

Ephesians 1:3-6  
 Grace Church of Gainesville  
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 Rod Fultz

## God Decided to Bless Us

A **Rescue** mission always begins upon receipt of the knowledge of a person (or people) in distress. Whether that be a call from a ship at sea on the radio, or a documentary that informs concerned people about orphans that are starving in North Korea (with NO ONE to care for them) **KNOWLEDGE** is what stirs concerned people to action.

Upon discovery of the calamity or the distress, they mobilize resources, and begin to **execute plans** to RESCUE those that are perishing.

How does that compare to **GOD** who knows every detail of all existence from eternity past?

How and when does **He DECIDE** to take action to rescue people who have fallen into the hands of the enemy... and will be rightfully be under His wrath forever, unless He acts to SAVE them?

How, When and **Why** did **God DECIDE** to bless people who are unlovable rebels. Not only forgiving them but **joining them** to His own Son... Making them **children** of the Living God.

- **Why would He do that?** Is what he did merely an **emergency reaction** to a circumstance, or is the act of saving fallen men and women created in His image..... something **much larger**.

God gives His answer to all of those questions in our text; Ephesians 1:3-6.

### GOD **DECIDED** to Bless You

Of His own **free will**.... God CHOSE to save you....to display the immensity of His loving kindness towards you.

While that may sound EASY to believe, when looking at texts like Ephesians one, it is often a BIG PILL to swallow.

So I want to ask you to get a **large glass of living water** from the Lord right now... in order that we might **RECEIVE** (and swallow) **the Word implanted** which is able to save our souls.

## PRAY

- These truths can become the **ANCHOR** of your identity and your **security**; you want to lay down all your **self sufficient PRIDE** and devote yourselves fully to God your Father as **glad members** of His family.

### Ephesians 1:3-6

" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who **has** blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."

Recall from last week that a blessing is literally defined as a **WORD well spoken** towards you; or upon you. In human terms, it is a conveyance of good will, of support. **But, Realistically**, (think about it) it does not mean all that much to have people speak well of us; to give us their blessing, because people sometimes **LIE**.

They **flatter** for the sake of gaining an advantage. People will put others on a pedestal simply because it feels good to exalt something other than themselves.

So a good word spoken to us or about us by fallen people is a **very limited** blessing.

Isn't it SAD, that we spend so much time and energy trying to get others to speak well of us? We spend so much time seeking the praise of men, when it means so **very little?**

God's Word says we **already have** the FULL blessing of Almighty God!

CONSIDER (by contrast) the types of things that HAPPEN when **GOD** speaks a good **Word** concerning something. God speaks in **decrees and** pronouncements. He speaks in **commands**. When he speaks to **anything** in the physical creation (wind and waves) they **OBEY!**

When GOD chooses to speak a **good word** (a blessing) towards you or upon you, it is not **flattery**. It is not even a commendation, it is not wishing you well, is not a hope that you will have good luck.

God's blessing is nothing short of **the GIFT** of **eternal happiness and success**

It is the verbal **granting** of an INHERITANCE. It's a Kingdom He imparts to you by giving you faith in Jesus Christ.

And remember ...God never does anything **half way!** He does not **mete** out blessings upon His children like some old **miser** (pinching them out **begrudgingly**).

Either...you get **ALL** of **His goodness** and riches and power in Christ Jesus (forever) or you get **all** the **wrath**; the full measure of the curse; stored up for the devil and his angels (for ever and ever).

Last week the goal of the message was to exhort you to **BLESS** GOD, because; everything that is **currently Christ's**, is ALSO yours as a free gift:

**You have:** His righteousness..... His holiness.... His goodness...

**You have:** The **love** from God that only Jesus deserves.....

His death was your death.....His resurrected and eternal life..... is now **YOUR life**.

HE Himself... by His Holy Spirit has come to dwell in your soul.....

And His exalted position of glory (at the right hand of God the Father) is now your **TRUE** and everlasting **home**.

In the heavenly places your blessings in Christ are spiritual blessings.

In the **OT**: the blessing of God was displayed and thought of largely in **physical** terms. Deut. 28 is an excellent example of God promising and delivering **material wealth**, fruitful wombs and peace with one's enemies to Israel; **IF** they would obey His commandments.

That is what theologians call the blessings associated with the **Law of Moses**. You **DO** what God asks and God makes your way successful, in this life.

But THAT type of physical blessing to Israel was meant to point to something **much better!** The land flowing with milk and honey, the bountiful crops, the peace enjoyed by freedom from enemies, the wealth and wisdom of Solomon, and the glory of the city where God dwelled (Jerusalem): Were designed to point to An ETERNAL Kingdom and a New Jerusalem.

One where KING Jesus reigns and is worshiped. The realm of that reign is **NOW** in the heavenly places. The riches of your inheritance are now being stored up for you (in Christ) in heaven. Your BLESSINGS are inherently spiritual. You draw from Christ by means of faith in Him.

Calvin says that it is not that material blessings are bad, they are still from God, but in the presence of Christ they become superfluous.

They are **SURPLUS** the **essence** of our blessing is CHRIST Himself!

His Holy Spirit becomes a **living pipeline** of **grace** into your soul, PROVIDING for you **everything** that is necessary for life and godliness ...and to and to **fit you** for an eternity **with Jesus** in His presence.

The passage here in Ephesians 1:3-14, is a lengthy song of **PRAISE**, based upon the **foundation stones** of HOW God has already blessed you. It is a **MEANS** of God helping you begin to **COMPREHEND** (and celebrate) the depth and the width and the height of His love for you in Christ Jesus. Similar to what is called the Golden Chain of Salvation in Romans 8:28 – 31 where God wants you to understand that not only was it His idea and His free choice to SAVE you, but the **PROCESS** belongs to Him as well. Don't miss this: If it had been God's idea to save you, from beginning to end, That means, you can trust entirely in Him at every point along the way.

God Decided to Bless You

### 1. **Before** Anything Else Existed

When we decide to do good to someone, it is almost always in **response** to their **NEEDS**. But **before** Adam was even created, much less before He sinned; God chose the members of His church, in Christ Jesus unto eternal salvation:

**Ephesians 1:4**

"even as, he **chose us in him** before the foundation of the world,

Kent Hughes puts it "God's choice anteceded **human need**."

So **take this in**: God's choice to save you in Christ, was not a **reaction**, it was a **predetermined CHOICE** by God Himself.

It was His **free** decision BEFORE He even said "Let there be light." or before He said Let us make man in our image.

Before that, He chose **YOU** in Christ Jesus to an eternal inheritance.

Paul Gardner says:

"The awesome electing action of God in salvation is the foundation of all the blessings that belong to Christians".

God BEGAN to display His love for you by choosing you in Christ Jesus ... before anything else existed except Himself.

That is how God can say this to His elect from every age....

**Jeremiah 31:3**

"I have loved you with **an everlasting love**; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."

God's choice of you to be in Christ was **NOT** based on your merit, you had none. It was not **arbitrary** like some cosmic lottery wheel where your number just happened to come up. God's choice of you was **intentional**. He chose to set His love upon you out of the mystery of His will.

What I am recommending to you today, and everyday.....let us simply humble ourselves and receive the Word of God for what it says. God HAS revealed this truth for your good, not for your **consternation**.

While it is a mystery how this truth can exist right alongside of man's responsibility to believe the Gospel, and to remain faithful to Christ until the end through that belief:

Here is what God wants you to GET as His children today.....

- I didn't start loving you when you began to show an interest in **Me**.

I have **ALWAYS** loved you **and** always **will** and that is why I have drawn you to my Son, so I could keep on loving you forever as my children.

God WANTS you to know your heritage and your TRUE identity as members of His household. He wants us to be rock solid **SECURE** in His love for us because it NEVER changes and is not based on our failures or shortcomings.

- Are you receiving that?

These are **FAMILY truths**....

Designed to be cherished and celebrated within the Family of God; The church.

We are so individualistic in our thinking about that, but God has revealed these truths to his church. That is why Paul writes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural. He chose **us** in Christ. He chose us...in Christ.

**Ephesians 1:4b: "that we** should be holy and blameless before him.

The Bible says: Without the holiness of God, **no one** can even see God, much less dwell in His presence. If you study the accounts of sinful men (like you and I) that God has brought into His presence (even in the Spirit or through a vision). Their responses don't seem very **enviable**:

**Daniel kept on falling with his face to the ground and going into a deep sleep everytime he came into God's presence.**

John said.... "I fell at his feet as though DEAD."

### **Isaiah 6:5**

**"Woe is me!** For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Yet, when Christ returns; at the great wedding supper of the Lamb, when the sanctification of His Bride has been made complete, when we are indeed HOLY and BLAMELESS before Him:

We see the redeemed of the LORD as **exceedingly jubilant!** They serve Him without fear! Hallelujah! Worthy is the Lamb! Because, God has made them; **SPOTLESS** in His presence; through the blood of the Lamb.

Holiness MEANS you will have perfect communion with God (who is holy). Because you will no longer be self- centered. You will perfectly enjoy giving and receiving LOVE. You will be (forever and ever) without even an inkling of the GUILT and SHAME that is so common in our experience as sinners:

- Can't you see? **ONLY** God can do that for people like us.

I was able to share the gospel with a man I have known for several years this past week. The more I get to know him, his problems are BIGGER than I had at first imagined. He is in bondage to some lifelong sin patterns that are destructive and make it impossible for his life to have any real foundation.

For a moment, I really had doubts as to whether this man could EVER become a faithful disciple of Jesus, then, I remembered this verse: that GOD chose him TO BE holy and BLAMELESS before Him. **GOD** can change him! **God** can change you! **God** can make us like His Son!

With man... it is **impossible**... but NOTHING shall be impossible with God!

So even now, as some of you are wrestling with besetting sins; The way to freedom from them is not merely trying harder. The key to DELIVERANCE is REALIZING and believing that GOD has chosen to make you holy! GOD DECIDED! I am under HIS authority, His direction!

As you struggle, BELIEVE that it is the GOD who chose you in Christ....that is at work in you. And, because GOD has begun that good work (from before the foundation of the world) He **WILL** complete it to the day of Christ Jesus.

You are here in the middle, struggling to stay on the path of righteousness for His Name's sake, fighting to keep your eyes on Jesus.

God wants you to know: I am the **Beginning** and the **End**: I have you in my hand.

Therefore **keep FIGHTING** the good fight of faith. **Not faith in yourself**, (how **depressing** would that be?) but in **GOD** who promises to complete what He began.

What should even be more encouraging is God's **motive** for choosing you is **unconditional love**:

**Ephesians 1:4c-5**

**In love**, he predestined us **for adoption** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,"

God Decided to Bless You

## 2. Because It Pleased Him to Love You through His Son

God's Love is infinite and everlasting. He pours **ALL** of it out upon His **Only Begotten Son**. Jesus is (v. 6) **the** Beloved (lit.) **The ONE loved**. THE Son.

So use your sanctified imagination; get this picture, before the creation of the world: God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, together with the angelic hosts were perfectly happy reveling in the glory and love of GOD. And GOD decides...Let's **Adopt**.

Out of this creation, where we know Satan will cause man to fall into sin, let's **choose**, let's set loving bounds around (predestine means) a people to ADOPT into Christ. To graft them in, by way of redemption from their sin, so I can set my **particular LOVE** on them as sons.

If you are going to grasp the **extent** and the certainty of God's love for you; there is no better picture in the Bible than **adoption**. In adoption, children who are without hope in the world are brought into an existing **FAMILY**. They are given a **new name**, new privileges and often new siblings. They are given a future and a hope, in the context of a network of loving relationships i.e. **FAMILY**.

I loved the movie **The Blindside**; because of how Big Mike slowly became a part of the family that adopted him. My favorite scene in the film was after Michael had been grilled by an NCAA examiner about why he chose to accept a scholarship from Ole' Miss. He wholeheartedly says... "Ole Miss is where my family goes to school.... it is where **we** have always gone to school..."

Even though Michael had a radically different upbringing in the hood; where no one even finished High School, he had now fully embraced the values of his new family having received adoption as a SON.

**That** is God's will for you in applying this text. He wants you to receive the **Spirit of Adoption** by which you might call on Him as your FATHER. Not in some **formal**, bland way, but, as a child calls out **Daddy** to the One they know LOVES them and is out for their good.

So, all we upon whom God has set His SEAL, await (by FAITH) the final stage of our adoption process, which Romans says is the **Redemption of these bodies**. That EVERY part of us might be joined to Christ: in new bodies, in righteousness and holiness before Him, Just as God has **decreed**.

So, just like God predestined Moses to be adopted by Pharaoh's daughter: so that he would not only be saved from death but could bring God much glory through being His agent of deliverance. God predestined you to be **adopted**. To be **saved** so that you could bring Him much glory by your DEVOTION to Your Deliverer Jesus Christ.

God did not **HAVE** to do this. He freely chose to.

Just like you do not have to ADOPT any of the **unlovable** children of the world today; (other than sharing THIS good news with people) I am not aware of a more **practical** way to replicate and pass on that picture of Divine Love, than to adopt children, loving them as your very own. Especially those from cultures that are different than our own. Might be something to pray about, If God has you in such a position.

It means a lot of sacrifice. Jesus **laid down His life on the cross** in order to accomplish **your** adoption.

Scripture says: It brought God much pleasure to make you a vessel of His mercy: To set His love upon you and make you His son.

He wants you to be **SECURE** in that love and sacrifice to extend it to others.

GOD DECIDED to Bless You

3. To Qualify You for the Eternal Chorus of **Praise!**

Whether you consider yourself musical or not, you're going to be In the Choir in heaven!

**Musicians**, are notoriously proud. Something about hearing yourself play or sing, that tempts you to **love yourself** more than what you are singing about.

So, in order for you to be able to join in the glad adoration of God in heaven.....

God has taught you (today) that you are saved ENTIRELY as an act of His grace.

In what is the **mystery of mysteries**, God chose (in eternity past) to make you a vessel of His mercy and love. He set His saving love upon and predestined you for adoption. So that, you would have **no more room** to try and **credit yourself** with even PART of your redemption.

You would become a **glad debtor** to the FREE grace of God.

He predestined you...

### **Ephesians 1:6**

"to the praise of his glorious **grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."

The END result of God sending His only Son to redeem a people for Himself is so that a number which no man could count, from every tribe and every nation, from every generation would compose an eternal choir of jubilant PRAISE for the goodness of God's Sovereign and electing **Love**.

- Will you gladly join that choir?

God has GRACED you with every thing you need in His Beloved Son so you can.