

"God Chose Us"

by Pastor Jeffrey Miskus

Text: Ephesians 1:3-14

Date: January 3, 2010

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST OUR CRUCIFIED RISEN AND ASCENDED LORD WHO IS NOT DEAD BUT ALIVE, NOT IN THE TOMB BUT WITH US HERE AND NOW WITH HIS LOVE AND HIS POWER AS HE LIVES AND REIGNS AT THE GLORIOUS RIGHT HAND OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

Brothers and sisters, many of us do not realize how certain - how absolutely sure and certain our salvation is. Many genuine Christians - perhaps you are one of them - are not certain of their final destiny. When we are asked about whether or not we will go to heaven we say - "I hope..." or "I think..." or "probably..." When we are asked about whether or not we are God's children we give the same answers.

WE LACK CERTAINTY - WE BELIEVE BUT WE ARE NOT SURE! THE GOOD NEWS TODAY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IS THAT GOD, YOUR GOD, NOT ONLY WANTS EVERY BAPTIZED BELIEVER IN JESUS TO BE SURE OF THEIR SALVATION - BUT HE HAS REVEALED TO US SOMETHING THAT IS DESIGNED FOR THAT VERY PURPOSE...

Listen to the second verse of our second reading. "GOD CHOSE US IN CHRIST BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD TO BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS IN HIS SIGHT." GOD CHOSE YOU! GOD CHOSE YOU BEFORE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

Before all things were created - the ultimate being of all - God - Father - Son and Holy Spirit was thinking of YOU. HE CHOSE YOU - HE LOVED YOU. An eternal act of God done for you and to you. Before we existed, God the great eternal God, the Lord of heaven and earth fixed His eye upon us, upon me, upon you, poor weak creatures...

In His thoughts, in His eternal counsel and decision He took us out of the world, SET US APART, and determined that we belong to Him and are to be His own for all eternity. God chose - God decided - God willed and God acted... What a wonderful powerful comfort that is for us Christians. But there's more - WITH GOD THERE'S ALWAYS MORE! The next verse describes what God had in mind when he chose us - what His plan was. Ephesians 1:4-5 - "... In love God predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--"

GOD NOT ONLY CHOSE US, BUT God predestined us - the word predestined means to fix and establish in advance. When you address a letter you predestine it to go to a certain destination - most of the time it gets there.

Folks talk about their 'destiny' - where they will end up - what the future has in store for them. Right here in the Bible it says that in LOVE God PRE-DESTINED US - that is God set up our future - he planned it - mapped it out in advance. In eternity before the creation of the world - God set your future - WHAT DID GOD PLAN...? I'll read you the verse... "In love God predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ.

God has predestined us to be HIS CHILDREN. We were not merely to be God's creatures, not only slaves or servants, not only the friends and confidants of God, but our relation to

God was to be that of Children. Galatians 3:26 reads "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Through Jesus - GOD'S ONE AND ONLY SON - GOD HAS MADE US HIS SONS. WHY DID GOD PREDESTINE YOU TO BE HIS CHILD AND NOT - LET'S SAY FOR EXAMPLE - HIS SLAVE. BECAUSE CHILDREN ARE HEIRS - THEY INHERIT THE WEALTH OF THEIR PARENTS.

Before the foundation of the world OUR heavenly Father decided that the heavenly blessedness and glory which is His own was also to be ours. Thus He entered our names as heirs of His kingdom - WE ARE PRINCES AND PRINCESSES - KINGS AND QUEENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM. Listen to what 1 Corinthians 4:8 says to the church...

"Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings... How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you!"

Paul is saying to the Christians in city of Corinth "I wish you realized what you are, what you have, what God has given you, what God has made you - KINGS!!!" Most of us don't realize that God mapped out our life. God has ordered and fixed all circumstances and fortunes of our life in such a way that they were to serve His plan - his predestination.

There is no such thing as luck, no such thing as chance, and no such thing as coincidence when we are talking about our salvation... What love what honour, has our Father in heaven bestowed upon us in this, that before we existed He selected us as His children and arranged everything beforehand. We have never been and will never be worthy of such love and honour.

There certainly is nothing lovable and attractive in us which could move God or did move God to chose us - we are sinners - squirming in the blood and death of our own evil thoughts, words, and deeds. GOD SHOWED HOW LOVING HE WAS BY SAVING US - THE SINNERS - THE WORST OF SINNERS. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING - THE HOLINESS AND WORTHINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS AND BLESSEDNESS OF CHRIST HAS COVERED OUR UNWORTHINESS, UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, UNHOLINESS.

Ephesians 1:9 continues - "And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,"

God has made known to us His will - His plan - his intentions. You and I both know that no one really knows what's going on in our minds unless we reveal it to them.

Folks might be able to guess what we are planning in our own minds - or what our motives are for certain things - but it can only be a guess unless we reveal it to them.

Verse 9 says, "God make know to us the mystery of his will" THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MINUTE: I'm about to tell you what Almighty God was thinking. You can go home today knowing what God - your creator - who exists in unapproachable light was thinking before all creation. He revealed to you the great mystery of His will because out of love for you he wanted to be certain of your salvation. You can tell your friends this week that not only is God your Father - BUT HE HAS REVEALED TO YOU WHAT HE WAS ACTUALLY THINKING BEFORE THE WORLD WAS CREATED.

And what God was thinking and planning was WONDERFUL GLORIOUS BEAUTIFUL JOYOUS NEWS FOR US. In eternity God took counsel with Himself. After due and careful deliberation, after weighing all things, He came to the conclusion that we, even we my fellow Christians, were to become His children and the heirs of eternal life. This decision and purpose of God is irrevocable.

Psalms 33:11 says - "But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations." We cannot execute everything, we cannot fishing everything which we decided to do. You might make plans to have children or for your children's future - THEY MAY OR MAY NOT HAPPEN. WE ARE LIMITED IN OUR POWER. GOD IS ALMIGHTY! THERE ARE NO LIMITS ON HIS POWER.

It is to God's glory alone that He executes and finishes and completes everything upon which He has decided. What a wonderful comfort that is for us Christians to be sure that our childhood and salvation have not been placed in our hands from which it might easily be taken and torn through the trickery and power of Satan and the world.

GOD HAS TAKEN OUR CHILDHOOD AND SALVATION INTO HIS OWN ALMIGHTY HAND AND INTO HIS ETERNAL PURPOSE, WHICH CANNOT FAIL OR BE OVERTHROWN, AND THUS HAS SECURELY AND SURLY GUARANTEED IT.

BUT GOD GIVES US EVEN MORE REASON TO BE SURE AND CERTAIN. HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

Ephesians 1:13-14 says - "... Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance..."

Here, the Holy Spirit is called two things - a seal and a deposit. In biblical times a seal was placed on objects for security and authenticity and ownership. Artists often sign their work - it is theirs - it was made by them - they own it - it is authentic - their signature is their seal. Caesar's seal was placed on Jesus's tomb... YOU OPEN THIS TOMB YOU MUST FIRST GET CAESAR'S PERMISSION OR YOU WILL ANSWER TO HIM. God gives us his Holy Spirit as a seal and in this way marks us as his own. The Holy Spirit is also called a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. Unless you have seen your parents will - you don't know what they will leave you as an inheritance. Imagine your parents sitting down with you - showing you their will - telling you what you will inherit - and then giving you half of the inheritance to make you sure they are sincere. We are God's children - set to inherit the Kingdom he has prepared for us since before the creation of the world. There is nothing our Father wants more than for us to be sure that it is ours - that we are His children and that eternal life is ours. So he gives us his own Holy Spirit - to rule our hearts here and now - as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance - his rule over us for all eternity. But of course you probably still have one question nagging at you... "HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ONE OF THE ONES GOD HAS CHOSEN?" OUR FINAL AND GREATEST ASSURANCE IS IN THE WORD OF GOD. HERE I MYSELF HEAR AND CAN READ IT WITH MY OWN EYES, THAT GOD WANTS TO SAVE ME, THAT HE SENT HIS ONE AND ONLY SON SO THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. Mark 16:16 - "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved..." - THAT'S GOD'S PROMISE. If you believe in Jesus you can be sure you are one of his chosen. TO MAKE US EVEN MORE CERTAIN OF THIS PROMISE GOD HAS GRACIOUSLY REVEALED HIS WILL, HIS PLANS, HIS CHOSING AND PREDESTINING US FROM BEFORE ALL CREATION.