

The Five Points of Calvinism
Trinity Baptist Church Discipleship Training
(March, 2015)

Introduction:

After the death of Jacob Arminius in 1609 his followers presented objections to the Belgic Confession and the teachings of John Calvin. These objections were formerly presented in a document called the Remonstrance of 1610. The Remonstrants set forth their position of election on the basis of foreseen faith, universal atonement, resistible grace, and the possibility of falling from grace.

In 1618 the Dutch Reformed Church called a synod at Dordrecht, Holland known as The Synod of Dort (Dordt, Dordrecht). The Arminian doctrines were examined carefully at and found contrary to Scripture. In answer to the positions set forth in the Remonstrance they established what has become known as the Five Points of Calvinism. The acrostic T.U.L.I.P. was used to describe the system of doctrine.

Total Depravity

1. J.C. Ryle: "There are very few errors and false doctrines of which the beginning may not be traced up to unsound views about the corruption of human nature. Wrong views of the disease will always bring with them wrong views of the remedy. Wrong views of the corruption of human nature will always carry with them wrong views of the grand antidote and cure of the corruption."
2. Total Depravity does not mean absolute depravity. It means that our nature is so corrupted that we have no ability to turn from our sin and no desire to do so.
3. Arminianism teaches freedom of the will – that man possesses the freedom of the will – freedom to choose between good and evil, to choose to follow Christ.
4. Reformed Theology teaches that sin has so resulted in a corruption of the human nature that the lost man lacks the freedom to choose to turn from his sin or to do anything pleasing to God.
5. *The lost man is spiritually dead*
Ephesians 2:1 NAU - "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,"
The lost man is at war with God.
Romans 8:7-8 NAU - "because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*,⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."
The lost man is in love with his sin.
John 3:19 NAU - "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil."
The lost man will not seek after God
Romans 3:11-12 NAS - "There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God;¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."

The lost man lacks the ability to follow Christ.

John 6:44 NAU - "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

The lost man lacks the ability to discern spiritual truths

1 Corinthians 2:14 NAU - " But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

6. What are some implications to this doctrine?
 1. It will affect how we do evangelism.
 2. It will affect how we order our worship.

Unconditional Election

1. Arminians believe that God's election is conditional upon His foreknowledge of our faith. In other words, God's election is conditional upon our will.
2. Reformed Theology teaches God's unconditional election. It is based upon the purposes of God. There is nothing good in man – nothing foreseen as meriting God's favor.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NAU - "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no man may boast before God."

Romans 3:10-12 NAS - "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹ There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹² All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one."
3. God's election is by grace alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NAS - "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Romans 9:11 NAS - "or though *the twins* were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to *His* choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,"

2 Timothy 1:9 NAS - "who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,"
4. God chose us before the world began

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 NAS - "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. ¹⁴ And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
5. What are the implications?

It removes all pride. It humbles us.
It exalts the mercy and grace of God as well as His justice

Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption

1. Often seen as the most difficult. God is often charged with being unfair. It seems to go against our principles of justice.
Did Christ die for all men equally or did He die for the elect only.
 - A. The Arminian believes that Jesus died for all men equally.
 - B. The Calvinist believes that Jesus died for the elect.
 1. This is consistent with the other four points. If God is sovereign and election is unconditional and His plan perfect then His purposes must be directed to a particular people – the objects of His grace.
 2. This is also consistent with the nature of the atonement. If the atonement is a perfect substitute for all of our sins then it must be for a particular people. If Jesus died for all the sins of all people then all would be saved.
 - C. Amyraldianism also called hypothetical universalism – God decreed election after He decreed universal atonement. Universal grace demands the universal sacrifice of Christ which is offered to all upon condition of faith – sufficient to all but particular to those who do not reject it. Christ died for all but only the elect will enjoy the blessings of the atonement. The Amyraldians coined the formula: “Jesus Christ died for all men sufficiently, but only for the elect efficiently.”
2. God’s redemptive purpose is directed towards one people – the elect.
 - A. This is consistent with God’s eternal purpose
Jesus came to save His people from their sins.
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."
 - B. His love is directed particularly towards them.
Ephesians 5:25-27 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."
John 17:2 NAU - "even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life."
John 10:11 NAU - "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."
John 10:15 NAU - "even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."
John 10:26-29 NAU - "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand."

3. Verses offered up as difficulties:

Loraine Boettner – “This is not a cold, barren, speculative theory, not an unnatural system of strange doctrines such as many people are inclined to believe, but a most warm and living, a most vital and important account of God’s relations with men.”

- **2 Peter 3:9** – “The Lord is not . . . wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”
 - A. The entire verse reads:
2 Peter 3:9 NAU - "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."
 - B. The “you” refers to the recipients of the letter:
2 Peter 1:1 NAU - " Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:"
 - C. We can see the same thing in **Romans 8**
Romans 8:31-34 NAU - "What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us? ³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? ³³ Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; ³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."
- **1 Timothy 2:1-6 NAU** - "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time."
 - A. This passage is speaking of all sorts of men. We are to pray for all sorts, even the kings.
 - B. God has willed to save all sorts of men. If He willed to save all men without distinction then all men would be saved.
To say otherwise is to deny the sovereignty of God.
- **1 Timothy 4:10 NAU** - "For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers."
 - A. Obviously Jesus did not provide eternal salvation for all men.
 - B. He has, however, saved all men from instantly being thrust into hell. The mercy of this age is because of God’s redemptive plan in Christ.
- **2 Peter 2:1 NAU** - "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."
 - A. This does not mean “bought” in the sense of atonement.
 - B. The word for Lord here is **δεσπότης** as opposed to **κύριος**
With the death of Christ He has been given authority over all things.

Matthew 28:18 NAU - "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

Philippians 2:9-11 NAU - "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

- **1 John 2:2 NAU** - " and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*"
 - A. John begins this letter from the distinct perspective of the Apostles.

1 John 1:1-2 NAU - "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- ² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--"
 - B. Jesus didn't die for the disciples alone. He died for the sins of the whole world. Is John referring to all of the sins of every person in the whole world? If this were true then all the world would be saved.
 - C. It is important to understand John's use of the word κόσμος. John uses it in several different and distinct ways.
 1. In John 12:19 John used it as hyperbole

John 12:19 NAU - "So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."
 2. The earth

John 1:9-10 NAU - "here was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him."
 4. The human inhabitants upon the earth

John 14:22 NAU - "Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"
 5. The kingdom of evil as related to the earth

John 7:7 NAU - "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil."
John 8:23 NAU - "And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world."
 7. The general sense of men out of every tribe or nation

John 6:33 NAU - "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
John 4:42 NAU - "and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."

4. What do we do with **John 3:16**
 1. God loves all of His creation. He “loved” the Rich Young Ruler. He shows great mercy upon all men.
 2. While God has a general love for all, Scripture is consistent about the particular love of God for the elect.
Boettner – “If from eternity God has planned to save one portion of the human race and not another, it seems to be a contradiction to say that His work has equal reference to both portions, or that He sent His Son to die for those whom He has predetermined not to save, as truly as, and in the same sense that He was sent to die for those whom He had chosen for salvation.”
 3. John 3:16 does not state that God sent Jesus to save the world but to save those who believe.

Implications of particular redemption:

1. It causes us to marvel at God’s infinite grace. God receives glory from all of His actions. This doctrine gives God all the glory.
2. It reminds us that God has an eternal plan of redemption which He is carrying out through Jesus Christ. If God has ordained our salvation has He not also ordained everything else in our lives? Are we not in the arms of our loving God?
3. It gives the believer assurance and confidence before God. If God has chosen us and sent His Son to die for us particularly, shall He not preserve us until the end?
4. It reminds us that God is doing all things for His own glory.
Romans 9:17 NAS - "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."
5. It reminds us that no one is too evil to be saved. Those for whom Christ died will surely be brought into the kingdom.
Romans 8:29-30 NAS - "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; ³⁰ and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

(See appendix, page 9)

Irresistible or Effectual Grace

1. All whom God has determined to saved and for whom Christ died will in God’s appointed time be effectually called by His Word and Spirit out of the state of death to grace and salvation.
2. God’s offer of free grace is offered to all men through the Gospel which is preached to all men – the Biblical doctrine of grace
3. Why do some men respond to salvation and others do not? Wherein lies the difference?
1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NAS - "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, ²⁹ that no man should boast before God."

- a. Since all men are radically corrupt, all men left to themselves will continue in their state of rebellion against God and refuse every offer of salvation
- b. God makes the difference. An inward, supernatural change must take place. This change is called regeneration.
God moves upon the sinner and effectually persuades Him of his need for Christ.
4. God's actions here are monergistic (**monergism**) – only God alone can bring about the change necessary for salvation.
 - a. This is opposed to **synergism** which states that the human will cooperates with God's grace in order to be regenerated. Synergism teaches that salvation is dependent upon some action of man - man must do something in order to be saved.
 - b. Synergism teaches that God's commands imply the ability of man. They teach that man has the freedom of will to choose to accept Christ by faith.
 - c. The Arminian believes God gives faith to all men. They believe in a prevenient grace – a grace given to all men and sufficient for them to respond to Christ; a grace which enables them to cooperate with God to the salvation of their soul.
5. Salvation demands a new birth. This new birth is a sovereign act of God's will.
John 3:7-8 NAS - "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'⁸ "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."
- a. In salvation God moves upon the heart of the sinner. He begins to convict him of his sin. Through the quickening Spirit He sees his desperate need for Christ. God grants unto him faith and repentance.
- b. All of this is according to God's supernatural, sovereign will, purpose, and work. Only God can save a sinner.
6. It is irresistible because when God awakens the sinner he flees to Christ. He finds Jesus irresistible. He has his sight restored and begins to see things on a spiritual level. He is given a change of nature. Sin becomes repulsive to him and holiness becomes his desire. His appetite for sin is removed.
7. Irresistible grace is no violation of man's free agency. No one is saved against his will. Nor is someone who desires to be saved prevented from turning to Christ.

Implications of irresistible grace:

1. Confidence in evangelism. God is able to move upon the worst of sinners unto salvation.
2. Dependence upon God in evangelism. It is not our work but God's work which leads to the transformation of the lost man.
The Gospel is not about what we do but about what God does.

Perseverance of the Saints or Eternal Security

1. The Remonstrants taught that a person could fall from grace. This is a reasonable conclusion to their theology. If a person is not corrupt in his will but possesses total freedom; if election is based upon God's foreknowledge of our faith or goodness; if Christ's atonement was designed for no man particularly; if man can resist and obstruct God's purpose to save His own, then it is only reasonable that a man might eventually fall from grace. If we enter God's grace through an act of our will, then we must surely be able to exercise our will to turn from following Christ.

2. The Bible clearly teaches that God will never lose a single one of the elect. If there is no condition that determines a man being chosen to salvation there is also nothing he can do to lose the salvation God has chosen to accomplish in him.
 - A. Salvation is by God's will

James 1:18 NAU - "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures."
 - B. Our salvation is based upon God's eternal covenant. Our security is based upon Christ's ability to keep the covenant.

John 6:39 NAU - "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."
John 6:37 NAU - "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."
John 17:2 NAU - "even as Thou gavest Him authority over all mankind, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life."
 - C. God will accomplish that which He has purposed to do

Philippians 1:6 NAU - "*For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."
John 10:28 NAU - "and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand."
Jude 1:24 NAU - "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,"

Implications of Perseverance of the Saints

1. High praise for His eternal covenant of grace.
2. Assurance of our eternal reward.
3. Confidence as we struggle with sin.

Romans 7:24-25 NAS - "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! "

Appendix: (From Joel Beeke's blog)

Seven Problems with Arminian Universal Redemption

March 28, 2013 By Joel Beeke 2 Comments

In the theology of Arminianism, we are told that Christ died to make it possible for everyone to be saved, if they so choose. This is a rejection of the Reformed view that Christ died to actually save a particular people chosen by God. The Arminian view is by far the most popular view of the atonement in the Christian church today. However, serious objections must be lodged against Arminian universal redemption, among which are these:

- *It slanders God's attributes, such as His love.* Arminianism presents a love that actually doesn't save. It is a love that loves and then, if refused, turns to hatred and anger. It is not unchangeable love that endures from everlasting to everlasting.

It slanders God's *wisdom*. Would God make a plan to save everyone, then not carry it out? Would He be so foolish as to have His Son pay for the salvation of all if He knew that Christ would not be able to obtain what He paid for? I would feel foolish if I went into a store and bought something, then walked out without it. Yet Arminianism asks us to believe that this is true of salvation—that a purchase was made, a redemption, and yet the Lord walked away without those whom He had redeemed. That view slanders the wisdom of God.

It slanders God's *power*. Arminian universalism obliges us to believe that God was able to accomplish the meriting aspect of salvation, but that the applying aspect is dependent on man and his free will. It asks us to believe that God has worked out everyone's salvation up to a point, but no further for anyone.

It slanders God's *justice*. Did Christ satisfy God's justice for everyone? Did Christ take the punishment due to everybody? If He did, how can God punish anyone? Is it justice to punish one person for the sins of another and later to punish the initial offender again? Double punishment is injustice.

- *It disables the deity of Christ.* A defeated Savior is not God. This error teaches that Christ tried to save everyone but didn't succeed. It denies the power and efficacy of Christ's blood, since not all for whom He died are saved. Hence, Christ's blood was wasted on Judas and Esau. Much of His labor, tears, and blood was poured out in vain.

- *It undermines the unity of the Trinity.* Just as parents must work together to run a family effectively, so the triune God co-labors in each of His persons with identical purposes and goals. One person cannot possibly have in mind to save some that another person has not determined to save, but Arminian universalism implicitly teaches just that. It denies the Father's sovereign election, since Christ would have died for more than God decreed to save, thereby making Christ seem to have a different agenda than

that of the Father. That would have been *anathema* to Jesus, who asserted that His entire redemptive ministry was consciously designed to carry out a divinely arranged plan (John 6:38–39).

Similarly, Arminian redemption disavows the saving ministry of the Holy Spirit, since it claims that Christ's blood has a wider application than does the Spirit's saving work. Any presentation of salvation that makes the Father or the Spirit's work in salvation lag behind Christ's work contradicts the inherent unity of the Trinity. God cannot be at odds with Himself. Arminianism is inconsistent universalism.

- *It rejects all of the other points of Calvinism.* The Arminian view of the atonement rejects the doctrine of man's total depravity, teaching that man has the ability within himself to receive and accept Christ. It rejects unconditional election, teaching that God elects on the basis of foreseen faith. It rejects irresistible grace, teaching that man's will is stronger than God's. It rejects the perseverance of the saints, teaching that man can apostatize from the faith.

- *It detracts from the glory of God.* If God does everything in salvation, He gets all the glory. But if God can do only so much and not everything, then the person who completes the application of salvation gets at least some glory. That is why there is so much emphasis in mass evangelism on the free will of man. Universal atonement exalts the will of man and debases the glory of God.

- *It perverts evangelism.* We repeatedly hear today in evangelistic messages: "Christ died for you. What will you do for Him?" But do we ever find in the Bible that someone is told personally, "Christ died for you"? Rather, we find the work of Christ explained, followed by a call to everyone: "Repent and believe the gospel." The message is not "Believe that Christ died for you" or "Believe that you are one of the elect." It is "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

- *It disparages the intrinsic efficacy of the atonement itself.* Arminians teach that Christ's work induces the Father to accept graciously what Jesus accomplished in place of a full satisfaction of His justice. It is as if Jesus persuaded His Father to accept

something less than justice demanded. That is why Arminius claimed that when God saved sinners, He moved from His throne of justice to His throne of grace. But God does not have two thrones; His throne of justice *is* His throne of grace (Ps. 85:10).

Arminianism forgets that the atonement does not win God's love but is the provision of His love.