

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Praise God for His Inheritance!
Ephesians 1:11-12

Keywords: Praise, Thankfulness, Faithfulness, Blessings, Heaven, Heritage, Inheritance

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb:

Gloria moving on August 16th from 9-1. Needs help, only a couple have offered. It is a Saturday.

I. Introduction.

- A. Already we have much to praise God for because of our election, adoption, redemption, gift of wisdom and insight, and the promise that in Jesus Christ all things shall find their purpose and end.
- B. Today we come to the end of the second of three strophes.
 - 1. Remember that this massive sentence is written in a very deliberate manner.
 - 2. It is triune in nature.
 - a. The first focuses upon the Father.
 - b. The second turns the focus to the Father's gracious and loving work through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - c. The third will be how the Father seals us in Christ with the Holy Spirit that we might be kept safe to the end.
 - 3. Each strophe ends with the declaration of praise to God (6, 12, 14).
 - 4. So today we will see the final reason we are praise God in relation to the Son.
- C. Behind all of this is an assumption that I wish to make explicit. For if it is not understood then these sermons will have little effect upon transforming us in how we understand ourselves before God. The assumption is the faithfulness of God.
 - 1. This is part of what is driving the words Paul uses in this wonderful sentence.
 - 2. Yes God did choose us in Christ. And yes He did predestine us unto adoption. And yes, He did redeem and forgive us. Yes, yes, and yes.

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3. Yes He did seal us safely in Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit until that final day when all is made new.
 4. But what if He doesn't actually follow through? Then we have nice words that mean nothing.
- D. The faithfulness of God declared:
1. If you have lived even for a short time you have been lied to, you have lied and you have learned that promises mean little most of the time.
 2. We all get very offended when we are the ones who sees and experiences a broken promise. All the while forgetting the many times we were unfaithful.
 3. There is almost an assumption that promises will be broken and that can flow into how we relate to God and His promises.
 4. The Old Testament is replete with various ways that God shows His faithfulness and His people are reminded to never forget that faithfulness.
 - a. Moses makes it the basis of hope for Israel in Deuteronomy, "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God . . ." (Deuteronomy 7:9)
 - b. It is used in contrast to Israel's unfaithfulness.
 - (1) At the end of Micah's prophecy after he brings terrifying statements such as how He will rise up and act against Israel due to her unfaithfulness and it will be a time of evil.
 - (2) Then he ends it thusly, "Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob And unchanging love to Abraham, Which You swore to our forefathers From the days of old. (Micah 7:18-1:1)
 5. We see it in the Psalms as something not just believed but something experienced.
 - a. Psalm 18:30-50.
 - b. O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. (Psalm 89:8)

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6. Titus 1:1-2.
 - a. Note the similarities to Ephesians 1.
 - b. Also note the declaration that God cannot lie. The conclusion then is that what He promised we can take hold of with confidence.
7. Romans 1:1-4.
 - a. Paul says that he is set apart for the gospel of God.
 - b. What is that good news?
 - (1) First it was something promised by God by the prophets of old.
 - (2) Second it is concerning His Son, Jesus Christ who is Lord.
 - (3) The point Paul is making is that God has been faithful to His promises. In the right time He sent forth His Son to be our Lord and Savior.

- E. My point here is simple but very important.
 1. We can confidently praise God because He is faithful to His Word and His Name.
 2. He truly is the God who cannot lie. And so we read things like what we are seeing in Ephesians and there should grow within us a settled assurance that we are a people most definitely blessed.
- F. And this moves us into today's reason for praise. God has predestined in accordance to His careful and purposeful plan to make us a people of His possession, His inheritance.
 1. For those learning Greek there is an interesting thing taking place that you should note. There is a switching from the active voice to the passive voice.
 2. God the Father is the One who is acting in this whole sentence. But the focus is moving from what God has done to what we as believers receive from God.

II. We praise God for His Inheritance.

- A. First the technical part. Notice how vs 11 is translated by most of your translation. "We have obtained an inheritance. . . ."
 1. This is one way that it could be translated.

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2. But if you have a bible with margin notes you may notice another way to translate it, ". . . were made a heritage."
3. There is a really good translation for careful study called the NET bible. Very careful and precise and therefore not as easy to read. But worth buying or using as a reference. Netbible.org. Here is how they rendered this difficult part of the verse: In Christ we too have been claimed as God's own possession . . . (Ephesians 1:11 NET)
4. At issue is how to understand a single word in the Greek, κληρω which is made all the more difficult because it is only used once, right here.
5. There are several ways that this can be translated but I want only to focus on the one I think is best. Understand though that the question is this: What have Christians been allotted? Or, to Whom have they been allotted?
6. The term finds its connection back into the Old Testament where God speaks of Israel both as His possession and heritage (something that is reserved for one's possession).
 - a. But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today. (Deuteronomy 4:20)
 - b. Notice the close connection between what we are learning in Ephesians and what we hear in this next passage:

"I prayed to the LORD and said, 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look at the stubbornness of this people or at their wickedness or their sin. Otherwise the land from which You brought us may say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised them and because He hated them He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness." Yet they are Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm.' (Deuteronomy 9:26-29)

- c. We have the ideas of redemption, the faithfulness of God to His promises and that Israel is the inheritance of the Lord.
 - d. So too we see that we are redeemed out of enslavement to sin and in doing so we become the Lord's inheritance.
7. There is also the bigger point that Paul is going to make in this letter that there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile.

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- a. That the Gentiles are in full possession of the blessings in Jesus Christ.
 - b. This is laying the groundwork by hearkening the Jewish Christian readers back to what is their pride and joy, that they were God's inheritance or heritage.
8. All of this to say that it is worth making a note in your margin and even better beginning to see the blessing that this is. God views us as His inheritance.
- a. What a privileged position we have!
 - b. We are sons and daughters of the Most High.
 - c. And we are His inheritance.
- B. How was this done?
1. The short answer is pure grace. But the long answer is filled with good things.
 2. It is our destiny for God has predestined us to this end.
 - a. What you have in vs 11 is a piling up of terms that emphasize the sovereignty of God. Notice them, "purpose," "works," "counsel," "will."
 - b. This is not by accident. Paul is trying to drive our minds to begin to think of ourselves as an incredible, infinitely, immeasurably blessed and privileged people.
 - c. We are God own possession.
 - d. Turn to Deuteronomy 32.
 - (1) This is known as the Song of Moses and it is something we looked at when discussing the real reality and how Jesus Christ has conquered the spiritual powers and rulers and authorities.
 - (2) Read vs 8-9.
 - (a) If your translation read at the end of vs 8 "sons of Israel" I hope you made the change in the margin like I asked you.
 - (b) Translations like ESV has a much better rendering, it is "sons of Gods."

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- (c) The nations of the world were assigned to the sons of God, meaning angelic powers.
 - (d) But not Israel. All the nations belonged to these powers who twisted that responsibility for evil. But Israel was God's portion, God's inheritance.
 - 3. Now we bring that idea into Ephesians and we see the glory of the mystery of God's work. What was once thought to only be a privilege of Israel is in fact a privilege for all God has redeemed in Jesus Christ.
 - a. This world lies in the lap of the evil one. Satan is the god of this age.
 - b. But while this age is the possession or inheritance of Satan, only to pass away; we are God's possession and God's inheritance.
 - c. Beloved that is a good thing.
 - 4. But this privileged position is not ours because of our efforts or accomplishments. As I said, it is pure grace.
- C. How did God predestine us to this end?
 - 1. The standard is His purposes.
 - 2. The emphasis is upon the faithfulness of God. This was His purpose or plan and He is moving all of creation in that plan.
 - 3. Notice how he continues to describe this work of God, "who works all things. . . ."
 - a. This speaks to God's active participation in Creation. He is not far and removed, He is near and at work.
 - b. As Paul told the religious leaders in Athens, that they should seek after God for he is not far from each of us (Acts 17:27).
 - c. Think of this on a global level across history where kings and kingdoms rise and fall. Think of the plottings of evil men and women. Add to that the schemes of Satan. And yet in all of this God is moving all things in accordance to His will.
 - d. Now think of this on an individual level. Your life is not an accident. Each day and each moment in ways too mysterious and wonderful to even grasp God is at work, moving you to His perfect end.
- D. And this is not done in a casual, flippant or capricious manner. How God accomplishes all things. It is according to the counsel of his will.

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1. This again speaks to the standard by which all of history is moving.
2. It is always and only in accordance to the counsel of His will and nothing more.
3. This term "counsel" speaks of councils that would gather to deliberate and make resolutions and plans.
4. In eternity past there was a divine council that was made up of the Triune God. And in that council God carefully, deliberately determined that we would be His possession. We would be redeemed out of sin and death by the Son and we would be sealed until that day of redemption by the Holy Spirit.
5. And then YHWH with great joy began to create. And the grand purposes bound up in His perfect plan and will began to unfold and continue to unfold.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Why?
- B. Verse 12.
 1. And here ends the second strophe centered upon Jesus Christ.
 2. God's gracious act of redemption in Jesus resulted in the revealing of the mystery of His will to bring all things together in Jesus and to reveal the heritage that He has in believers.
 3. This whole amazing work of sovereign grace is to move us to praise.
 4. We are a people redeemed to be a praise to His glory.
- C. It always goes back to this and so too must we.