



The Predestination Paradox | Doug Wekenman | 08.13.2023

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Welcome to week two of *Pendulum, The Predestination Paradox*. This week Doug tackled an important question that theologians have argued about for centuries - a question that every single one of us has asked ourselves at one point or another during our faith journey - Is God sovereign? Or does humanity have free will? Before diving into this weekend's message, let's define the two.

God's Sovereignty: God is the author and perfecter of our faith, and nothing happens without God knowing about it and allowing it to happen.

Humanity's free will: God gave humanity free will to choose to do or not do anything they please, including the choice to pursue God or not.

As you can see, there is a tension between these seemingly opposite concepts. Is one right and one wrong? Is God all-knowing or do we have free will? Or is there a third option? Could it be a tension tying the two together creating parallel tracks where neither one ever crosses the other, but both work in tandem taking us to the same place on our journey of sanctification? Tension can be incredibly frustrating or unbelievably beautiful depending on your perspective. Think of it like a guitar. The strings of a guitar must be connected to two opposite ends and then perfectly tensioned for beautiful music to be created. Without the tension, and without being connected to two opposite ends, no music can take place. So, as we dive in, will you open your heart and your mind, and join Jesus in tension between God's sovereignty and our free will?

Rate this past week on a scale of 1 (terrible) to 5 (amazing). Why did you choose that number?

What was a surprising way God showed up in your life this week (however big or small)?

GROW

Part of growing in our faith is spending intimate time with scripture. As we do, we learn more, but we often notice that there are scriptures that can often justify either side of an argument, and if we're not careful we can close ourselves off to what God is really trying to say as we keep the verses that affirm our beliefs and discard the ones that don't. But we serve a both/and God, not an either/or God, and as Doug reminded us last week, Jesus invites us into the mystery of the middle as we allow scripture to interpret scripture.

Read John 15:16

What is one area you can trust God more?

How will trusting God more help you partner with God in creating the new season or situation that bears the fruit you've been praying for?

M O V E

As Doug mentioned, none of us have it all figured out. Some or many of the beliefs we hold might be wrong and we will never know what we're wrong about and how wrong we might be on this side of eternity. Because of that, Doug encourages us to take a stance of humility in the tension between right and wrong and say, "I don't know." This is not a cheap excuse to stay safe in the middle, but rather to help us become more open-handed with our understanding of God so that we continue to better understand the heart of God as we develop our faith.

What do you think God thinks about you right now? Why?

Think about your mindset and your goals when you sit down to read the Bible. Are you trying to affirm your beliefs/desires, check a box, learn more about the heart of God, something else?

What is a new mindset or perspective you can adopt before you read the bible again that might help you wrestle with scripture that may be causing tension in your life?

P R A Y

God, thank you for being a God so powerful that you have carefully and creatively mapped out all of existence, and for being such a loving God that you gave us the ability to choose you. May we go to bed each night with a tremendous sense of confidence and peace that you have good plans for our lives, and

may we wake up each morning choosing to love you, worship you and praise you more and more each day. We understand that you have set things in motion far beyond our understanding, but as we pursue you through your Word will you remind us that the Bible is not a book to be memorized but a person to be experienced. So, as we pursue you this week will you remind us to invite you into the process so that you can reveal your heart to us in a new way that our souls have been longing for.