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St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
July 15, 2018  
8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture Lessons: Amos 7:10-15, Mark 6:7-13

Hymns: 224; 37; 310; 309

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Ephesians 1:3-14

<sup>3</sup>Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, <sup>4</sup>just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup>having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

<sup>7</sup>In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup>which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, <sup>9</sup>having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, <sup>10</sup>that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. <sup>11</sup>In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup>that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

<sup>13</sup>In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.  
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: A different perspective.

Sometimes it helps to get another point of view on issues arising in one's life. Sometimes we are so close to what's going on in our own lives that we can't be objective. We get too focused on the immediate that we fail to see the long road to where we are going. We may ask for another individual to tell us what they think, and often that is helpful. However other people have the same failing we have, they are short sighted. Too often we fail to see past today.

There is however another who can see our lives completely. There is one who has a much higher view of the affairs of our individual lives than we can possibly even know. If only we knew what God knows! Of course there is much that God knows about each of our lives that He in His wisdom and grace is going to withhold from us. It just wouldn't do us any good to know what troubles lie before us, or to know the day of our death. However the Lord does reveal the big picture, the picture that applies to each and every one of us who believe, and this helps a great deal. It calms our woes, and gives us assurance for life and of our own salvation.

That is what our text is doing for us. Paul is spelling out the truth of your salvation as well as his own. It was a truth that the Apostle Paul cherished for his own encouragement in life. He was a prisoner in Rome at the time that he wrote these words, and yet these words are filled with the confidence of faith. These words describe in quite some detail the doctrine of predestination. When one throws that word out "predestination" we immediately begin to struggle with questions that are not for us to answer, or to find objections in our reason that are not backed up by the truth of Scripture. It really isn't so dark or complex. The Bible teaching of predestination is a marvelous teaching full of grace and assurance for the child of God. So the Spirit would enlighten us concerning --

## **THEME: Predestination: Seeing Your Life from God's Perspective**

We are blessed. We are blessed beyond our imagining. We thank and praise God for the temporal blessings which come our way. And they do come our way on a daily basis whether we are thinking about it or not. However, all the temporal blessings we have received, as wonderful as they might be, do not begin to compare to the spiritual blessings which we have received, (and I am using the past tense with intent) blessings which we have already received in the heavenly places in Christ. If we are to see our lives from God's perspective that is where it begins, instead of staring down at the dirt we call earth and think of as home, finding here the end and goal of so much of our lives. When God the Father looks at our lives He looks at the final outcome of our lives, which is the salvation of our souls. God's look at your life began long, long ago; long before you were born, long before anyone else had any thought or notion that there would even be a you. It was during that long ago that --

### **I. God Chose You to be His Own.**

So Paul exalts the God of our salvation proclaiming this grace:

**Ephesians 1:4-6** “He chose us in Him (that is in Christ Jesus) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, <sup>5</sup>having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

He chose us, but not in a vacuum, not without any consideration of value. He chose us considering something extremely precious and important, but that consideration is **not** found in you or in me. That consideration was found in Christ. God the Father chose us in connection with Christ Jesus, His only Son whom He would send into the world in the fullness of time. All this consideration and choosing happened before the foundation of the world, before time was even created.

God chose you before the world began that you should be seen by Him as righteous and holy, without blame. This was done in love.

Love is a tricky word for us in English because it means so many different things. This is “Agape” love, that pure love which the world can only dream of, that pure love of action and grace which God extends to us. God’s choosing of us in Christ was done in connection with this love. And it was done with a purpose and goal. God chose us not only to be “believers” that we know that there is a God who made heaven and earth, but that we should be His children.

We are told that we were chosen by God for the purpose of adoption. God adopted us to be His children, to be as sons. Yes, we are right to say that we are His sons and daughters, but God the Father is speaking in terms of this world, which this world comprehends. The Lord wants all of us, men and women, boys and girls to know that we possess the status of sons before God the Father. While God sees us all the same before Him, in much of this world assumptions are made about sons that are not carried over to daughters, and this gospel is for all the world. In some false religions the status of women who are saved is taught to be inferior to the status of men in heaven. That is not the case at all. Farthest thing from God’s mind when He looked down upon our lives from His eternal home. In God’s plan of eternal salvation there is no distinction. We are all the same before Him, loved by Him and blessed by His grace revealed to us in the Beloved.

Using the term “The Beloved” is simply reminding us of how God the Father looked down upon the man Christ Jesus, and declared “*This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!*” (Matthew 3:17) God’s grace is revealed to us in Jesus, in His birth, in His holy righteous life, in His innocent sufferings and death, and in the glory of Jesus’ resurrection. That grace which we marvel at time and again throughout the church year was what God was considering when He chose you, when He chose me, that we might be holy and blameless in His sight, that we might be His adopted children.

That is where Paul takes us next is a fuller consideration of what qualified us to be chosen as God’s children --

## **II. Jesus Redeemed You to God.**

**Ephesians 1:7-8** “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace <sup>8</sup> which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,

Again that “**in Him**” is in connection with Jesus. We have redemption in Jesus. Redemption is often simply defined as act of buying something. While it is the paying of a price, this is a very special type of purchase that was made with the holy, precious blood of Christ. The term itself indicates that this is buying a life, saving a life from death, ransoming a life from slavery, from a cruel slavery which could only end in death.

That is precisely what Jesus did when He shed His blood for us, when He endured the torture of scourging and crucifixion, when He offered His life, His holy DIVINE life to God in payment for our eternal souls. God accepted that payment. Indeed it was in consideration of that payment by which we were ransomed from sin and death that God viewed your life **before the foundation of the world.**

All of this is for the fulfillment of His purpose and will. So often people question God’s purpose and will. We do this in our weakness, in the weakness of our flesh. In this doctrine of salvation we see God’s purpose and will for us; He sent His only begotten Son into the flesh to suffer and die so that He could consider your life and mine in view of that redemptive act by which we are saved.

**Ephesians 1:11-12** “In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

“In Him,” and that is still in connection with Jesus, we have been given an inheritance. Here we have that scary word, predestined. What did God predestine? **That you would inherit the glories of heaven!** That is what the working and counsel of His will is for your life. That is the only way this word “predestined” is used in Scripture, talking about those who have been chosen by God to salvation. We have been granted not only the right but the actual inheritance of heaven. That is what the being seen as “sons” is all

about. In so many cultures, even yet today, only sons inherit. Ladies and girls God wants you to know **you** inherit. He sees this as a done deal and final. You **inherit**, not someday you **will** inherit, **you** inherit, boys and girls, men and women, **all who believe**, you inherit! This includes any and all who trusted in Jesus, “*We are joint heirs with Christ,*” (Romans 8:17) to the praise of His glory. To the praise of **His glory**, and not our own.

How is it possible to talk like this, that this glorious heaven we look for so eagerly is already ours? It is because as part of God’s view of your life --

### **III. The Holy Spirit Insures Your Eternal Salvation.**

**Ephesians 1:13-14** “In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”

How do you know you’re going to heaven? “I just know” isn’t the best answer. It isn’t the best answer because there are a great many people who are convinced they are going to heaven, and they aren’t!

It isn’t the best answer because it is founded on your feelings, your personal conviction. Personal feelings or personal convictions can get shaky very fast when we face tribulation, and ultimately when we “walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” (Psalm 23) I want something more, and in His grace God has given me something more, something much more indeed. He has given me His Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwells within my heart, and the Spirit has led me to comprehend the sure promises of God in Christ Jesus. This is not the same as feelings or personal conviction; this is trust in the gospel of Christ as our crucified and risen Savior. We know as historical fact that Jesus both died and rose again. We know that Jesus has ascended on high also as true man, and so as our brother. He is then the first fruits of many brethren. (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23) We know that His words and promises are sure, for He is faithful, and all He has promised has come to pass. The Spirit of God has brought this faith, this trust, this conviction, not just personal conviction, the conviction of the Holy Spirit; He has planted this conviction in my heart and yours, and yours. This is

the guarantee of our inheritance. It is more than a down payment. This insures the Lord is going to come and collect what He paid for with His holy precious blood. When He does He will bring us to be with Him in heaven. He will come again and receive us to Himself that where the "I AM" is, there we will be also! (John 14:3)

And that my friends in Christ will be the culmination of your life and mine. It is the culmination of God's superior view of your life as He saw you from before the foundation of the world. The Lord's view is that you were chosen for adoption since before the world was made. You were redeemed by Christ crucified. God sees you as righteous and blameless. You were called to faith through the preaching of the gospel, and so received also the Spirit of our God who entered your heart, insuring for you the ultimate outcome of everlasting life. That is the grace of God's view of your life, and so it shall be both now and forever.

**AMEN.**

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Amen. (Romans 15:13)