

Glory to God the Father in Our Salvation

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Date: 21 October 2018

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[0 : 00] So I slipped up. I said, tonight, the sermon actually is not that long. I got things to do too, you know. I don't know about you guys. Are any of you guys big celebrators?

You know, you got to celebrate something, right? Whether it be, I know some of you guys do Christmas up really big. I know some women, it's not a birthday day, it's a birthday week. And it's for their 29th birthday for the last 10 or 20 years, right? I'm not saying that happens in my house, but in some people's houses. I can think of three days that I remember very distinctly, which were things that I celebrated.

One was my wedding, right? It's actually October 25th, it's this week, I just remembered, right? But the wedding day, the first time it came around was a pretty big deal to me, right?

The other big event that I remember celebrating in my life was my grandparents' 65th wedding anniversary. In case you don't know, my grandparents had 17 kids.

[1 : 09] So 17 kids generates a lot of cousins. So we actually took over this whole town. It was like a whole week-long celebration. You know, there was cousins I didn't know that lived near me.

It was a really great thing for me. And the third biggest celebration that I ever had, the excitement, the exuberance that I experienced, was October 23rd, 1994, when the Toronto Blue Jays won the World Series, right?

When Joe Carter hit that home run, I was out in the streets cheering like a lunatic. Now, that was a pretty big day for me. October 23rd, I was married on the 25th.

I tried to put them on the same day. Daniela said, we're not getting married on a Thursday. I don't care, right? But there's an exuberance, excitement. And what I'm trying to convey to you is this kind of excitement that we get for big events, I believe this is the same kind of excitement that the Apostle Paul has as he is singing.

He's actually, this beginning part of Ephesians is actually a hymn, like a eulogy. He's so excited about what God is all about, what God is doing, that he decides instead of penning this great theological, and we're going to understand this passage is one of the most theologically deep passages that we're going to have.

[2 : 38] Instead, he's actually in a cold, damp prison, praising God. And he's praising these deep theological truths.

He's excited. And today I want us to be just as excited and understand that as we learn some glorious truths from this passage.

So if you are new here, we're actually beginning a whole new series in Ephesians. So please have your Bibles out on Ephesians chapter 1. We are going to be referring, we're going to be digging, we're going to be referencing it quite a bit because I want you guys to see the marvelous truths that we're going to be pulling out and examining together.

So last week we began our study by examining the characteristics of those who Paul wrote this letter to the church. And he wrote it to who? Christians, right?

Believers. And we identified three aspects of believers in Christ. One, they're called saints, right? We talked about that.

[3 : 49] He's referring to us as saints. And there's implications for us being known as saints. The second thing that he calls this is that Christians are faithful.

We're faithful to a teaching, but we're also faithful in the consistency of our life and how we live it. And the third aspect of being a Christian is being known to be in Christ.

In Christ Jesus. And in verse 3, Paul tells us that Christians are blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

I want to stop here for a moment. This idea of heavenly places is actually an ongoing theme in this letter. Paul uses it here in five other places.

We also read it in Ephesians 1.20. Where it reads, that's he, God, worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places.

[4 : 55] So we're seeing this heavenly places show up again. That this is a location that exists right now. Ephesians 2.6 says, and Jesus raised us up with him, seated us with him in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus.

So not only does this heavenly place exist now, but we are with Jesus in this place. What Paul is communicating to us is that our union in Christ goes beyond the here and now.

The union we have in Christ is a spiritual union. When Jesus died, we died. When Jesus rose, we rose.

When Jesus ascended, we ascended. We were united with him. These blessings that are through Jesus Christ are available to us now.

The most natural question that you should be asking is, how do I get unity with Jesus? How do I receive these blessings?

[6 : 09] These blessings that Paul is so excited to sing to us about in this chapter. A couple of facts. These blessings are not something that we can attain.

We can't work hard for them. We can't buy them. We gotta work. We gotta act. We gotta act. I think you'll have the gens to say right now. We gotta build. We gotta build. We gotta build. We gotta build. And have the 110.

We gotta build. Bend itself. Bend■ aparecer. You gotta be expedition of my food. Thank you. Thank you.

[7 : 52] Thank you.

Thank you. It's kind of an awkward word structure that they're using there, but what he's communicating is because God chose us, we can have these spiritual blessings.

That God chose us in him before the foundation of the world. The reason you have been blessed in Christ, that you can sing his praises with every spiritual blessing is because God chose you.

When? He chose you before the foundation of the world. And who gets the glory in this choosing? Take a look down at verse 6. Paul says to the praise of the glory of his glorious grace. The act of choosing, of election is what we're going to talk about today.

[9 : 29] But I want you to understand, in that act, that is not an act of us being glorified. That is an act that God the Father is doing that glorifies him.

All right? Now, there's a second reason I want you to take a look. There's this other section which begins in verse 7. It says, It says, In him, him is Jesus, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

So through Jesus, we have redemption and forgiveness. Who redeems us? Jesus, right? God chooses us. Jesus redeems us.

Who gets the glory for our redemption and forgiveness? Look down at verse 12. To the praise of his glory.

What we're looking at are almost like stanzas in a song that we sing. The first stanza is about God and election. The second stanza is about Jesus Christ and his redemption for us.

[10 : 48] And guess what the third stanza is about? Verse 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 promise of the Holy Spirit.

All right? Who guarantees the inheritance, our election and our redemption? Who guarantees it? The Holy Spirit. That's what it's communicating to us.

And who gets the glory from our inheritance being guaranteed? Take a look at verse 14. God, to the praise of his glory.

So I want you to see three distinct sections in the first 14 verses of this chapter. Right?

We're seeing the election of God where God chooses us, the first one, and he separates them to the glory, to his glory. The work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[11 : 52] We are seeing the whole work of the Trinity in our salvation. And Paul calls our attention to each of these sections to the praise of his glory, to the praise of his glory, to the praise of his glory.

We are not chosen because God knew we were going to do good works. God did not die. Jesus did not die on the cross because I did a lot of good things on this earth.

The Holy Spirit doesn't seal me because I gave a lot of money to church. No, God does it all to his glory and his glory alone.

So our salvation is not about our glory. It's about his glory. God the Father chooses us. Jesus Christ redeems us. And the Holy Spirit seals us.

This is the basis for our spiritual blessings. What we have here is the perfect working of the Trinity in our salvation.

[13:07] You should be smiling at that. Like that is a deep truth that Paul is singing to us. So that's what we're going to be looking into the next several weeks.

So each of these, God the Father choosing us, we're going to look at that today. We're going to look at Jesus Christ redemption, what that looks like. And we're going to look at the Holy Spirit and how he seals us.

I'm actually excited for that section. Dave and I might tag team on a two-sermon approach on different aspects because I think it's one of the least taught aspects of the Christian faith is the role of the Holy Spirit in all these aspects of our salvation.

So today I want us to take a deeper look into why Paul is so much praise.

So we're going to read this verse 3 again. Today we're from 3 to 4 and we're going to look at this whole idea of election. Let me pray.

[14:13] Dear Lord, Heavenly Father. Lord, we're into an area which some contend is not the teaching of the Bible.

Some people are unsure. There's a lot of wrong teaching on this subject. I pray that you would bring clarity to my voice. I pray this would be really easy to understand.

Even though they're deep truths, they'd be easy for us to comprehend. I pray that we would see clearly what your Spirit reveals to us in our Bibles.

Ask these things in your name. Amen. Verse 3. 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.

When it comes to the subject of salvation, there's three avenues or areas we can attack this from. The first way of coming up at salvation is to understand what salvation looks like in our own conversion.

[15:59] Right? We talk about salvation. Three things come to mind. The first one is our own conversion. Those of you who are Christians, you can speak firsthand what God saved you from.

And what God saved you to. Right? Some of you guys were living a life that was totally contradictory to the life you live now. Some, it was an outward, visible change.

For some, you were kind of living the same life, but there was an inner change. An inner motivation change. So when people ask you about this, you can answer with authority about salvation and what God did for you.

You can testify to God's grace in your life. You know about how God changed your life through the power of the Holy Spirit. We praise God for the powerful role of the Spirit in convicting us of our sins and calling us to faith in Jesus Christ.

Amen? Yeah, let's give it up for the Holy Spirit. Right? That's an important work. It saves us. This is the great perspective to look upon salvation.

[17:10] The second place we can look upon salvation is to understand salvation from the work of the cross that happened over 2,000 years ago.

With the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. Jesus was wounded for our iniquities.

His saving death gives us a necessary understanding of salvation. At the cross is the very heart of the gospel.

But as one author writes, as grand as this perspective is, it is not the clearest view on salvation.

The clearest view is the third place where I want to talk about today. It's to understand that our salvation goes all the way back to eternity past.

[18:20] That our salvation goes back to eternity past. There, before time began, God the Father chose his elect to be his people.

That he singled them out to become recipients of his saving grace and his great love. Once elected, Jesus, his son, was commissioned to enter the yet created world, the yet formed cross, to

eventually die in our place as substitutes for us.

In eternity past, Jesus Christ became the Lamb of God. The plan to be slain began before the foundation of the world.

The Father, the Son, then commissioned the Holy Spirit to apply the merit of Christ Jesus' death to his elect.

I need you to understand a very important truth. The cross is no accident. Do you know that? When man came and started walking and started sinning, this was not a surprise to God.

[19 : 42] He knew this would happen. In fact, it was planned all before. And his rescue plan was already set in motion before it even began.

God did not look down the tunnel of time to see what man would do and then started making decisions based on man's decisions.

That would not have been planning. That would have been reacting to man. The truth is the all-knowing God has never looked ahead to learn anything.

Do you understand that? God does not look ahead to learn. God knows all. Rather, before the foundation of the world, God determined to glorify himself by putting his greatness on display in people who he chose for himself to be an inheritance for his Son.

Paul teaches here that the Father chose his elect, all of whom he purposed to save. His choices were not based on anything good that he foresee on us, but simply because of his great pleasure.

[21 : 03] Now, let me explain to you how I know this. The tense and the voice of the word choose here means to choose something for oneself, for your own benefit, independent of what that is.

When I go into a grocery store, there is a certain product that sings my name. Cadbury Milk Chocolate Bar.

I go buy that. That is the most delicious-looking purple foil, right? I love it. It calls me. I have to buy it. Whether it's on sale for \$1.88 at independent. And if it's not, I will gladly go to London Drugs and get it cheaper, okay?

And I choose that for me, because that's going to benefit me, right? Now, when God chooses, he's making that same choice for us to benefit him, but it's not because we're delicious.

It's for a whole other reason. And guess what? That reason is known only to him. But he's choosing us so that God be glorified as he loves us.

[22 : 23] That choosing denotes a relationship. It is not arbitrary. It's not like ones and zeros and ones and zeros.

I'm taking all the ones. There's a personal aspect going on. As a matter of fact, because the verb is reflexive, it signifies that God not only chose by himself, but for himself.

And the primary purpose of electing the elect was to the praise of his own glory. Amen? Now, let me be honest.

Let me be candid with you. I am not naive enough to believe that everyone in this church believes this.

I get it. A lot of people struggle with this doctrine. People fight this doctrine. People try to redefine this doctrine.

[23 : 27] And I'll tell you why. The reality is, it's a tough doctrine. It's tough. Some people struggle with it.

Some people fight it. Some people get mad at it. Some people are so mad, they've set their whole ministry to write websites and write books, trying to unprove this truth.

Well, there are three positions that are used today to undermine what the Bible, I believe, clearly teaches here. And I'm going to go over these. One, it's the denial of election outright.

And what that position states is that nobody is saved because of some supreme hidden purpose of God. What they will say is, you were elected when you got saved.

That's how you got elected. They say that God's grace provides a way of salvation. And after that, it's up to us to make that choice. God graciously offers salvation, but people must make the choice of their own free will.

[24 : 40] The strength of this position is that it conforms to what we naturally like to think about ourselves. We like to think that we have a choice.

That we can discern what is good and bad, right and wrong, and what is good for us and good for our family. So we're going to accept that. The difficulty is, this is nowhere found in the pages of Scripture.

It's not. John Stott said, election is a divine revelation, not a human speculation. It's quite simple. The second position is that election is based on foreknowledge. Based on foreknowledge. That somehow God was able to look through the tunnel of time, see who would choose him, who wouldn't choose him.

And he chose the ones that chose him. Okay? And you guys have heard that story, right? There's two forks in the road. And you make that choice and you look back on the sign and you see your name is written there.

[25 : 47] That's kind of, you know, that's a lot of people, that's how it was taught to me, essentially. And this comes from the teachings of Rome, Romans 8, 28, 29. I'm going to read this to you.

And thinking that they saw ahead of time.

They're using a Webster's Dictionary of the Word. But that's actually not what that word means. That word means to have knowledge beforehand, right? It means to even have the knowledge beforehand that action would ever take place.

It infers that there is a relationship. When did that relationship happen between us and God? When he chose us. He knew us.

Sadly, that's what happens. What's interesting, why do they hold this position? Because they think that the Bible teaches election, but they find it unfair.

[27 : 10] It's unjust that God elects some, but not others. And it does. It affects our sensibilities. Especially if you have a loved one.

Some people feel, what is that? There's a psychological term, people who made it through 9-11 and others who didn't. There's a guilt on those who survived, right?

There's this survival guilt, right? It's like almost that is kind of working out. The argument is that God does elect some to salvation and some not.

But that he does so on some future good choice a person will eventually make in the future. And that choice would be faith in God. The problem, again, with that argument is that's not what is taught in Scripture.

There's this teaching in Scripture, and I haven't talked about it. I'm not going to elaborate. Unless you want me to elaborate on the doctrine of depravity. Write it on your comment card. I will gladly do a sermon on what all that means.

[28 : 17] But it essentially means that we are so tainted by sin, by both Adam's sin and our own sin, that we're actually dead. We're dead in our trespasses.

And there's nothing good we can do for our salvation. Right? It's like we're drowning, but we don't even know we're drowning. We're in a building that's fire.

We don't choose to go for the exit because we don't even understand that the building's on fire.

That's how depraved, that's how blinded we are by our sin. That's why it's really dangerous when we talk about depravity.

This is really big. This is why we need people outside to speak truth into our lives. This is a big plug for biblical counseling. Sometimes you can sit there as a husband and wife and you're making plans.

Say you've been going through a rough patch in your marriage and you're going to decide, you know what, we're going to do this. The problem is you guys are already infected with the sin that's been going on. And you don't see clearly what God actually has.

[29 : 23] And you need someone outside of yourself to tell you what's going on. It's the same way with salvation. You need someone outside of you to pull you out of there.

You don't even recognize you're in a burning, torched-down building. But if you would like more expansion on the teaching of total depravity, a lot of people say it means we can't do any good thing.

That's not true. We have been created in God's image, amen. And there's a lot of good things we can do, but we can't do anything good to earn our salvation. That's where he's going with that.

So, can we choose him at some future choice? No, we can't. The Bible teaches, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And this is the reality. We all deserve rejection. You know that? We don't deserve to be chosen.

And let me include a few thoughts on this matter.

[30 : 24] When the Bible talks election, it doesn't talk about any dislike for those not chosen. You know that? God doesn't say, I love those who are chosen, and I unlove those who are not chosen.

This is important for you to understand. A lot of people believe in this thing called double predestination, that God chooses some for heaven and some for hell.

The reality is we're all going to hell. But God chooses us out of that line that's going to hell. All right? It's not rejection with disdain. When God chose Abraham and eventually Israel to be his people, it's not because he hated all the other nations.

It has nothing to do with that. In fact, the Bible teaches that Abraham, Israel was of a lesser nation. So why? So God's glory could be seen even greater.

[31 : 24] When God chose Levi for priesthood, it did not imply anything negative about any of the 12 tribes. Nowhere in Scripture is election contrasted with others being really evil and sinful.

The choice, though, is not random. He was specific in who he chose to set his love.

And he chose to set his love upon the elect. He did not choose because some of the elect are more holy.

And if he did, this is why, if it had anything to do with our works, it would mean God owes us. You get that? Then all of a sudden, I have power over God.

I did all these things. Therefore, I have a right to be elected to God. Nobody has any power or any say on God. You got that? So when people start thinking that works stuff, think about that.

[32 : 32] It's to say that you have a say on God. There is no obligation on God's part to choose anyone, but he freely choose some, and this is the evidence of his great grace.

If God had not taken the initiative, no one would be in his presence. And the issue that we will struggle with is not that he chose some, but why that he chooses any.

Now, this is the great conundrum. How is it that we are chosen, yet we are held responsible for our decisions?

Let's take a look at some of the verses, and I'll go through these quicker. If you want the references, I'll gladly supply them. First, basic one, John 3.16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes on him shall not perish, but have her everlasting life.

There's a choice there, right? We're being tasked to bring a choice. John 11.26. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

[33 : 43] Mark 4.17. Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. That's an action, a decision on your part, to repent. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

You can pick up the verses I've been learning since King James, right? With my these and thous and yees. John 5.39. You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

And it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. In Revelation 22.17, John writes, Come, And let the one who hears say, Come, And let the one who is thirsty come.

Let the one who desires to take the water of life without price. Yet, we read in Ephesians 1.4 that he chose us.

Romans 9.11, Though they were not being yet born, and had done neither good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of him who calls.

[34 : 53] 1 Thessalonians 1.4, For we know, brothers, loved by God, that he has chosen you. 1 Peter 1.2, To those who are the elect exiles.

Right? According to the foreknowledge of God the Father. John 6.37, Get this one. This includes both. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. Two things. God giving, and yet, responsibility working out. It seems that God's sovereignty, and man's accountability, and his choice seems to contradict.

And the reality is, there is a mystery here. Does it make sense to us? Some he chooses, and some he does not.

And for some, that bugs us. If you're OCD, you're squirming with this, right? Let me conclude with this truth.

[36 : 00] I do not know who is elect, and who isn't. God has not told me that, believe it or not. My friend jokingly says, he's going to put a little E on the back of his neck there, so he can say he knows he was chosen, because an E showed up, and start freaking everybody out.

My responsibility, is to preach the gospel, to everyone who will listen. Why? So that the Holy Spirit, may bring his elect ones, to faith in Jesus Christ.

As for you, who are not preachers, your responsibility, is to believe the gospel. If you want to join the elect, and be blessed with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenly places, scripture sets forth, very simple steps to do this.

One, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen? God, actually offered a sacrifice, for your sin.

That sacrifice, was in the name of Jesus Christ. You are a sinner, both by birth, and by action. You may come, and believe in him, and receive, receive the gift, of everlasting life.

[37 : 25] After receiving the gift, having come to new life, you can say, that you, are one, of the elect. You, are one, of the blessed, with all spiritual blessings, in the heavenlies.

If, you are wondering, if you are elect, sometimes, you need to look at your life, to see if it's so.

If your life, is characterized, by a pattern, of conscious sin, you are very likely, not a Christian. If your most cherished thoughts, that you hold on to, are of hatred, strife, and unforgiveness, you may not be, a true believer.

If you are committed, to materialism, that you find, your satisfaction, and greatest joy, in being self-indulgent, clothing your body, with lavish outfits, having all your waking, thoughts devoted, to cars, houses, clothing, and comfort, you may not, be a Christian.

If you are a sensualist, who is addicted, to pornography, if your mind, is filled, with lustful thoughts, for 24 hours a day, and you think, it's okay, you may, not be, a Christian, regardless, of how many times, you have prayed, to accept Christ.

[39 : 08] How do I know this? Take a look at verse 4. Even as he chose us, in him, before the foundation, of the world, that we, should be holy, and blameless, before him.

That's how you know, if you're elect. In fact, election, has its emphasis, on a relationship, with Jesus Christ.

It is all based, on God's, unbelievable, acceptance of us, to the praise, of his glory. My prayers, that God, may move your heart, that you would come to him, that you would believe in him, that you would be saved by him, that you would find new life in him, and find out, that you, are truly, elect.

Let me pray. Well, thank you. Thank you. May. Thank you.

Well, next day.