

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

Praise God for Our Election, Pt 2 ***Ephesians 1:3-4***

Keywords: Praise, Thankfulness, Election, Sovereignty, Sin, Blessings

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: Paul immediately brings his readers into an invitation to praise God for the great things which He has done for and to them. He begins with the humbling doctrine of election and moves to the hope-filled doctrine of adoption. And then shows us the purpose for all of this, that we might be a people who praise God.

I. Introduction.

- A. Let Us Praise God! This is the point of this long introductory sentence.
 - 1. A Christian who is not quick or eager to praise God is one of two things.
 - a. Either untaught, therefore not really understanding the vastness of God's majesty, authority, power and grace.
 - b. Or self-centered, having a very man-centered view of all things.
 - 2. Neither are desirable and only as we are willing to open the bible and sit under its authority can we hope to see the glory of God better.
 - 3. That is my intention for us today.
- B. The blessedness of God (3).
 - 1. That little phrase, "in Christ" is where it is all at.
 - 2. The purpose is to point out that God has chosen to reveal himself and his renewing of creation through Jesus Christ.
 - 3. Jesus is the agent, if you will, of all of God's redemptive work. You see this clearly in 1:10.
 - 4. And all that we do, all that we have, all that we are is bound up fully in our union with Jesus Christ by the will of the Father. The better we understand our Christology (study of Jesus) the better we function as parents, spouse, citizens, and children.
- C. His basis for this blessing: His sovereign election (4).

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1. God chose us. This is the only verb in the whole sentence that is not grammatically subordinate to something else. It stands supreme as the primary expression of God's magnificent blessing of His people.
2. Two phrases help capture the glory and the mystery of this election. The first is 'in him' and the second is 'before the foundation of the world'. It was not some vague choice but the sovereign choice to place His elect in Christ.
 - a. 'In him' speaks to the totality of all things are necessarily connected to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the foundation of our election and all that follows that election. It all depends on Him.
 - b. 'Before the foundation of the world'.
 - (1) Paul's mind reaches back before creations, before time began, into eternity in which only God himself existed.
 - (2) This means that the Fall of mankind was not some mistake.
 - (3) The removes any aspect of human choice or merit.
 - (a) This doesn't mean we don't need to make the choice to love and trust Jesus and what he has done on the Cross.
 - (b) But it does mean that our choice that occurs in time and space follows a decision made when there was no time or space, only God.
 - c. And it is here that we wade into deep waters that can easily sweep us away if we are not careful.
- D. A basic introduction to the necessity and mystery of God's sovereign election.
 1. The necessity is wrapped up in our sinfulness and inability to reach out to God.
 - a. Our sinfulness declared:
 - (1) Ephesians 2:1-3.
 - (a) Tt starts out with our state of being, then to our actions, and then back to our state. Our actions flow from our state.
 - (b) "This bill of indictment cannot but grate harshly on the ears of shallow religionists of effeminate sensibilities and an extenuating temper; and manifold

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are the attempts they make to elude its impact by the help of evolutionary or philosophical presuppositions. Fond of patting human nature on the back and of glossing over its vicious propensities, they persuade themselves to regard it as innocent in the main, or, if somewhat of a scapegrace, 'more sinned against than sinning.' Its obliquities are frequently attributed to the development of the passions in advance of the judgment. But that complacent theory does not tally with the facts of the case. For, as the history of humanity abundantly proves, *all* mankind without exception turns aside to his own way. We are sinners *in grain*; every mother's son learns to be naughty without book. Nor will either impulse or example suffice to account for the anomaly of wrongdoing co-extensive with an entire species of moral agents, whilst our fellow-lodgers, the animal creation, fulfil their instinctive ends without fail. To confine sin to outward acts is merely resorting to a hollow euphemism; for whence these uniformly corrupt fruits save from a corrupt tree? Deny original sin and the state of our world becomes harder to construe than if you embrace the tenet. The evil principle lurks beneath the surface, seated in the hidden heart" (Simpson, *Ephesians and Colossians*, pp. 49-50).

(2) Romans 8:5-8.

b. The effects of this sinfulness declared:

(1) Genesis 6:5.

- (a) The greatest, fullest description of the heart of man. Two assessments of man by God: first the breadth and second the depth.
- (b) "Was evil" This is God's judgment upon the thoughts and hearts of man. Strip away everything we like to drape over our thoughts and hearts and evil lies at the center. God is speaking of the moral state of humanity.

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- (c) "intent" This word speaks of the very formation of our thoughts. The soil, the soup, that produces a thought.
 - (d) "Every." This shows that there is no thought that a man could produce that was not formed without the deadly stain of evil. The very soup that our plans, ideas, words, dreams, and goals are formed from is evil.
 - (e) "Heart." This shows the location where God was looking. This is so important, because we know that the heart is the very essence, the very nerve center of a person. It is our mission control center. Nothing occurs separate from the heart.
 - (f) "His" This shows that God is looking at each individual heart. Not just a blanket statement, but over all humanity, each heart is examined and the same conclusion is drawn.
 - (g) "Only" This shows the totality of the evil. There was never an exception in time that the thoughts or intents were not evil! Think of that!
 - (h) "Continually." This shows the constancy of the evil. This says that not only was every thought evil, that every embryo of a thought evil, but that the only thing the heart did was evil. Meaning there was not a time, such as when we weren't thinking, that we sort of went into neutral. Every day, every second what was exploding into God's eyes? Each person's constant, total evil.
- (2) Romans 1:18ff.
- (a) The very first charge is that man suppresses the truth and this is too often overlooked.
 - (b) The word, "suppress" speaks of one who in incarcerated. Natural man takes truth, seals it in a box, and then buries it.
 - (c) Note the logical flow. Mark them in your bible.

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- (d) Avoid two extremes. 1) Do not deny the revelation of God in nature. 2) And do not take that revelation out of the reality of fallen man's response to truth—they actively suppress it.
- (e) There are several consequences to this passage.
 - i) First, God has revealed himself to humanity and done so clearly.
 - ii) Second, humanity, left to its own ways, can and will never find its way to God on its own.
 - iii) Third, there is no actual epistemological grounds to truly engage the non-Christian.
 - a) Fancy word to cover the whole idea of how we know and how do we learn that knowledge.
 - b) God says that we see Him clearly in His works and in the innermost part of ourselves, but we reject it and press it down.
 - c) This is why I do not engage in long debates with people.
 - d) Also this relieves me of that horrible fear that I may not know enough to share the gospel with a person. What if they "stump" me?
 - iv) Fourth, it is not surprising how throughout human history you see this constant movement to some form of creature worship, even in an atheistic form, where man, or self, becomes supreme.
 - v) Fifth, and wherever this is seen you see the ever growing expression of godlessness in society as God actively gives them over to all things unnatural.
- (3) Ephesians 4:17-19

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- c. Add to this the fact that Satan actively attacks and blinds unbelievers as taught in the introductory sermons and you have utter hopelessness and helplessness.
 - (1) At the outset (2 Cor 11:3).
 - (a) Note where Satan attacks—the mind. “Astray” is more literally rendered seduced.
- d. Throughout history.
 - (1) The fact of 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.
 - (a) He blinds the minds where repentance begins. Notice what he is blinding them to—the beauty of Christ.
 - (2) Remembering Ephesians 2:2.
 - (a) He is effectively working in the lives of mankind. We walked/lived/conducted ourselves in accordance to Satan.
 - (b) He is the energy, he effectively is at work.
 - (3) The knowledge of 1 John 5:19.
 - (a) This is a tragic verse because it shows that mankind is not held captive by Satan where they struggle to be free.
 - (b) Rather we are comfortable in his presence.
- 2. The reality of God’s election as described by Jesus.
 - a. John 6:37, 44-45, 64-65.
 - b. John 10:24-29.

II. Conclusion.

- A. Once you have these fulness of even this brief and small foray into the sinfulness of man settle into your mind you will then find the reality of God’s election/choosing of a person to salvation to be a joyful mystery.
 - 1. Without it there is nothing for any of us.
 - 2. It is designed not for us but to drive our minds from us to God.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

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- B. We now turn back to Ephesians 1:4 to bring this all to a final point. What is the point of this election?
- C. And the answer is simple and straight-forward, to be holy and blameless.
- D. Therefore before sin had entered into the world. Before the world was made God ordained that those he chose would be a holy people.
 - 1. This is speaking of both being separated out for His purposes but also in a moral sense of being pure and righteous.
 - 2. And you will see this throughout Ephesians. Consider 4:17-20.
 - 3. Election and habitual sin are incompatible with each other.
- E. We are to be a humble people for our salvation is wholly of God.
- F. We are to be a grateful people for we have infinite blessings from God.
- G. We are to be a gospeling people who call others to come to Jesus Christ with the comfort of knowing those who are His shall respond.
- H. We are to be a holy people who reflect the character of Jesus Christ in whom we have our salvation.