

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings reflects the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: May 5, 2024

Sermon Title: “He Chose Us”

Sermon Series: Ephesians

Text: Ephesians 1:3-14

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Text: Ephesians 1:3-14
Theme: God chose us to be in his Son so that we would become part of his forever family. Such actions on his part should humble us and cause us to respond with gratitude and worship.

ILLUSTRATION – Lasagna needs to have at least three layers in order to constitute a true lasagna. Most recipes have 3 or 4 layers. “The Pioneer Woman, Ree Drummond, says her lasagna is the best ever. Her ingredients include – 1 1/2 lb. ground beef; 1 lb. hot breakfast sausage; 2 cloves garlic, minced; 2 cans (14.5 ounce) whole tomatoes; 2 cans (6 ounce) tomato paste; 4 tbsp. dried parsley, divided; 2 tbsp. dried basil; 2 1/2 tsp. salt; 3 c. lowfat cottage cheese; 2 whole beaten eggs; 1/2 c. grated (not shredded) Parmesan cheese; 1 tbsp. olive oil; 1 package (10 ounce) lasagna noodles; 1 lb. sliced mozzarella cheese”¹ I love lasagna AND especially lasagna that has sat for a day or two and reheated. That time sitting allows all of the flavors to converge.

This passage is like lasagna in that there are three layers with multiple flavors encased in a rich sauce of grace made with love. Love is the secret ingredients. And if you allow it to marinate in your soul, your enjoyment of it will only increase. The purpose of this passage is for us to enjoy the meal provided for us by our loving God.

Remember the cosmopolitan make-up of Ephesus. First, it is a port city. Second, it is a Roman provincial city, and finally, it is at the end of the Royal Road. It had people from the entire coastline of the Mediterranean Sea. It was a melting pot of humanity from every strata of life and it is **to these people in the gathered church** the apostle Paul writes, “God chose you to be holy and blameless before him and God predestined you to be adopted as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ.” It was a thunder clap arresting the heavy and weary soul. This passage was not written to the unbelieving. The truths celebrated in Ephesians are for the church, not for the unbelieving.

ILLUSTRATION – it is like receiving a personal piece of mail. It is for you. Others may read it, but it is for you.

The intent of our passage is to 1) correct faulty thinking; 2) humble the recipient, and 3) to provide a cause for gratitude, reflection, and worship. Its theology wasn’t meant to incite debate, but to encourage and comfort the church.

The theological structure of this passage is intentional.

- **First**, the timeline moves from eternity past through the present and into the foreseeable future.
- **Second**, this timeline is trinitarian and moves from the Father’s choice, to the Son’s work, and the Spirit’s guarantee.
- **Third**, the Father’s choosing is known through the Son’s redemptive work and the guarantee of the Son making good on the promises are set by the sealing of the Spirit.
- **Finally**, there is notable parallelism throughout. This much is certain.

Outline:

I. The Blessings of the Father (vv. 3-6)

- ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be [**not speculative or tentative, but certain; you are not you might be**] holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Blessed is the word from which we get our English word “eulogy.”

This word [blessed] is used eight times in the New Testament. It is always used in the context of God (Mark 14:16; Luke 1:68; Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 2 Cor. 1:3; 11:31; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3). The word carries the idea of adoration, worship and glorification. Thus, the context is that of a praise or a hymn.

Our passage tells us two parallel actions the Father does before the foundation of the cosmos. **First**, he chose us and **second**, he predestined us.

Those two thoughts are in parallel. God’s choosing and God predetermining speak to the same idea. Just as the outcome of holy and blameless is the same as adopted as sons and daughters. You can no more make yourself holy and blameless as you can cause yourself to be adopted. The impact of these ideas was to refresh, encourage, and overwhelm the audience.

A. He Chose Us (v. 4)

“Chosen” (**eklegomai**) = To choose, select, pick or call out.

- **First**, this choosing took place *before the foundation of the earth* (v. 4a). There was a time when the world was not and, in that time, God chose us.
- **Second**, so that we would be holy and blameless before him (v. 4b)
- **Third**, as a result of this choosing, those chosen will hope (v. 12), listen, and believe (v. 13).

We seem to trip over the idea of God picking us before the foundation of the world. Personally, I have no problem with an all-wise, all-loving; all-knowing God picking me rather than me being left to my own choices or picks. I would rather have God exercise his will rather than me exercising mine.

ILLUSTRATION – When I go shopping, I pick an object based on what I know in that moment [for the sake of the illustration use a bag of nuts]. I then take the picked object, pay the necessary price, and bring it home [all three actions are sequential and inseparable]. When I bring it home, it is mine to enjoy. I did not pick all the objects. I only picked the one I was willing to purchase and brought it home to enjoy. The picked object might begin to wonder why it was picked over all the other objects not picked, but the reason as to why I picked this object was simply because it became the recipient of my generous love. Love drove me to pick the object. The object should respond with humility realizing there was nothing in it causing me to pick it and the object should respond with gratitude that I chose to set my love upon it.

This passage does not address those outside the church, but those inside the church and says, “God set his love upon her and chose her before the foundation of the world.” Wow. The love God has for his church is different than the love God has for his world at large.

B. He Predestined Us (v. 5)

“The Greek word for ‘predestined’ is ‘προορίζω’ (proorízo), which is derived from ‘πρό’ (pro), meaning ‘before,’ and ‘ορίζω’ (horízo), meaning ‘to determine’ or ‘to appoint.’²

Again, choosing before the foundation of the world and pre-determining are synonymous in our passage.

ILLUSTRATION –To predestine is to pre-determine. To pre-determine is to plan before it happens. In our passage such vocabulary as purpose, plan, and will occur. If I were to build a house, I would have a blueprint. The blueprint pre-determines what is to happen. The cosmos follows the blueprint established before the foundation of the world.

Perhaps you have seen those TV series where a couple purchase a home to remodel only to find out as they work through the house there are a pile of problems because someone did work without a blueprint. No one likes a home with unpleasant surprises.

What is of interest is how we have no problem having a carpenter look at a blueprint and build the house according to its specs, but we struggle with an all knowing and all loving and all wise God building His Story according to his specs.

Something we often overlook in the discussion of both election and predestination are the two words preceding predestination, “**In love** he predestined us.” The issue of whether or not God loves everyone equally is not here. What is here is that God loves you [the church] and this love on you was before the foundation of the world.

This same idea occurs in Eph. 2:4

- “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.”

When Paul prays in Eph. 3:14-19, he prays the people “¹⁸ may be able **to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,** ¹⁹ **and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**”

Rather than worry about whether or not God elected everyone equally, you need to fall on your face in unrestrained humility and unbridled joy and proclaim widely, “God loves me.” We should be shocked and startled by the mere thought that God loves us and that he saved us.

If one out of three people in Italy is a slave and one out of five people are slaves in the Roman empire, then such talk about choosing and predestination and love and family was shockingly.

Notice for a moment the occurrence of the small word [preposition] according [kata]. “It is often used to emphasize the idea that our spiritual blessings and resources come from Christ's inexhaustible abundance.”³

- Eph. 1:5 Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will.**

- Eph. 1:7, 8
⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of his grace;** ⁸ which He **lavished** on us, in all wisdom and insight.

It is hard for me to overlook the word “lavished.” In the New Testament, the word speaks of “excess, an abundance, to be over and above.”

- Eph. 1:9 making known to us the mystery of his will, **according to his purpose**, which he set forth in Christ
- Eph. 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things **according to the counsel of his will**,
- Eph. 1:19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, **according to the working of his great might**
- Eph. 3:7 Of this gospel I was made a minister **according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power.**
- Eph. 3:11 This was **according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord**,
- Eph. 3:16 that **according to the riches of his glory** he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
- Eph. 3:20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, **according to the power at work within us**,
- Eph. 4:7 But grace was given to each one of us **according to the measure of Christ's gift.**
- Eph. 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, **according to the effectual working in the measure of every part**, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (KJV)

Whatever the action, the resource never fails nor falters. There is never a point in time when the provision of God will run dry or fail to achieve its end. You and I grow weary, you and I faint, but God never ever grows weary nor faints. That is what we are dealing with, the infinite.

The first six verses speak of what God has done in eternity past. Now the focus shifts to what the Son does in the present.

II. The Actions of the Son (vv. 7-12).

- ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

How do I know I've been chosen by the Father before the foundation of the world? I have been redeemed by the Son and given the inheritance. You see, “What God picks, the Son pays for.”

Three actions by the Son are noted.

A. He redeemed us (vv. 7, 8)

“It is the word used for ransoming an individual who is a prisoner of war or a slave; for freeing an individual from the penalty of death. In every case the conception is the delivering of a [person] from a situation from which they were powerless to liberate themselves or from a penalty which they themselves could never have paid.”⁴ Again, think of the audience, enslaved.

- **First**, what does our redemption result in? – the forgiveness of our trespasses (This becomes necessary in light of 2:1 – “dead in trespasses and sins”)
- **Second**, what means were used to cancel sin’s debt? – through His blood
- **Third**, on what basis were we redeemed? - According to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.

Our outstanding sin debt was forgiven thus redeeming us from its control. Our sin debt against God has been cancelled, pardoned, forever and always removed.

The ones God picks, the Son purchases. And the ones God chooses the Son makes known the mystery.

B. He made known to us the mystery (vv. 9, 10)

Notice the language of plan, of intent, of design in verses 9 and 10. There is a mystery previously hidden but is now being made known. The mystery of His will is specifically the full revelation of the plan of redemption in the uniting of all things under the headship of Christ. The fact you are saved means he has made known to you the mystery.

ILLUSTRATION – putting together a puzzle without the picture. In this new revelation given to the apostle Paul, the picture is provided. In the Old Testament, they had multiple pieces. In the New Testament, we have the completed picture.

The consequence of God’s redemptive activity unites all things in Christ.

C. He secured for us an inheritance (vv. 11-13a)

- ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

An inheritance is something received in the future. Notice three aspects of this inheritance.

1. The inheritance was **personal** – [“we have obtained”]

We personally possess this inheritance.

2. The inheritance was **predetermined**

Same Greek word found in verse 5 (**proorizo**).

The inheritance was according to His **purpose and plan** who works all things after the counsel of His will.

When our Lord Jesus returns, the coming together of all things will be fully realized.

3. The inheritance is **appropriated** by believing the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation (“to hope in Christ” [v. 12]).

Verse 13 speaks of hearing and believing. Those whom he chooses are those who hope in Christ thereby receiving the inheritance. **The hope is the consequence of the choosing; it is not the cause.**

We have noted what the Father has done in the past and what the Son has done in the present. Now let us turn our attention to the Spirit concerning the future.

III. The Sealing of the Holy Spirit (vv. 13, 14).

- ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

What guarantee do we have that it will come to pass? The certainty of the promises is found in the sealing of the Spirit. What the Father picks, the Son pays for, and the Spirit brings it home. Two ideas are clear.

A. He is the seal

“Sealed” means, “To set or mark with a seal.” This idea would be common thought when sealing a letter or scroll with wax.

ILLUSTRATION – sealing a letter with wax. The wax is the Holy Spirit.

God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit. This makes us secure concerning our end.

We’ve noted this in the Book of Revelation. Just as all unbelievers bear the mark of the beast, so also all believers bear the seal of the Spirit. There is no possible way for the believer to accidentally or intentionally receive the mark of the beast.

B. He is the pledge | guarantee

The pledge speaks to a future point assuring the completion of the transaction.

ILLUSTRATION - When we purchase a home, we give a ‘down payment’, guaranteeing the full sum to come in the future. Unlike our transaction which we can default on or lose, this transaction has as its source and certainty God Almighty the Holy Spirit. “The spirit is the ‘down payment’: part of the promised future.”⁵

Two thoughts are true concerning this seal.

1. First, the seal identifies ownership

“The possession of the Holy Spirit is the seal which shows that a person belongs to God.”

2. Second, the seal guarantees outcome

God will finish what He began (1 Thess. 5:23, 24). All whom He calls will come. What God predetermines will come to pass.

ILLUSTRATION – “Toronto lawyer and financier Charles Millar died childless in 1926 and left a bizarre request. He decreed that his fortune – worth over \$10 million today – would go to the woman who had the most babies over the next 10 years. It ended in a tie and the estate was divided among four mothers, each of which had nine children.”⁶

When an individual writes their last will and testament, it is revocable up until the day they die. Until then, the will is not settled. Once the person dies, the will is irrevocable. Jesus has died and in his will he has left us an inheritance. The Holy Spirit is the seal and pledge that the will of the testator shall be carried out to the letter.

- The Father chooses
- The Son purchases the chosen.
- The Spirit renders certain the outcome

All of these are indicatives. All of these are grace gifts given by God to his people. All of it is ours.

Now What? Where do we go from here?

- **First, READ | HEAR**

Start reading and listening to the Book of Ephesians. Take the time to reread this paragraph and then in preparation for next week, read to the end of chapter 1. It will take you about 15 – 20 minutes to read the Letter in a single sitting.

- **Second, THINK | MEDITATE | TALK**

Where does this passage find you emotionally? Do you or are you questioning God’s promises? Are you comparing yourself to someone else who appears more successful than yourself? Do you struggle with identity and self-worth? Are you the recipient of physical and/or emotional abuse? Are you wondering if God truly and effectually loves you? What guarantee do you have that what God promises will come to pass? Friend, if this is your struggle, then you need a fresh encounter with the Holy Spirit in and through this world.

There are a pile of problems needing to be addressed in this world, but while living with the failed, frail, and fractured present, let us know that God chose us in love.

God loves you and because he loves you

- He chose you before the very foundation of the world and predetermined you and because of this you are holy and blameless before him. You have been adopted and are now his child.

God loves you and because he loves you

- Jesus died to redeem you from sin and death
- Jesus has revealed to you this profound mystery
- Jesus gives you an imperishable inheritance

God loves you and because he loves you

- The Holy Spirit seals you so that none of God's promises to you shall fail.

ILLUSTRATION – think of this passage like a pan of lasagna with three great layers embedded in a rich sauce of grace made with love. Or whatever layered meal you enjoy and when you enjoy that meal, think of Ephesians 1:3-14 and the many layers of goodness set before you. God is serving you a delicious meal and it is yours to enjoy.

- **Third, RESPOND**

There is a three-fold response to this study.

- First, humility. Why? Because God loves you.
- Second, gratitude. Why? Because God loves you.
- Third, worship. Why? Because God loves you.

Perhaps you know someone who would benefit from this study. Why not send them the link so that they might enjoy God's gracious offering.

¹ <https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a11728/best-lasagna-recipe/>

² <https://chat.openai.com/c/d36bc942-2b56-466e-b7c1-be963521df8a>

³ <https://chatgpt.com/c/8cba3729-a6cf-4ee7-a343-e2c2716d57e8>

⁴ William Barclay, *Ephesians*, 81.

⁵ N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Epistles*, 13.

⁶ <https://www.clearestaate.com/blog/strangest-wills-ever>