” May he deliver the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. May he have pity*

*on the weak and the needy and save the lives of those in danger. May he redeem the lives those under oppression and the threat of violence; May he consider the blood of his people precious in his sight.*

That's godly dominion – to use, serve, and protect your kingdom.

In Ezekiel God is furious with the Israelite Kings, He says, “*You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them.*”

That's not godly dominion – to neglect and abuse.

We have the dominion over the land, the sea, the sky, and over people – we are given the godly choice to use it wisely – which means that we can also use it unwisely.

I see it here in the Mallee – the good land between the sand hills has been cleared, the sandy ridges, the rocky patches are left – and there're patches left just for the birds, and animals, and flowers.

I see around godly dominion over this fragile land. The land is used for the benefit of people but not abused for greed.

My grandfather left here with 2 mates and took up land in WA – near Bencubbin. The WA government was virtually giving land to anyone who wanted to have a go. There was one condition, they had to clear x number of acres per year, or the land would be taken back from them.

Government policy forced them to denude the land, they abused the land, they did not practice godly dominion over their land – after a while that land was useless – they walked off and came back here to Murray Bridge.

Their old farm in WA, and those around it, are still a mess today.

This is a long-winded way of saying we have the choice to destroy something beautiful, which God has created, in a flash, actively, or ignorantly.

**This is the key to the doctrine of election, predestination.**

**God's beautiful will is that we are saved for eternal life – he creates a path for us – but we can choose to refuse it or destroy it in flash.**

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***Jesus says “no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.”***

Simple enough – no one is saved unless God draws them to Jesus.

How do you get two teachings out of that one text?

The Greek word “draw” is “Helkuo”.

Let's do exegeses – some of us leaned what that is – it's to see what we get out of that text – we are not interested in Eisegesis – what we read into the text.

So, we look at other places where Helkuo has been used.

In John 21:6 Do you remember the failed fishing trip. The disciples went fishing and caught nothing – I've been on lot's of those trips.

Jesus said: *“Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”* When they did, they were unable to **drag** in the net in because of the large number of fish.

There it is, Helkuo – means to drag – drag in the net.

In John 18:10, Peter draws his sword

Helkuo – means to draw – to draw your sword out of the sheath/scabbard.

In Acts 16:19, Paul and Silas caste out an evil spirit from a girl, a fortune teller, who used make a lot of money for her owners.

The owners were furious and **dragged** Paul and Silas into the Market place where they were “severely flogged and thrown in prison”.

Helkuo – means to drag – Paul and Silas were dragged into the market square.

Let’s be clear the fishing net and all the fish had no part in being dragged onto the beach.

The sword played no part in being drawn out of its sheath.

And Paul and Silas did not drag themselves to the marketplace – they were dragged.

So can we make a doctrine?

God draws people to salvation some willingly and some like the fish and Paul and Silas unwillingly – even kicking and screaming.

No matter what God draws people, and they are saved, even if they have no part in the drawing.

Is it that easy? There we just saw how a doctrine is made up.

Before we get too excited this is the doctrine of double predestination – because as we can see God calls some fish and leaves others.

In other words God wills some to be saved – and others to be? Dammed.

Now how does our doctrine look – lousy.

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We must look at all of scripture and all of scripture from beginning to end says that God’s will is that all people are saved through Jesus..

*1 Timothy 2:4 ...God our saviour, ...desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Let’s look at our text again with Gace alone ears and knowing God has given us the free will to say yes or know to him.

***Jesus says “no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.”***

Jesus also says in John 12: when I am lifted up from the earth [on the cross], I will draw all people to myself.”

Now Jesus is using Elkuo in a new way.

He is saying the cross – what Jesus did on the cross – the sacrifice will draw – attract - people to believe in him – and in believing they will have eternal life.

It's not like dragging a net full of fish – it is drawing our hearts to see the cross – that is the Gospel.

God still does the work. Jesus makes the sacrifice. The Holy Spirit turns our rebellious heads toward the cross.

We make the choice.

*Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”*

John 3:14,15.

God does not force His salvation on anyone. He draws people to Jesus on the cross.

Ultimately, our seeking after God is our response to Him seeking us.

Whoever does this is the elect. You are the elect. What a beautiful thing.

Divine election – predestination comes down to that one word – Helkuo – does God drag you to heaven and not others, or does God draw all people to look at the cross to see what Jesus has done for them.

The doctrine of election is disguised in our catechism from the 3<sup>rd</sup> article you all know:

*"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him, but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts and kept me in the one true faith."*

That is divine election, that is predestination, that is God's will from eternity.

Why does God need to draw us to salvation?

Quite simply, if He didn't, we would never come – ***“no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.”***

My heartfelt warning. Like the fragile sandy land in WA, the rain forest in Queensland, Man can destroy something of beauty in that God has made in a flash.

How many beautiful baptisms have you seen simply thrown away or shelved – and not even by the kids – it's the parents.

As the elect, God has privileged you to lead people to the cross – to see what Jesus has done for us, relying on the Holy Spirit to convince people of its truth and draw them to Christ.

*Lord, thankyou for allowing even us to help draw people to the cross to see the love and grace Jesus has for us. Amen*