

Message #1082
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"YOU ARE CHOSEN"
{Genesis 1:1-5; 26-28; 31 and Ephesians 1:1-6}
Trinity Presbyterian Church
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INTRODUCTION

We made a number of incredible discoveries last week as we studied the introductory verses of the Book of Ephesians.

...WE ARE SAINTS
...WE ARE RICH
...WE ARE A CITIZENS OF HEAVEN
...WE ARE A RECIPIENTS OF GOD'S GRACE
...WE ARE BLESSED

We're going to build upon that foundation this morning and discover that God thought of us even before He said: "Let there be light!" and began the creation process.

Please read with me...

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us in the heavenly realm with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." {1:3-4}

CHOSEN BY GOD

Now add this to your growing list spiritual blessings--I HAVE BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD!

...you are not a pauper
...you are the recipient of immense spiritual wealth.
The thrust of our text is: salvation begins with God!
...God takes the initiative
...all we do is respond
...and {bottom line}--God even initiates the response via the Holy Spirit
...God has ALWAYS made the FIRST move!
...salvation is wholly by God's grace...and mercy!
Jesus told His disciples {read it with me}--
"You did not choose Me, but I chose you!" {John 15:16}
"I CHOSE YOU!"

A person outside of Jesus Christ does not seek God. Paul wrote...

"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God." {Romans 3:10-11}

It is only God through His love who seeks us...

"...the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost!" {Luke 19:10}
...the lost--like sheep--went astray in their own way
...the lost--had to be found by the Shepherd--or they would be lost forever!
...and...

"The Lord is my Shepherd!"

...and...Jesus said...

"I am the Good Shepherd!"

...who came to seek
...who came to find and claim the lost
...who came to save!

Now, note the text...

"God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world"

That is mind-boggling--

...before creation

...before time began

...when only God existed

God did something absolutely phenomenal when everything was in chaos in the universe... GOD THOUGHT OF YOU.

Write this down: God thought of me before creation!

God formed a purpose in His mind...

...concerned with Christ {His begotten Son}

...and with us {whom He proposed to make us His adopted sons and daughters}

Now this is paramount for our understanding: God put us and Christ together in His mind!

...He determined to make us {who did not yet exist} His own children through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ {which had not yet taken place!}

Note now, this was a definite and deliberate decision by God!

Equally important is it to note that...

"God chose us...IN CHRIST!"

...NOT in ourselves!

And...God chose us for a purpose--

"...to be holy and blameless in His sight!"

What this says--quite simply--is that when God chose us we were unholy and blameworthy--NOT deserving adoption but judgment.

Someone might ask: "Didn't I choose God?"

The answer: "Yes, indeed you did...and freely...but ONLY because in eternity God had first chosen you!"

Someone else might ask: "Didn't I decide for Christ?"

The response: "Yes, indeed you did...and freely...but only because in eternity God had first decided for you!"

A third person might ask: "Does the sinner respond to God's grace against their own will?"

The response: "No, they respond because God's grace makes them willing to respond!"

The mystery of God's sovereignty and human responsibility will NEVER be solved in this life. Jesus taught both in John 6:37...

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never drive away!"

...both are true

...both are essential

God is sovereign--in absolute control!

We have been given responsibility--we have ability to make decisions--to choose between right and wrong!

What we're talking about is the DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

...it's Biblical

...it cannot be ignored

...nor can it be fully understood or comprehended

In the Old Testament, God chose Israel out of all the nations of the world to be His special people.

In the New Testament He is choosing an international community to be His "saints!"--His "holy and blameless" people.

John Calvin preached in St. Pierre's Cathedral in Geneva on May 1, 1558...

"Although we cannot conceive either by argument or reason how God has elected us

before the creation of the world, yet we know it by His declaring it to us; and experience itself vouches for it sufficiently, when we are enlightened in the faith."

God chose us to be "holy and blameless"--not wild and reckless!

God chose us "IN CHRIST" to be like Christ!

He chose us NOT on our merit!

God chose us because He loves us!

The whole emphasis of these opening verses in Ephesians is...

...God's grace

...God's love

...God's will

...God's purpose

...God's choice

So, God has chosen you!

Secondly...

GOD HAS ADOPTED YOU INTO HIS FAMILY

Listen carefully: You do not get into God's family by adoption! You get into God's family by regeneration!

Adoption is what God offers to those who have received Him through faith into their lives.

...so, as God's children--we inherit God's riches!

Read with me...

"In love, He predestined us to be adopted as His sons {and daughters} through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will--to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves." {1:5-6}

Note how this begins: "IN LOVE...HE PREDESTINED US TO BE ADOPTED...!"

Here surfaces one of the most misunderstood...and most debated...words...in all the Scripture: "Predestined!" The word means: "to ordain beforehand, to predetermine."

...election refers to people

...predestination refers to purposes

The events connected with the crucifixion of Christ were predestined.

God has predestined that we are to be conformed to Christ.

God has predestined that we have a future inheritance.

And God has predestined our adoption as sons and daughters...and...

...with that adoption comes responsibility

...to be imitators of God {5:1}

...to live Christlike lives

...with privilege comes obligation

OK--God chose us...God has adopted us...and finally...

GOD HAS ACCEPTED US

We cannot make ourselves acceptable to God! But God--BY HIS

GRACE--makes us accepted IN CHRIST!

...this is our position...and it will NEVER change!

...because of God's grace, we are accepted by Him

CONCLUSION

OK--what have we learned?

...WE ARE SAINTS

...WE ARE RICH

...WE ARE A CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

...WE ARE A RECIPIENTS OF GOD'S GRACE

...WE ARE BLESSED

...WE ARE CHOSEN

...WE ARE ADOPTED

...WE ARE ACCEPTED