

## Chosen Slaves of Righteousness

by Hendrik Joubert

When His disciples asked **"Why do You speak to them in parables?"** Matthew records the Lord as saying: **"To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. Matthew 13:10-11.** When the Lord says: **to some it has not been granted,** is He saying that some are excluded from the grace of God by a miraculous act of God preventing them from seeing? Does it mean (as Calvin and others suggest) that they cannot believe even if they wanted to?

Before you answer consider also the following words received through the apostle Paul: **So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.** <sup>19</sup> **You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? <sup>21</sup> Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? Romans 9:18-22**

Are we to understand that God made some of us specifically to resist Him, while others were made to please Him, and that we have no say in the matter? How does one harmonize these words with the most popular words of the Son of God? **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.** <sup>17</sup> **"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. John 3:16-17.**

**So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.** This statement is rather difficult to explain to a bunch of arrogant Americans who think they own the world. Please read on. How do you feel about the statement I made concerning Americans? Consider the "power" I have to harden the hearts of many with such an insult, while at the same time drawing shouts of pleasure from others. The point, first of all, is that as a human being I am able to say things that will cause a hardening of some while it softens others. ( I do not believe that about Americans)

Notice also that the very same words will have different effects on people depending on your perspective. The gospel brings some to their knees, while others scoff at it. Through the apostle Paul we learn more about the different reactions from different people. **For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24**

We live in a society where the *nice guys always finish last.* The tough guys are considered winners. The gospel of Jesus Christ is directed and appeals to those who are willing to accept Him as Master of their lives. In **Matthew 5: 2-9** Jesus describes the personality of those who are sought out by the gospel. *Humble* individuals who are reduced to *mourning* as they learn of their sin and the price paid. Who *meekly* approach God for forgiveness, and when they learn that it is available *hunger and thirst after His righteousness.* In it they learn of His *mercy* and extend it to others. They do everything from a *pure heart* with pure motives as they worship God and reach out to *make peace* between God and other sinners in the world. In **verses 10-12** the Lord alerts them to the fact that **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12),** and in **verses 13-16** explains why they should endure.

Man is created with the ability to make choices. Some choose to place themselves in the hands of the Potter to allow Him to dictate what they should be. Others choose to be tough and individualistically minded and refuse to become what God would have them be. Why did God choose to save the *humble softies* who seem to have no ambition as they say "yes, Lord, no Lord?" As the Creator it is His prerogative. In the gospel of Jesus Christ we have a message designed to weed out those who will not by faith submit to the will of God.

Forgiveness is available to those who are willing to admit their sins and resolve to leave no stone unturned to overcome them as they become the **slaves of righteousness. Romans 6:18. Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.** <sup>19</sup> **"If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; <sup>20</sup> "But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword." Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isaiah 1:18-20**