

Glory to God the Father in Our Salvation Part 2

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[0 : 0 0] have a seat. Well, what do you guys think? Not bad, eh? Our thanks go to the Cairns and being so generous to build us a pulpit that actually holds my Bible and all the notes that we have, right? It's kind of sturdy. You know, when we, society likes to talk about membership, right? If you listen to American Express, American Express tells us that membership has its privileges, right? We get that. I'm very proud to say I'm a member of a few exclusive groups. Costco, right? Get all the perks of my favorite popcorn there, which I can't find in the size and price anywhere else. Makes me feel special and entitled. Membership can do a lot of funny things to people. My friend actually tells us I find a very humorous story. He is a professional golfer and he works at one of the most exclusive golf clubs in all of Canada. And he tells us a funny story about how almost every day people come into the course and they drive around the flagpole.

And their purpose in driving around this flagpole is to see if it's at half mast. They're hoping that someone has died in the club and they actually move up on the waiting list to get into the golf course. I'm not exaggerating. Okay? In order to become a member of this golf club, it's a very exclusive club. It's situated in a very gorgeous part of Toronto. It's actually got a 12-year waiting list. Okay? 12 years. And you actually have to pay \$25,000 to get on this waiting list. But it's not money that actually gets you there. You have to find a member who is actually going to support you that you would support all the values that they support to get on, right? So if you move into town, you can be a multi-millionaire, you got to make friends with somebody. And it's not like it's a public list. And I was actually researching this list and there's actually bulletin boards trying to find people that would support them to become a member. So then you wait the 12 years. After the 12 years, you pay \$75,000.

And even then, you're not a full member. You know what that gets you? Five rounds per year. Five rounds per year. So for the next five years, you're on this semi-membership list. You then are graduated, still paying \$10,000 every year, right? So you've thrown in another \$50,000. For the next five years, you're then promoted to 15 rounds per year. So after 22 years and paying over \$200,000, you are now entitled to a full membership of the club.

You can imagine, he says, a lot of people are very excited when that person dies and they know they're the next one on. And he says, and they come and they use every privilege that the club has to offer, right? Sadly, imagine if that was what it came for us to come to Christ.

That we'd have to give all that we had from financial resources and waiting for over two decades of great expense to finally be accepted into the family. I think we would say that it's absurd.

[4 : 0 5] But I believe the problem is for many of us, we see Christianity or the blessed Christian life as something that is earned and not graciously given.

That there's something more that we have to do in order to receive the full entitlements that Jesus Christ gives us when we come to him.

Today, my prayer is that you'd come to a better knowledge of why you have been chosen by God so that you truly worship and be thankful for him, not just saving you, but what he has indeed saved you into.

Please turn with me, book of Ephesians, you know we're here. Whether you want to call it a letter or epistle, this is a letter that Paul, the Apostle Paul, wrote to the church at Ephesus.

We believe it's around 60, 60 A.D. I say we, like I'm one of the scholars who made this decision, right? But scholars have told us it's usually written between 60, 60 A.D.

[5 : 11] He's writing it from prison. It's kind of a general letter. He's kind of writing about some specific things that he would like them to understand. And he actually begins these first three verses actually really excited.

It's almost like a hymn, a doxology, a eulogy. Like he's just got this so much passion and exuberance because he's talking about his salvation that we have in Christ.

And in these first 13 verses we actually talked about last week, it's actually kind of divided into three sections. He's giving glory to God for choosing him. God the Father for choosing him.

Then he's giving glory to Jesus Christ for redeeming him or us. And then he gives glory to the Holy Spirit for sealing us. What we see is perfectly the three members of the Trinity involved in our salvation.

And that was the crux. What we talked about last week, salvation. That salvation actually happens in three different times. It happens when we first come to believe in Jesus Christ and trust him as our Savior.

[6 : 22] But that's not what Paul's referring to. We think about salvation, we might start thinking about the cross, when Jesus died on the cross for our sins. But that's not where our salvation began.

That scripture is very clear in Ephesians 1, 4. When God chose us, he chose us before the very foundation of the world.

That God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit planned out our salvation before the world was even created. It tells us that Jesus Christ coming 2,000 years ago was no accident.

That Adam and Eve didn't gum up God's plan. He knew it was going to happen. And he had put this plan in place, this rescue plan to redeem us.

That Jesus, fully manfully God, would come to walk this earth for those 33 years and die on a cross was no accident, but it was planned.

[7 : 25] So today I want to go beyond salvation in order to answer the question, why are we saved? What are we saved unto? Please take a look at With Me.

We're going to start in verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us 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 to Himself 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.

Incredible, isn't it? That there was a purpose for salvation. That He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ.

Now before I go any further, I think it's important that we understand this doctrine of election, which predestination is a part of. Last week, as we dug in a little bit, we talked a little bit about choosing, but there's generally three words are used when we talk about the doctrine of election.

[9 : 03] When I say doctrine, I'm talking about the teaching that we find in the Bible, telling us what God is teaching us. One, we see three words. And Carl read for us the first word in Romans 8, which is foreknowledge, according to the foreknowledge of God.

He chose us, which is the second word. And the third word is predestined. So Romans 8, 29 states, For those whom He foreknew.

Last week we talked a little bit about this. A lot of people would like to argue, define the word. That means that God had this knowledge beforehand. That God, back in time, looked forward to see who would choose God, and therefore He would elect them.

That's what some people would like to argue, that that's what that's stating. However, that is not what this word means. It's not, and the key is when commentator really brought it to the forefront, He says, here it's not what God foreknew, it's who God foreknew.

Who did God know before? He knew those He loved, those He called to be elected in Him. That God knew us beforehand.

[10 : 25] Now the Bible uses this term in several different places. I'm sure many, when we were young, we would ask that question, why does it say in the Bible, you'd get it from your kids, what does it mean?

It says Adam knew Eve, right? Adults, we know what that means, there's an intimate knowledge, a husband and wife knowledge that takes place. Talks about the sexual union.

Abraham knew Sarah. Intimate knowledge. The book of Amos, the prophet actually calls that he knew Israel from among all the nations.

This is God who created all the nations. He knows all the nations. But what he's saying here in this text is there's a special knowledge which denotes intimacy.

Intimacy. So when we see that word foreknowledge, he's communicating intimacy, a special relationship that is between God and His people.

[11 : 25] And I wanted to say this as an aside. When people get into this doctrinal election, I'm sure, and I'm not sure, I know some of you have talked about it, some people have talked to me a little bit about it, but I believe one of the most compelling arguments against the idea that God makes decisions based on our decision is that God would no longer be God.

And what I mean by that, that would mean if God's making a decision on our decision, it means that He doesn't have full knowledge. Right?

He has to learn something. And if God has to learn something, He's no longer all-knowing. When I was young, kind of struggling through this doctrine, that was one of the areas that really spoke to me.

And in this case, the God that we know would not have been God. Some people struggle with this. I get it. It's tough. It's unjust.

It seems unfair to us. But I have to reject any theory or possible answer that diminishes the glory of God in salvation.

[12 : 40] I have to. All glory has to go to God. No glory can go to man. And any answer that said that God doesn't know or He had to look through time to decide would not be the God of the Bible.

So that is what we're talking about with foreknowledge. The second word is choose. What Paul means is simple selection. Like we go into a grocery store. We're going to decide between organic bananas or regular bananas.

Right? We're making a choice. Whether it's clothes, groceries, candies. But the emphasis is on selection. So foreknowledge, the emphasis is based on the special relationship.

To choose is selecting the elect by virtue of His love for them. And here we have this word predestined. Predestination.

What it means, it suggests a sense of destiny. It means to be marked out beforehand for a particular goal. It means that you and I are meant for something.

[13 : 49] For those who were chosen in God were meant for something. The emphasis is on the goal. So in these three words, we see intimacy, we see selection in love, and we see a goal.

And that God has predestined us for adoption. Why is this important? We need to understand that there is no fatalism in election.

That God actually has a specific purpose. It's not arbitrary. It might look arbitrary to us, but to God, there's a special purpose.

He chose us in love. He did it with a foreknowledge of an intimacy with us. And we predestined us for a specific purpose.

And that purpose that we read right here in Ephesians 5, is that we would become His children. Let me ask you this question.

[15 : 07] Do you truly consider God your Father? Do you really consider God your Father? And I'm talking beyond the Lord's Prayer.

But do you see Him as your Father? J.I. Packer, in his book, Knowing God, makes this statement. If you want to judge or know how well a person understands Christianity, he writes, find out how much he or she makes of the thought of being God's child and having God as his or her father.

Now get this. He adds, If this is not the thought that prompts or controls his or her worship and prayers and their whole outlook on life, it means that they do not understand Christianity very well.

Wow. That's what I wrote next to those lines in that book. Wow. I confess, I don't always see myself in those terms.

But this is a primary term that God uses for us. My children, why don't we see ourselves as His children?

[16 : 37] My experience in discipleship over the last 20 years is that most people do not see themselves as God's child. They'll see themselves as a servant, perhaps even a slave, or often men will see themselves as a soldier.

I heard one man just clearly articulate, I'm a soldier in God's army. He is my general. He tells me what to do. I will do it. But there's an important distinction between a soldier and a general.

They don't know each other. There is no love relationship, right? The general does not walk the trenches with his men. He's back in the headquarters making decisions.

Eisenhower, when they invaded France on D-Day, he wasn't there. He was the grand general over everything.

He did not know those men. My friends, this is not what the Bible teaches us. God is not a distant or far-off general.

[17 : 53] A few weeks ago, you heard me talk about what it is to be a slave. Let me clear up that confusion. That was to duty, not to position.

Positionally, we are his children. If you are a New Testament saint from a Jewish background, this is blowing your mind.

This is blowing your mind. You would read your Old Testament scriptures. It would actually refer to God as a father 14 times. If you were an expert, you knew your Old Testament 14 times.

And all of those times, it would refer to father of the nation. But now, Paul is teaching us that we're his children.

And he actually uses this term, Abba Father. Abba Father. Jesus comes along and uses a word for father in the same way that a child would address their dad.

[19 : 04] I love going over to one of my buddy's places. His two little girls just say, Pa. Hey, Pa. It is more endearing than any other word I've heard them say.

You know, you're just kind of tugging on his leg. Hey, Pa. You know, it's a beautiful picture of love, right? You see, we've been predestined to this.

That God elect us, God chose us, God foreknew in intimacy that we would be his children. We are invited into this relationship. Earlier, Carl read from Romans, and I'll quote Romans 8, 15 and 16, For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear.

But you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, Abba Father. Daddy. Daddy. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

Galatians 4, 6, 7, Paul would earlier write, And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba Father.

[20 : 24] So where you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. There's two ways that Paul could be referring to about the subject of adoption.

There's usually the Greek understanding or the Roman understanding. Ephesus is a Roman town. In fact, it is the third largest Roman city in the entire Roman Empire.

So I believe that he's using a Roman understanding of adoption. In the Roman understanding, the man is the patriarch, the husband, the father.

It's his name that succession happens. All property goes to him. If he wills or desires one of his family members to be put to death, it's not considered murder.

He is the lord of the manor. He can do what he wants, right? So you guess when he tells the kids to be quiet, guess what? Kids are quiet, right? Remember Johnny three years ago, right?

[21 : 33] But often what would happen is they would not have a son. But they wanted their family name to continue the prestige of their family so they would adopt someone into the family.

Now usually that family member would usually be a nephew or a distant relative. Usually someone in the bloodline. So they would adopt this person.

And they actually had this very interesting process in which they did it. And the methodology was somewhat symbolic. But basically as a father, I had the right to sell my son or my daughter off as a slave.

Do you know that? I had that right. I could do it. So I could send them off and then I could buy them back. Then I could send them off again, buy them back. But Roman law stated after the third time of selling them off, I could no longer buy them back.

At that point, I had absolutely no power over him. That's like I completely sign off all my rights to this child.

[22 : 45] Or it could be an older man such as myself. It didn't matter what age. You could be adopted as an adult if it proved to further the Roman family's line, right?

So they would sit there, sell them, buy them, sell them, buy them, sell them, buy them. By the time you got to that third time, the old family had no hold of him.

His father had no power of him. What was interesting is he adopted a new family and a new name. All the debts that he could have had under that old name disappear.

They're gone. Because he's now got a whole new personhood, a whole new family to which to identify himself. The old has passed and the new has come.

Adoption meant to be released from the control of the natural father. Now, the adopting father became the new father and guess what?

[23 : 48] He had absolute control. And when he died, all power, all prestige, all property and title went to his son.

Like in Rome, we are adopted as children of God. Satan no longer has any hold of us.

That is who we belong to, this world. The imagery that Paul is creating is that world has no legal jurisdiction on you anymore.

It's your new father. You have a new status. you have new privilege. What does that mean when you're adopted into the God?

2 Peter 1, 4, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.

[24 : 51] Remember, the major theme that we're going to be reading in Ephesians is what it means to be in Christ. In Jesus Christ.

We're a part of him and this is how it happens. We're adopted. Romans 8, 16, the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, then heirs.

Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. means we have all rights to everything that God has for us. Hebrews 2, 11 says, for he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.

That is why he, Jesus, is not ashamed to call them brothers. brothers. My friends, this is powerful stuff. You know what, I was trying to think of the closest analogy of being perfectly accepted into a home and when I grew up, parents were divorced and there were several friends that I started hanging out with from our church and one family was very particularly kind.

They never, we just didn't have a lot of money so they would kind of make sure I had enough money if we were going out for, after playing a baseball game if I had enough money for an ice cream. They'd always kind of make sure there was five dollars in my pocket or doing stuff.

[26 : 18] They really, really loved me and I remember the moment I really felt that I was part of the family is when I had free access to the fridge. Right?

I'd be over. Can I, can I grab a drink? And I remember the father just, BK, this is your home. You don't have to ask. I didn't have to ask to sleep over or have dinners or anything.

I was considered a part of the family with my, their two sons who were my close friends. Um, do you feel you're that close to God?

Do you feel that you can ask him anything? Are you afraid that comes to time, do you feel there's some pull or shame when it comes to praying to him?

Sometimes we do, right? If we're in sin, you know, we run away from church. We run away from the cross. Like that's the last thing we should be doing, right?

[27 : 22] When that is indeed the safest spot and that's Satan trying to communicate that shame because we do feel shame. When we've shamed our mother and father, we should feel embarrassed, right?

We have let them down. But God loves us. That's what he tells us the motive is for. We are free to come into his presence.

We can come boldly before the throne. God is not close to us. I used to be part of this ministerial with several pastors and there was one of the pastors works with the inner city kids when we were in Victoria.

A lot of kids downtown that are hopeless living on the streets and he said one of the words that they couldn't use was father because father denoted for most of these kids a horrible picture.

abusive, uncaring. And one of the things that I think that God or Satan does is he attacks what that image should be.

[28 : 40] Right? We see a war on women's identity. You know, you can look at the commercials, right? The greatest father figure that you see on TV is like Homer Simpson, right?

They want you to look at your father as doofuses that couldn't even put on blinds on a window or something like that.

They ridicule. There's a message that they're trying to do. They're trying to undermine because it's not the image of who God is. God is a perfect father, perfectly loving.

I grew up without a dad, but I've seen good dads. And sometimes we have to look to other men to be that model for us, right?

Because we can get caught up in who our dads were, and we put it wrongly on God. I've held many men crying in tears because of what their dad did to them, reassuring them, that is not the God of the Bible.

[29 : 47] That is not our father who loves us. And you know why he loves us? Do you want to know what's so amazing about us? Absolutely nothing.

There's nothing amazing about us, right? Romans 5, 7, 8 says, for one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die, but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 1, 26, 30, for he says, consider your calling, brothers. not many of you were wise according to the worldly standards.

I almost wondered if Paul wanted to write, not many, well many of you are dim-witted, right? You know, but we better put the do not, right? But not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world even things that are not to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God and because of him you are in Christ Jesus who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

[31 : 19] There is nothing glorious in us. All glory goes to God. When I was with athletes in action we would have this national training camp and there would be baseball players, football players, basketball players and they would do divide these teams and they would purposely the guys rigging it would pick certain people last because they knew it would drive their pride nuts.

That's what they do because they're trying to flush out our sin. If you've ever been around a bunch of athletes you're just having a big pride fest. All these guys are all varsity athletes.

Some are on the verge of being professional. A lot of egos there and they would do that and you would just why was I chosen last and they would just nag certain guys. Right? And I was so excited because I got chosen first all the time.

Right? Not knowing I was the worst one there. But we get invited into this family to receive all his blessings.

God adopting us is like the Roman emperor adopting one of the slaves of the barbarian hordes that came in and attacked Rome.

[32 : 30] You get that? We're of the lesser of the most evil people that are coming against God. We hated God and we're going to learn about this later just how wonderful we are.

I have this close friend grew up as an orphan. And he was finally adopted in his later years by this Christian family. And the saddest thing always happened to him.

Guess who was not included in the Christmas picture? Him. You know, he would do all the things of the family when it came time to that Christmas card.

You know, the family was adopted to, their kids were in there, but he was always asked to step out. He did not take their name.

It's not like that with God. There's no kiddie table. Galatians 3, 28, 29 says, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

[33 : 49] And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise of God. Amen? That's God's truth.

Now, God's not calling you to a new life to sit around the house and do nothing. Right? With calling comes privilege, but responsibility.

You have this privilege of being called a son or daughter of Christ, but there's responsibility. You know what that responsibility is? To be of your father's business. What is your father's business?

Calling sinners to repent. Amen? Discipling those who do not know all what Jesus taught. Got a friend in university, we'd look at him, he had a nice sports car when he shows up and you're like, you know, first year university, man, you got it going on, right?

You're 18, you're driving the nice sports car, but what I soon learned is that my friend had great responsibility. His family owned a very big business, and if he didn't get into business school at my university, it was all over for him.

[35 : 05] This is a guy who would cry before he exams, I'd be like, what's the matter with you, right? But if he didn't get into business school, it was all over. He felt that pressure.

But we are called to share all that Jesus taught, to baptize those who accept Jesus Christ, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ, and to expect discipline.

Hebrews 12 actually talks about in his love for us, he will discipline us. And I always think discipline is a name that we don't always understand. It means to train to be better.

Who here honestly wishes your parents were a little bit harder with you, right? Some of you do, right? You wish that maybe mom and dad checked in on your homework okay, right?

Or kind of helped you, push you, you know what, maybe go to that soccer field a little bit more, kind of get more out of you. That's what God our Father does, but he does it with this perfect love.

[36 : 14] I want to conclude with you an understanding that God's purposes are rooted in the depths of his nature. That God is the kind of God who loves and seeks a people to love.

love. Deuteronomy 7.7 states, it was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you as he spoke to Israel and chose you for you were the fewest of all peoples.

But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand.

That's why Galatians talks about we're heirs of Abraham, the blessing meant for his people to be chosen and loved by God.

That God sent his son to a cross to gain our redemption so that we would be called son and daughter. And why does he do it?

[37 : 27] To the praise of his glorious grace that you would not only deeply love God more but that you would dearly love him and worship him in a way that is due to him.

Amen? Let me pray. Dear Lord, heavenly■■■■