

# God's Chosen People

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] I want to welcome all of you here today and especially want to welcome those who are visiting with us from the Learning Center Preschool.! So good to have you with us and good to know that we are part of the same community and we pray God's blessings on your work in the community and serving families with your preschool.
- And we will be sure to be praying with you and I make a promise that one of these days I'm going to pop in and just see how you're doing.
- For this morning, I want to begin by drawing your attention to two different verses from two different hymns. And I'm sure that most of you, if not all of you, know these hymns.
- And perhaps if you went to a funeral yesterday or this week or recently, you probably spoke, you probably sung one or both of these hymns.
- The first one is Glad Reunion Day. And verse two of that hymn goes as follows. And the second hymn is, It's All Right Now.
- [ 1 : 3 4 ] And here's the second verse of that hymn. A down or lonely pathway without a friend to guide, I walked in sin and sorrow all alone.
- Till Jesus came and found me and drew me to his side. It's all right now, for I'm his own. Hopefully it has occurred to you that these two verses from these two songs contradict one another.
- But if you miss the contradiction, you probably, well, you shouldn't feel too bad because I assure you that you're not alone. There are many people, Christians included, who don't see the contradiction in these two verses.
- And that's because they lack a biblical understanding of salvation. The lack of understanding of what God has done and does to save people.
- And this lack of understanding is revealed in the fact that when many people think about salvation, they immediately think about themselves and what they did to come to Christ.
- [ 3 : 0 0 ] Or they may even think about the cross. I want to say to us this morning that if we start with ourselves or we only started the cross, we're not fully grasping the length and breadth of salvation.
- Because the cross itself, and even when we come to Christ, that's not the first moment in salvation history. And as we continue our sermon series this morning in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the section that we have come to brings us face to face with the first moment of salvation history.
- And I pray that all of us who have come to trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will hear these words. And I pray that they would be the basis for great rejoicing in our hearts.
- If you have not already rejoiced, having seen the amazing grace of God that is displayed in this passage, I think when we truly see what is displayed of God's grace in this passage, we want to say with the hymn writer, Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing, my great Redeemer's praise.
- If you've not yet done so, please turn your Bible to Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 1. And this morning our attention will be directed to verses 3 through 14.

[ 4 : 38 ] Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3 to 14. For those who are joining us this morning, we are right at the beginning. This is the second sermon in an extended sermon series in Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

So we begin this morning in chapter 1, verse 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, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

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

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, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

[ 6 : 41 ] 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Let's pray together. Father, we bow our hearts this morning, and we thank you for your word. Lord, I pray that you would speak to us.

I pray that you would open our eyes and our hearts to behold the amazing grace of God that is revealed to sinners like us in the pages of Holy Scripture and in this passage in particular.

God, would you grant us grace to hear as we ought and to respond as we should. Would you free us, O Lord, from any hindrance, any habit of reading that will cause us to miss the truth that is displayed about your saving grace in these verses.

Lord, I once again acknowledge my inadequacy, my deficiencies to handle your word in general, but in particular to handle this passage.

[ 8 : 21 ] And so I ask for grace. I pray that you would help me to serve these who were gathered this morning. Anoint me by your spirit. Grant me unction that only comes from you.

And God, would you grant us all illumination in the pages of your word. We ask this now in Christ's name.

Amen. Brothers and sisters, we have just read one of the most glorious passages of Scripture in all of Scripture.

Scripture. It's a passage that, when understood, God's people want to praise him with every fiber of their being.

They want to praise him with affection. They want to praise him with adoration. They want to praise him with rejoicing with every bit of strength their hearts can muster.

[ 9 : 31 ] But it's easy to read past these words. It's easy to read over these words and miss the amazing display of God's grace that is within them.

And I know this to be true firsthand. I came to Christ at the age of 13. And although I read this passage over many years, in total as I think about it, for about 27 years, for much of my Christian life, I early on adopted the practice of reading through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation annually.

And so I would have read over this many, many times. As a pastor, I read over this many, many times. And sadly, as I think of my own experience, I read past these words.

I read over these words. And I suspect that some of you are like I was. You belong to Christ, but you read these words and you aren't amazed.

Your heart is not rejoicing and thanking God for the mercy that's displayed in this passage.

[ 11 : 04 ] And so my prayer is for all of us who belong to Christ. Whether you have already come to see the amazing grace of God in this passage, I pray that would increase. And if you're seeing it for the first time, I pray that you would rejoice with unbridled joy this morning.

As I think about why I read over this passage and missed the grace of God in it, I think it's because largely I didn't slow down and I didn't watch the pronouns.

And so I want to say to us this morning as we read this passage, let's slow down and let's watch the pronouns. the indication to us that this passage is grounds for rejoicing is how the Apostle Paul begins it.

He begins by saying, 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.

Paul begins blessing God, unbridled blessing to God because he has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[ 12 : 23 ] And then he goes on to tell us why we should be blessing God the Father. And here's the summary of the reason that Paul gives. God has unconditionally elected, redeemed, and sealed his people for salvation according to the purpose of his gracious will to the praise of his glorious grace.

That is the holy truth that the Apostle Paul by the revelation of God, not by his own ideas, but by the revelation of God reveals to us.

God has unconditionally elected, redeemed, and sealed his people for salvation according to the purpose of his gracious will to the praise of his glorious grace.

And brothers and sisters, whenever we read God's word, we are on holy ground. But I want to say to us this morning, we are especially on holy ground as we consider this passage and we consider the glorious truth in it, which we are only knowing because God in his mercy revealed it to the Apostle Paul, who has in turn revealed it to us.

This passage is comprised in our English Bibles in five sentences, verses, but in the original Greek text, it is one long sentence.

[ 14 : 08 ] It's one sentence, but the translators have broken it up and put it in five sentences to help us to better understand the truth that Paul is communicating here.

Paul used one long glorious sentence to communicate the glorious truth that we find in this passage. For those of you who are taking notes, I've organized a sermon around three statements that communicate what God has done to save us, his people, and why we should praise and bless him for it.

The first statement is this, God elected us. That's the glorious truth that we see in verses three to six. Paul tells us that God blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places by choosing us in him before the foundation of the world and predestining us for adoption as sons into his family through Jesus Christ.

Christ. The apostle Paul uses this term heavenly places and it's found five times in this letter to the Ephesians and theologians who are much smarter than I am point out that this term heavenly places is the only place in this letter of Ephesians is the only place that Paul uses this term and we'll encounter it as we work our way through this letter.

But the term heavenly places refers to the sphere or the realm where spiritual powers operate and which Christ reigns supreme. reigns supreme with his people those who are in him and in that realm God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

[ 16 : 28 ] All of it. God has withheld none of it from us. Now we obviously have to mature into that and grow into that and there are vistas of it that are beyond our imagination but it is already ours.

He has given it to us in Christ every single spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm the heavenly places they belong to us. Now I think it's important right at this point that we get our bearings to understand this passage starting in verse 3 and to help us to do that we need to answer we need to ask and answer this important question who are the us in verse 3 whom God blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

This is a most critical question to ask and answer correctly. Who are the us? Paul says blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us.

And there are those who say the us is the whole world. And really when you look at that and you just think a little bit about the revelation of God's word, you realize it cannot be the whole world.

Because if we substitute the whole world for us, then we would come away saying that God has blessed the whole world in Christ with spiritual blessings in the heavenly places and that amounts to universalism.

[ 18 : 15 ] The Bible does not teach universalism. There will be people in hell, sadly. Clearly, us in verse 3 does not and cannot refer to the whole world.

Instead, us in verse 3 refers to believers. It refers to the same people as the pronoun our in our Lord Jesus Christ in verse 3.

So when you look at verse 3, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us. The are and the us are the same people.

The us are those who have come to call Jesus Christ Lord. They've come to know him in saving faith. They are the ones that the apostle Paul has in view here.

And indeed, the letter of Ephesians was written to the people of God. We saw this last week in verse 2. It was written to the saints who are in Ephesus, but not just in Ephesus, who are in the world.

[ 19 : 34 ] The saints who are in the Bahamas, or wherever they may be in the world. This is God's word preserved for his people. So our and us refer to believers, to God's people, and the spiritual blessings that Paul refers to in verse 3 are all the spiritual blessings that God has given to his people as a result of them being in Christ.

I pray you see this, because if you don't see this, you won't marvel, and you won't be amazed at the grace of God. But Paul goes on to say something that is more amazing in verse 4.

He says that God blessed us with those spiritual blessings in Christ even as or because he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

That we should be holy and blameless before him. If you don't mark your Bible, I understand it, but if you do mark your Bible, I read mark before. He did this before the foundation of the world.

Now, another word that the Bible uses for this choosing that God does before the foundation of the world is the word election. And so another way of saying what God did in choosing us is to say that God elected us.

[ 21 : 12 ] And when Paul refers to God choosing us in Christ, he is helping us to see that God had in view Christ's redemptive work at the same time that he chose us, and he chose us in him that we would be blameless and holy in his sight.

And what should be obvious to us right there is that clearly in the mind of God, before the foundation of the world, as God chooses us in Christ to be holy and blameless, it is clear that he also saw that we were not holy and blameless.

He saw that we were unholy and we were blameworthy. He saw that we were those who rightly deserved his wrath.

But he elected us from the fallen mass of humanity, all who were unholy, all who were blameworthy, he elected us, those who believe, out of the mass of humanity under the judgment of God and the wrath of God.

And he, in essence, was saying, though in the future, you will be blameworthy and unholy, I, before the foundation of the world, elect you to be holy and blameless before me.

[ 22 : 56 ] And he did it in Christ, envisioning that Christ would come and Christ would live and Christ would die to enable that to be a just outcome for those of us who otherwise deserve wrath and judgment.

But that's not all. Look at what Paul says at the end of verse 4, then into verses 5 and 6. He says, in love, he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

So not only did God elect us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him, he also predestined us that we would be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ.

And it's important to see that though these are connected, they're different. It's one thing for God to choose us for salvation, to be holy and blameless in Christ.

There's another thing for him to predestine that we will be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ. To predestine means to predetermine in advance what the outcome of something is.

[ 24 : 35 ] That's what God did. And we're not talking about some mortal who's saying it's going to be like this, but he has no power to bring it to pass.

No, we're talking about the God of the universe who predestined that these whom he chose before the foundation of the world, that they will be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ.

Now, it may stand out to some of us this morning that Paul talks about adoption as sons, but this would have been a very comforting statement at the time that it was written to those who were, it was written to originally to the Ephesians.

And the reason is that at that time, only males could inherit from their father.

Only males could inherit. Females could not inherit. Females were taken care of because the first son would get a double portion of the inheritance, and he would have the responsibility to take care of his mother and take care of his sisters, and the other male sons would get a single portion.

[ 25 : 57 ] So he doesn't say that God has predestined us to be sons and daughters, because had he said that, then the women hearing him originally would have thought, well, I don't inherit anything because I can't inherit anything.

But he says, no, what God has done is God has predestined that those whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world, that they would be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ, meaning that they will come into an inheritance that God, the God of the universe, has for them.

And that is a glorious truth, that God has an inheritance, a glorious inheritance for us, his people, for those who believe in Christ, and all of them, whether they're male or female, they're going to come into that fullness of that inheritance.

Why? He predestined it. It has to happen. He predetermined it. And notice in verse five, it tells us that God predestined his people for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.

How and why? According to the purpose of his will. Isn't having a conference having some suggestions? No. He did this according to the purpose of his will, and let's remember, before the foundation of the world.

[ 27 : 37 ] I like the way the New International Version translates those words in our Bible, which is the purpose of his will. The NIV says it this way.

He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will. God was pleased to do this.

He was pleased to do this. He was not there starchy in heaven and saying this is my will, this is what I'm going to do. No. It was his pleasure to do this.

It was his pleasurable will that he would choose and predestined a particular people to be sons, adopted as sons through Jesus Christ and to come into this glorious inheritance that he has for them.

And what is the end goal? What is the end of all of this? Paul tells this in verse 6. The end of it is to the praise of his glorious grace with which he blessed us in the beloved, still in Christ.

[ 28 : 54 ] God does all of this to the praise of his glorious grace. That's the aim.

That's the aim that God has in mind, that we would see and praise his glorious grace. The grace that he gave us by choosing us in the beloved, which is a reference to Christ.

And if we don't praise God's glorious grace, it's because we don't see his glorious grace in electing us for salvation in Christ and predestining us for adoption as sons in his family.

You know, oftentimes we hear people say they'll get up and it's probably some event with a lot of people and I'm sure you've heard this statement, people would say, we are all God's children.

But friends, that's not true. That's not true. God is the creator of us all, but he's not the father of us all.

[ 30 : 11 ] The way that God becomes our father is adoption through Jesus Christ. And so although God has created all, it is only through adoption through Jesus Christ.

It is only through God before the foundation of the world predetermining, predestining, that those whom he chooses will be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ.

Friends, adoption is a merciful thing. Adoption is a merciful thing. Adoption has all to do with mercy, that God, according to the good pleasure of his will, he does this.

So if we could talk about being God's creatures as of right, because he created us, but if we adopted as a son, our hearts need to be filled with amazing amazement at the grace of God who has brought that to pass.

God's God is God through God through Adam, God Adam, but we become God's sons through Jesus Christ.

[ 31 : 48 ] Brothers and sisters, this is the first moment of salvation history. This is where our salvation begins. Our salvation doesn't begin in time, our salvation begins before the foundation of the world.

it begins as some theologians say, in eternity past, God, in accordance with his pleasure, the pleasure of his will, elected us out of the fallen mass of humanity that we would be holy and blameless in his sight, that particular people would be holy and blameless in his sight, and he predetermined that they would be adopted into his family as sons through Jesus Christ.

And so sadly, the author of Glad Reunion Day missed this glorious truth in the second verse of the hymn. Christians who think that when they get to heaven, that one of the first things they want to do is to find Jesus and tell him how they came to love him and make him their choice don't understand that no, this is the revelation that we find in scripture.

God chose before the foundation of the world that they would be holy and blameless in his sight, and that they would be sons, adopted as sons through Jesus Christ.

And the only reason that anyone chooses Christ is because he before the foundation of the world chose them. Now allow me to state the obvious.

[ 33 : 46 ] What God did in electing us is so amazing that is easy to miss. You know sometimes things that are too good to be true, we sometimes miss them.

We just think, that can't be, so we don't see it. God elected us for our salvation and predestined us for adoption before the foundation of the world, so the obvious truth in that is, it was before we were born.

God's acts of election and predestination were not based on anything about us.

It tells us he did it according to the pleasure of his will. And it wasn't based on anything that we would do in the future down the road, that we may do some good thing. Because if he did it based on that, then he didn't do it according to the pleasure of his good will.

He did it because of something he saw down the road, and then there would be reason that we could boast because there's something down the road that's good about us, meritorious about us, as to why God chose us.

[ 34 : 58 ] No, it's none of that. And this is why in Reformed theology, also called Calvinism, the description of this election is unconditional election.

God unconditionally did what we're reading about before the foundation of the world. he unconditionally chose to save particular people.

Without reference to them, but reference to himself. It was based on his love and grace and no condition in the recipients of his love and grace.

love and grace. If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal Savior this morning, I pray that the reality of this truth of unconditional election has you rejoicing in your heart and thanking God for choosing you before the foundation of the world.

heart. But if your heart is not amazed this morning that God has elected you before the foundation of the world and he has predestined that you will be one of his sons through Jesus Christ, that you will come into his family and you will obtain an inheritance, I encourage you to ponder this passage some more.

[ 36 : 32 ] And I encourage you to make every effort to hear the rest of this letter to the Ephesians because Paul is building. We're in chapter 1 and Paul is telling us what God did.

He's going to get to chapter 2 and tell us about ourselves and what he says about us is as for you, you were dead in your trespasses and sins. But God didn't stop at election.

Paul goes on to tell us that in addition to electing us, God redeemed us, which is the second statement in this passage. God redeemed us. We see this in verses 7 to 10.

Paul has now moved from what God did before the foundation of the world to what God did in time in the world. Look again at verses 7 and 8.

in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.

[ 37 : 41 ] Paul is now addressing Christ's death on the cross, and he says that God has redeemed us through Christ's blood, which is the forgiveness of our sins.

And again he did it according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us. He wasn't sprinkling it on us. He wasn't stingy with us. No, he lavished it on us, and he did it with perfect wisdom and insight.

I believe most of us have lived long enough to love or like someone. And then later on we found out we didn't like or love them so much because of something we discovered about them, something they did, and all the other things.

So we didn't have perfect knowledge. And some of us would even dare say, if I knew who you really were, I wouldn't like you, I wouldn't love you. If I really knew, Paul says not so with God.

He lavished his grace upon us with perfect wisdom and insight. He did this knowing comprehensively our worst moments, our worst acts of sin, the lowest points that we will ever get in life.

[ 39 : 08 ] He knew all of that and he lavished his grace upon us in all wisdom and insight. This was not blind infatuation.

this is amazing grace and perfect knowledge and wisdom and insight. the author of the hymn it's all right now got it right.

She got it right when she wrote in verse two a down a lonely pathway without a friend to guide. I walked in sin and sorrow all alone until Jesus came and found me and drew me to his side.

It's all right now for I'm his own. That's the redemption that God does that makes good on his election before the foundation of the world.

That in a time-space world he has sent his son to die on the cross and then at the right time at the time he determines he comes to those particular sinners in their sin and in their sorrow and Christ finds them and brings them to himself and that's the only reason that any of us come to Christ.

[ 40 : 35 ] We don't find Jesus because none of us were looking for Jesus. And as I heard one preacher say he wasn't lost we were lost and so he found us in his mercy and in his grace.

I thank God this morning that God not only chose us and predestined that we would be sons but he sent Christ to redeem us and then one day he came to us and brought us to himself because of all he did was to say I've made it possible now you come to me none of us would come because we love sin too much.

That is our nature. And so God in mercy has to come to us and arrest us as he did Saul on the road to Damascus and bring us to himself.

And you know what some of our conversions may not be as dramatic as Saul but it's no different from Saul's. He was persecuting the Lord and we may not have been searching our Christians but we were persecuting the Lord in the way we were living with our backs to him and our faces to the world doing our own thing and he came to us in mercy and grace and brought us to himself.

And so when Jesus finds us and we know that he has found us when we get to heaven we don't want to get them to say how we made him our choice.

[ 42 : 15 ] We want to get to heaven and we want to thank him for making us his choice. For reaching us and bringing us to himself.

But in verses 9 and 10 Paul makes the point that God has revealed that his redemption through Christ is part of his larger redemptive purposes. That he has set forth in Christ by which he is going to unite all things in heaven and on earth in Christ in the fullness of time.

In other words God has determined to fulfill the fullness of his redemptive purposes through Jesus Christ and the redemption of Jesus Christ the redemption through Jesus Christ that we have experienced is only part of his larger redemptive purposes.

That's the point that Paul makes in verses 9 and 10. And God will do this larger purpose, the fulfillment of it, in the fullness of time.

now Paul's thoughts in verses 11 to 14 they're a bit difficult to follow but I want us to try to unpack quickly what he says.

[ 43 : 37 ] Remember earlier in verse 5 we saw that before the foundation of the world God predestined us for adoption into his family as sons through Jesus Christ.

Christ. So whether we're male or female if we believe in Christ, we trust in Christ, we will share this glorious inheritance.

Now in verse 11 notice that in view of Christ's redemption which is now taking place, Paul is saying 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.

So in verse 5 before the foundation of the world this is what the father determines that I'm predetermining that these whom I elect will be sons my sons to inherit my great inheritance through Jesus Christ.

in verse 11 Paul says we've obtained an inheritance. This is an example of the sovereign Lord bringing to pass his will which he predetermined before the foundation of the world.

[ 45 : 03 ] But this is not unique to redemption. I'm not going to spend time on this but I want to draw your attention this morning and I encourage you to make a note of it especially if you're seeing it for the first time.

In verse 11 we're told that God works all things according to the counsel of his will. All things. God works all things in accordance with the counsel of his will.

will. It's very important to understand because it helps you to see that God is in control of his entire world. There is no aspect of God's world that does not at the end work in accordance with the counsel of his will.

Now based on what Paul says in verse 11 that we have obtained an inheritance does this mean that we who have come to trust in Jesus have now obtained the inheritance for which God predestined us to receive as sons?

The answer is yes and no. in a sense yes we have come into that inheritance but in a sense no we have not come into the fullness of that inheritance.

[ 46 : 29 ] One of the helpful ways I have heard this illustrated is when you think of countries that have an electoral system where they would elect the president on a particular day and the president on that day becomes president elect but there is a lapse in time between when he is elected as president to when he is inaugurated or when he functions as president so the United States has that where they'll elect the president in November but he doesn't take office until sometime in January and that's kind of like what Paul is pointing us to here yes in the death of Christ we have come into that inheritance inheritance but we will not come into that inheritance in fullness until the day when Christ returns and he ushers in a new heaven and a new earth we will taste that that will be as real for us you notice the president elect he is appointing his cabinet and doing all kinds of things but he is not functioning yet in the office and so those of us who have come to

Jesus Christ we're kind of like sons elect we have not come into it in its fullness but we have in reality come into it we have come into it in earnest but not in fullness we will only enjoy the fullness of this inheritance when Christ returns and judges the world and rewards believers and he ushers in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells now I mentioned before that in order to rightly interpret this passage we have to watch the pronouns and in these verses verses 11 to 14 Paul uses the word the pronoun we differently we uses it two times and he uses it differently so in verse 11

Paul uses the pronoun we to refer to and I want you to follow me so that you can really see this don't just take my word for it this morning but if you have a bible look at this in verse 11 Paul uses we to refer to all believers when he says we have obtained an inheritance 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 but in verse 12 he uses we differently and I hope you see this he says we and so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory in verse 12 Paul is using we in a

Jewish sense he's using we as referring to the Jews who believing Jews who were the first to believe in Christ Christ came first to the Jews that's who the gospel went to first and then to the Gentiles so what he's saying here is we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory this makes perfect sense when you look at verse 13 it says in him you also and the you there is Gentile believers which the Ephesians were he's saying to them he says you also when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in him was sealed with the promised Holy Spirit so if you think about it just in a personal sense the apostle Paul when he would have written to this church he had already believed in Christ and so had all the other

Jews at that time who had come to Christ before these Gentiles these pagans these Ephesians Paul is now saying to them but you also and what Paul is doing here is Paul is touching on a reality that he is going to develop in this letter how God brings together Jews and Gentiles in one people and I'll say this the hope of racial reconciliation in the world is accented for God's people when we recognize that God has brought together Jews and Gentiles that is a far more difficult reconciliation than to bring blacks and whites together and Paul is going to elaborate on this in chapter two he's going to talk about how those who were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel

[ 51 : 50 ] God joined them together but at this point he's making this distinction between the Jews who first hope in Christ those believing Jews and then Gentiles who when they heard the gospel they believed and when they believed they were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit and notice how Paul wraps this up beautifully in verse 14 he says who is the guarantee referring to the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we he is back now to a corporate we not just a Jewish we but a universal we among the people of God until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory well that brings me to my third and final point which is the statement that God sealed us not only has God elected us and redeemed us he sealed us and that's the point that Paul makes in verses 13 and 14 look again at verses 13 and 14 in him you also when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in him was sealed with the promised

Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we come until we acquire the possession of it to the praise of his glory this is an important step in salvation the process of salvation that is easily overlooked all those whom God redeems he seals with the promised Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit whom he promised whom Jesus himself promised that he would send and so in verse 13 Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit who lives in us functions as God's guarantee that we will eventually acquire the possession of our inheritance inheritance that inheritance that God determined would be ours as sons before the foundation of the world that we would be adopted as sons into this glorious inheritance through Jesus

Christ what we're seeing now is that the Holy Spirit when we come to Christ we are given the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that we're going to have that inheritance the Holy Spirit is that down payment it is the deposit that the God of the universe says this is my guarantee that you're going to finish and get that possession as one of my sons coming in to your inheritance and so to recap God elected us before the foundation of the world God redeemed us in time in the world and then God sealed us for all eternity and notice that in these three steps we see the triune God at work in the salvation process God the Father elected us

God the Son redeemed us God the Holy Spirit seals us and what we see in these three aspects of our salvation is the certainty of it God guarantees the salvation of his people from start to finish he guarantees it before the foundation of the world he says this is going to happen for those whom I choose and then in the time space world he saves them and gives them the Holy Spirit and he says this is my guarantee that they're going to finish and they're going to get the inheritance that I promised before the foundation of the world and friends so the idea that one who belongs to Christ that one who has been saved by Christ that one who God determined before the foundation of the world will be his will lose his or her salvation is not supported in scripture God would have to be impotent or a liar for it to be otherwise and this is why we believe in the eternal security of believers those who belong to

Christ truly will always belong to Christ truly and they will finish the race and they will be home with their father in his family enjoying the fullness of the inheritance with the rest of his family with Jesus Christ getting the first portion the double portion and the rest of us getting our individual portion God guarantees our salvation from start to finish you know why this truth is in our Bible this truth is in our Bible to comfort us and to encourage us because there are going to be times when we don't feel like we're saved and we don't feel like we're going to make it and we do things that surprise us and God says no before the foundation of the world I set my love upon you and I determined that you will be my son and you will be adopted into my family and I sent my son to die and in time he brought you to himself and gave you the

[ 57 : 21 ] Holy Spirit which is your assurance your guarantee that you are going to finish the race and receive your full inheritance the section of Ephesians ends with the words to the praise of his glory and friends that's the end goal of all that God has done he has elected us he has redeemed us he has sealed us to the praise of his glory there's no ground for boasting here there's no ground for puffing your chest out no the only proper response is to marvel at the grace of God and to praise and to glorify God for what he has done in electing us and redeeming us and sealing us I don't doubt that some of you have questions about this this morning these are high truths this is holy ground this is ground that we would never know unless God had revealed it to the apostle

Paul he is giving us a revelation he is unveiling the curtain that separates time and eternity and he's telling us what God did in the past and we don't comprehend all of it but that's what I'll call this morning our call is not to understand all of this our call is to believe it because this is God's word our call is to rest in this more than we rest in our circumstances and trust our circumstances our call is to rejoice in a God who finishes what he starts he started it in eternity and he will end it in eternity and by his grace he enables us to persevere day by day and to finish the race until the end God if you're here this morning and you would be honest with yourself and you would acknowledge that you don't know

Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and maybe you're watching by live stream I pray that your heart is moved moved by the amazing grace of God and the mercy of God and I also pray that you see a hopeless and helpless and sinful condition and that you recognize that you are a part of the mass of humanity that's under the wrath of God justly so the way the rest of us were and I pray that this morning you would turn to Jesus I pray that you would turn from sin and you would trust in Christ and if you do you will find a Savior who is quick to pardon all of your sins I pray you would do that this morning and if you do that you will know that you are among those whom God before the foundation of the world determined that he would bring to salvation let's pray together oh father we bow our hearts this morning amazed at your grace that you elected us that you redeemed us and that you saved us

I pray that you would cause us all who have come to trust in Jesus to rejoice to the praise of your glory and your amazing grace that though we deserved judgment and wrath you gave us mercy and grace oh Lord may our hearts be filled with wonder and amazement at the grace of God this morning we thank you for this now in Jesus name amen let's stand for a closing song up