

(Ephesians) Saved Through the Sovereign Work of the Father

by Jeff Noblit

God's sovereign work in our salvation is a glorious provision that deserves our praise and gratitude.

Duration: 1:19:57

Scripture: Matthew 5:48, Matthew 22:37, Romans 8:29, Ephesians 1:4-6, 1 John 2:4

Topics: "Election"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the responsibility of believers to share the gospel and pray for the salvation of others. He warns against being out of balance by focusing solely on the glories of God's work in redemption without actively spreading the gospel. The preacher explains that God chose believers according to his will and for the praise of his grace. He also highlights the importance of having a love for God's law and truth as evidence of true conversion.

Transcript

Ephesians chapter 1, as we turn this morning to this wonderful epistle, this letter that the Apostle Paul most likely wrote from a Roman prison to a young church in the city of Ephesus. And he begins to lay out before us the glorious provision of God for salvation in these verses as we look at chapter 1. And as we look today particularly at verses 4, 5, and 6, I've entitled the message, Saved Through the Sovereign Work of the Father. In the verses following that, we'll see something of the work of the Son in our salvation.

And then in the verses following that, we will see something of the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. One thing that Paul leaves without any question whatsoever is that God does the saving. He deserves the credit.

He deserves the glory for it all. And how wonderful it is. Let me share with you a little statement that Manly Beasley shared with me years ago.

What a great and wonderful man of God Manly Beasley was. In dealing with some items and truths, Manly used to say, Blessed are the balanced. And that's important here.

Blessed are the balanced. Spurgeon put it this way. Some folks say, are you a five-point Calvinist? No, I'm a five-point Spurgeonist.

And you don't know what that means, but he was the great Baptist preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England. And he held strongly to these great truths of Scripture simply because you can't preach expositional sermons and not believe them. And when he was asked about things like this, he would say, There is something of a mystery.

There is something of a balance here that we can't completely reconcile in our minds. We must preach the truth as it is in the text, but we want to stay balanced in our minds. So Spurgeon would say something like this.

If you ask me who is responsible, if a man gets to heaven, I'll give you the Calvinist answer. God is responsible. Then Spurgeon would say, if you ask me who is responsible, if a man goes to hell, I will give you the Armenian answer, that man is responsible.

And there's truth in that. So as we look at the glories of God's work in our redemption, our salvation, balance that with the stirring that ought to occur in our hearts. A stirring to be more about the business of sharing this gospel.

More about the business of praying for those who are not yet saved. More about the business of sharing the gospel to the ends of the earth. If that does not happen, you're out of balance.

This is to the end that we might be stirred more to glorify God, to extol Him more, to esteem Him more highly, to be more in awe of His wonder, but to be more motivated to share His gospel and preach it to everyone. So blessed are the balance. Let's keep that in our hearts and minds as we continue our journey through the book of Ephesians.

Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4. Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love. He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Now I want to ask and answer four questions from this text.

The first one, whom did He choose? Well, He chose those who were in Him. The second one, when did He choose us? Well, the text says He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Third question, what did He choose for us? The text says He chose for us to be holy and blameless before Him in love and to be adopted as sons.

And then lastly, why did He choose us? Well, the text said it was just the intention of His will to do it, to the praise of the glory of His grace. So let's look at those one at a time and see what the text has to say. First of all, whom does He or did He choose? Well, He chose those who were in Him.

It says very clearly, the first line of verse 4, just as He chose us in Him. Now when it says we are in Him or in Christ, that means in the sphere of Christ. Matter of fact, Paul himself uses this phrase in him or in Christ 164 times in his writings that became New Testament books.

So really in Paul's mind, the phrase in him is a better statement than are you saved. And as you and I have discussed many times together in modern evangelical circles, the phrase are you saved doesn't mean a whole lot anymore. And maybe we might want to just change that and start saying are you in Christ? Because that really means something.

Are you one of those who are in Christ? If you are, you're saved. If you're saved, you're in Christ, surely. But it's amazing as times change and cultures change, certain things get watered down and misinterpreted and misdefined, if you will, to where you have to clarify things all the time.

But anyway, we are saved because we are in Christ. He chose us in Him. Now here's a good way to understand this.

We are chosen in Christ the same way Jews were chosen in Abraham. Now think about all the Jews through all the ages who were the recipients of the blessings God promised to Abraham. But not because they were anything in and of themselves, but because they were simply of the line or lineage of Abraham.

Remember it was to the follow of the descendants rather of Abraham, the Jews that God gave the covenant. I'll be your God and you will be my people and here are my statutes and my laws. There's the moral law and the ceremonial law.

And God gave that to the followers or rather the lineage of Abraham simply because they were born of that line. They were in Abraham. The prophets came to the Old Testament people of Israel because they were all of the lineage of Abraham.

They had God's law, as I said. They had God's priests. They were given the temple.

All of these blessings were not because they had merited anything, because they had earned anything, because they had done anything. They were simply born of Abraham. And I think that's why Jesus said to Nicodemus in John chapter 3, you'll not get in on, you won't even see the kingdom if you're not born again or born from above.

So we're birthed in Christ. They were birthed of Abraham. So here's what the text means.

All of us who are in Christ receive all the benefits and the blessings promised to Christ just as the Jews received the benefits and blessings promised to Abraham. We get it because we're of His line, if you will. We are of the lineage of Christ.

Romans 8, 17 says that we are fellow heirs with Christ. We receive what He's going to receive. We get in on the blessings that are promised to Him as God's unique and special one and only Son.

The benefits that are bestowed on Him are also bestowed on us because we are what? We're in Him. 2 Timothy chapter 2 verse 12 speaks of us reigning with Christ. There's an aspect of the future kingdom whereby we will actually rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ because He receives that blessing, we receive it because we're in Christ.

We get in on it with Him. Ephesians chapter 1 verse 3. Our very text that we had a couple of weeks ago. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now listen, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. We're in Christ so we receive all the blessings He receives. We're in Christ, we receive all the benefits He receives.

What did you do to get in Christ? You did the same thing the followers or rather the lineage of Abraham did to get in Abraham. You were just born. Did you have anything to do with being born? No, God did that.

Through the miracle of a conception, gestation and birthing through your physical mother, God does that. And so He is the one who places us in Christ. Note by the way, the text does not say we were chosen in ourselves, does it? No, we're chosen in Christ.

It does not say we were chosen in works. Works cannot do it. We are chosen in Him.

It does not say we are chosen in merit or in some sort of worth in and of ourselves. No, it's because we are in Christ. It does not even say we are chosen in faith.

And far too often we want to make the exercise of faith into some sort of work whereby that merits God receiving us. But that's not what the text says. Don't make faith a work.

We're chosen not even in faith, but in Christ. We're chosen not in religious ritual. We're chosen in Christ.

None of these things are acceptable. Now listen, the only thing that is acceptable before God is the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ. The only ones that will be accepted before God are those who have the righteousness of His very unique one and only Son, Jesus Christ.

That's why the Bible says in Matthew 5.20, For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Now boy, I used to struggle with that verse because I knew something about the Pharisees. These guys worked diligently at religion.

They dotted every I in their religious works and practices. They crossed every T in their religious works and practices. They had like 600 laws they had developed from the scripture and they meticulously enforced those laws.

Probably the closest thing we would have today would be some of the Islamic extremists who are fundamentalist and extremists who have these strict adherences to certain rights and rituals and laws and customs. Well, that's the way the Pharisees were. And so when I read that, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you'll not get into the kingdom of God.

I thought, how could I possibly do enough to be more righteous than they? And the answer is, you can't. But what is really emphasizing is this. It's the source and the type of righteousness they trusted in that will not get into heaven.

You have to have a greater source and a greater type of righteousness. Their righteousness was a righteousness that they had by being in Adam. Are you listening to me? Everyone is born of the lineage of our great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather Adam who ate us out of house and home in the Garden of Eden.

And we're all born of that line. We're of that lineage. And the Pharisees just picked themselves up by their own bootstraps and in Adam took their human ability, their human works and tried to somehow gain or earn or merit God's acceptance.

And Jesus says, if that's where you're coming from, you'll never get in the kingdom of God. You won't get it in Adam. The only way you'll be righteous before God is to get in Christ.

And though He chooses those of us, or He chooses those to be His who are in Christ. The theologians call this thing of being in Adam or being in Christ your federal headship. In other words, Adam, in a sense, represents all of us before God.

And then once we're born again, once we're child of God, then we're represented by Jesus before God. You'll either be represented in the federal headship of Adam or in the federal headship of Christ. But don't try to get there in Adam.

Whom did He choose? He chose those who were in Christ. Now let's go to the second question. Hopefully this starts coming together for us as we go through the text.

When did He choose us? Well, the text makes it very clear in verse 4, before the foundation of the world. When did I get in Christ and therefore was chosen by God to be His? To be one of His saved ones, one of His children. You were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.

You see, the triune God, in order to illustrate the great glory of His grace, chose those who would be the objects of grace before the world began. I want to say that again. The triune God, in order to illustrate the great glory of His grace, chose those who would be the objects of grace before the world began.

Now let's define grace for just a moment here. Remember, there's sort of a two-fold aspect to grace. Grace is God granting to us what we could in no wise ever earn or deserve.

And grace is equally withholding from us that judgment we all fully deserve. Both aspects are in grace. Now listen to me.

Only God has grace. Only God has grace. And in the sovereign wisdom of an almighty God, He chose before the foundation of the world, those whom would be the objects of that grace.

2 Thessalonians 2 verse 13 says, We were chosen for salvation from the beginning. Chosen for salvation from the beginning. Revelation 13 verse 8 teaches us that the saved were recorded in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world.

But Revelation teaches that all people will follow the Antichrist except those who are written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. They will be given the sustaining, persevering grace to not fall into that grievous sin and temptation of honoring or following the Antichrist. And it all depended upon whether or not they were chosen or written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world.

So the text makes it very, very, very clear. And I'm sorry that this puts such a severe rebuke on your flesh. Such a fatal blow to your pride.

That God did it all and you did nothing. Well, I don't understand that pastor. Can I say it again? You don't have to understand it.

Just be glad you got in on it. And give God the glory for how big He is. Charles Hodge, the great Presbyterian theologian, said this, From eternity, the whole scheme of redemption, with all its details and all its results, laid matured in the divine mind.

That's a great statement. Whom did He choose? He chose those who are in Christ. Well, if I'm a saved one, I was in Christ.

Well now, when did I get in Christ? You got there before the foundation of the world. You're talking about saved. You were saved in eternity past in one sense.

Actually experienced the workings of salvation in the present life and you will be saved forever in eternity future. Number three. The third question here.

What did He choose for us? What did He choose for us? Now, Paul is not claiming here that he's giving us an exhaustive summary of everything that's for us, but he gives us some wonderful things. Verse 4 says, Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love and, verse 5, to be predestined as sons or adoption as sons. So I sort of summarized that down to be holy and blameless sons.

That's what He chose for us to become when He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. That we would be holy and blameless before Him in love. Now, the word holy is a difficult word to define because it's such a thoroughly descriptive word of who God is and that's really beyond our comprehension.

But perhaps this will help some. Holy means that one is in every respect immeasurably superior to all others. And that's why God is deemed as the Holy One of Israel.

That's why the seraphim fly around God and under compulsion and without being able to restrain themselves cry, Holy, Holy, Holy. Because to look on Him and see Him, you say, you are in every respect immeasurably superior to anything else in creation. You're the Creator.

He is superior in every individual attribute. You take love, God's infinitely superior in love to anything else in creation. You think of truth or justice or mercy or purity or omniscience or just name the attribute or the characteristic of God and He's immeasurably superior to the rest of creation.

But not only in every individual attribute. Now here's what's just glorious and somewhat mind-boggling. He is also immeasurably superior in the symphony of all of His attributes coming together.

When you bring the totality of who God is together and you see the... And I love the word symphony. It all fits and blends together to where... Are you listening to me? When we see Him, I just believe we will fall on our faces when we see the glorious symphony of all that He is and just cry, Holy, Holy, Holy. You know, only God has that and those He's chosen before the foundation of the world in Christ.

What does the text say? It says in verse 4, He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we would be holy. We're going to be holy like He is holy. What an awesome thought.

God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we would share in, partake of His holiness. I want to say something to you. That's a done deal.

It's going to happen for those that are God's. Oh, there's going to be a lot of changing between now and glory, isn't there? I don't know about you, but I look in the mirror and I don't cry, Holy, Holy, Holy. I thought, oh me.

Dear Lord, help me. Some of these young guys, they're strong and they're tight and they're macho and some of these young ladies, they're beautiful and they're a little prissy and they're kind of, you give it a little time, it'll start to sag and drag and bag on you, I guarantee it. But one day we're going to be holy.

And by the way, we're emphasizing this. It's infinitely beyond physical. Well, that's one of the things He chose for us.

John says in his little epistle, he says, We don't know what we will be, but we know we'll be like Him. You see, when the elect of God hear this kind of preaching, you know what they do? They go out and say, I've got to serve Him more. I've got to love Him more.

I've got to do more for Him. Can't get over what He's done for me. Well, not only just holy, He says another word here, blameless.

He chose us so that we would become blameless. Now, blameless simply means no blemish. No blemish whatsoever.

Now, here's the awesome thing. I might look at some of you and say, man, I don't see any blemish. You're just as righteous as you can be.

And you may look at someone else and say, you know, when I look at them, I just find no reproach, there's just no blemish. But you've got to understand something. This means no blemish before the scrutiny of an omniscient God.

Man, that's glorious. No blemish, even under the scrutiny of an omniscient, all-knowing God. You say, Pastor, how am I going to get there? You can't get there.

You have to be one of those who were chosen in Him. And then He works it out so that you become that. It's His work.

You see, holy and blameless are the fruit of election. Choosing election meaning the same thing. This is the fruit of election.

And I want to say something to you very clearly and very strongly. This fruit begins in this life. It begins manifesting itself in this life.

And it comes to its consummation in the next life. But it begins in this life. That's why Galatians 5.22 says, The fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the new man we have become. Listen, the fruit of the new man that we have become, the new man that we are increasingly becoming, and the new man that we are going to be, should already be manifesting itself in our lives. What is the fruit of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

That's the fruit of election. The elect of God, the truly saved, should be increasingly seeing the pattern of this kind of fruitfulness flowing out of their lives. Now, I don't know exactly what your experience is, but biblical text backs this up.

God is in the process of honing and shaping and chiseling and burning off the other stuff so that the fruit might shine through more fully and more clearly to those around us. And when people see that fruit in our lives, you know what they do? They don't say, you're wonderful. They say, you're God's wonderful.

Because I know you and that ain't you. How many of you ladies know someone who had a lost husband? And when those ladies kept growing in the Lord, and those husbands saw something that couldn't be coming from their wife, they knew it was God and that drew them to God. First Peter 3 teaches that very principle.

This fruit of election, this fruit of being one of His, begins to shine out of our lives in this life. That's why Jesus said, you will know them by their fruit. Now, the battle cry of the carnal and fleshly church member or the lost church member is this, Judge not lest you be judged.

Oh, read your Bible. We're commanded to judge one another in the family so that we might help and correct and encourage and love and sharpen each other so that we might shine more of this fruit through our lives so that our Lord might get more glory through us because that's why we exist, His glory. Let's just look at 1 John for just a moment.

Look at 1 John chapter 2. Would you turn there with me? Don't you just love the Bible? Don't they just teach you stuff we'd never think of? 1 John chapter 2. Look at verses 1 through 6. As I've shared with you before, 1 John is the book of assurance of salvation. If you want to know if you're really saved, read 1 John and look for the marks or the evidences in your own heart and life that John says must be there if you're a child of God. Now here's what I used to do.

I used to hear that and earlier in my Christian pilgrimage I would go to 1 John and I would try to think, have I done that thing? Have I jumped through that hoop? That's not the issue. You're looking at change your thinking. Don't say, did I do that? Did I perform that? Say, is that evidence present in me? That's what you're looking for.

Now listen, and John's not talking about perfection here. He's talking about the overall purpose and pattern of your life should show forth these marks. And we don't have time, but look at just a little of it.

But 1 John chapter 2, look at verse 1. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. John says, I'm writing you God's truth so that you can obey it and live not in a lifestyle of sin.

But when we do sin as a child of God, we have a law. You're an advocate before the Father. We're in Jesus.

He's our federal head. All right, verse 2. And he himself is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world. Verse 3, by this we know, now notice this, we know that we've come to know him if we keep his commandments.

When you are one of God's, there begins within you a pattern of loving and desiring to keep God's law. Wasn't that song, Redeemed How I Live Proclaim it? The king in whose law I delight. Did you catch that in the song? Folks, these songs mean something, by the way.

I want to tell you, there was a time when Jeff Knoblet did not delight in the king's law. But after coming to know him and being a child of God increasingly in my life, there is a love and appreciation and a respect for God's law. And I begin to discover God's law is not a burden.

God's law is a blessing. But you know what? You got to get born again to see it that way. You don't see it that way.

And see, that's one of the marks of conversion. Not perfection. There may be a season of backsliding or rebellion.

But as you look at the overall pattern of your life, you see a growing love for the law of God. Now, I want to say something to you. And I say this with concern and for clarification and understanding.

Those friends, even dear friends, who sit in churches under Bible preaching week after week, month after month, year after year, and in essence reject it to go get something weaker, are illustrating there's something missing in their heart that a child of God should have. There is a delight and a love for God's law and God's truth in those who know Him. Verse 4, the one who says, I've come to know Him and does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.

It should be that... Now listen to me. Listen to me. It should be that anytime someone in your small group rebels against God, and your small group does what a loving Christian would do, you go and lovingly confront them with the Word of God, they should humble themselves and say, the Word's right and I'm wrong and God bless you for helping me.

If they bow up and they rebel and they resist, and they say, I don't want to have anything to do with that stuff. God says, if they say they're a child of God, they're a liar. There's a love and respect for God's truth when you're one of His.

That's how you know you're a child of God. That's how you gain assurance of salvation. Verse 5, but whoever keeps His Word, not in perfection, but there's a new inner heart, love, devotion, respect for the Word and a desire to keep it.

Whoever keeps His Word, in Him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this, we know that we are in Him. How do you know if you're one of those who are in Him? There is that keeping of His Word.

Verse 6, the one who says he abides in Him ought also himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. Then jump down to verse 9, the one who says he is in the light, yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there's no cause of stumbling in Him.

There's a new love for Christians when you get saved. Did you notice that after you were converted? I mean, it was not two or three months and my whole circle of friends changed. Just totally changed.

I wanted to be around people that before I didn't want to have anything to do with. And I no longer desired to be close and intimate with people that used to be my closest friends. There was a new love for the people of God.

Now, are you listening to me? This is the kind of stuff that gets me in trouble all the time but I'm going to tell you the truth. Most churches are so full of non-Christians. Seeing people loving the people in most churches is not necessarily a mark of their conversion.

Are you hearing me? Most churches are so full of unbelievers and so full and active with fleshly programs and activities to love those people and those activities is not necessarily a mark that you belong to God. That's sad but that's true. So you got to be careful in how you define this in your hearts and minds.

Well, holiness of life follows the grace of election. It always does. This doctrine of election, this doctrine of God's choosing from the foundation of the world is not a doctrine of permissive sin and wickedness.

It's right the opposite. Since it is such a great work of God, we should expect to see clear evidence of that work because that work that changes the life and moves the life toward holiness is not a work that derives

itself in finite, impotent man but it's a work that comes from an almighty, all-powerful God. So we should look for more holiness and more righteousness and more purity knowing this doctrine.

Are you hearing me? Because God is able to perform it through you where you could not perform it in your own strength. So banish the concept that this kind of preaching teaches a sinful religion. It does not.

It teaches just the opposite. And Paul is presenting and showing forth the infinite goodness of God and the glory of God so that he might excite in the Ephesians and in all of us a deeper gratitude and a love for God and for all that he's done for us. Truly, the choosing and electing of God shuts the mouth of proud man.

It's all God's work. Well, as he's talking about and we're still talking about over in our chief text, Ephesians chapter 1, we're still talking about what he chose for us and we've already seen he's chosen us, he has chosen us rather to be holy and blameless and then he adds another phrase at the end of verse 4 in Ephesians chapter 1 to be holy and blameless before him in love. In love.

Now what does that mean? And I'll say to you that there's a lot of folks that say that means a lot of different things but I'm convinced I know what it means, alright? And if I'm wrong, I'm wrong, but I'm convinced I'm not. I'm convinced this is what that means. It means from the innermost being... There is a true passion and love for God, His truth and His holiness.

God begins a work in us. He perfects that work through time and space history, the church age where we're living right now. He completes that work in glory and when it's finally completed in glory, listen, we are righteous, we are holy from the innermost part of our heart's desire.

I don't know about you, but the new man in me does desire that, but the old flesh package, this old flesh body I run around in, it still has different desires. But God's going to so perfect, mature, improve, consecrate us that when He gets through with us up there in glory one day, from our innermost being, our total passion will be to love God, honor God, and glorify God in this life. Or for all eternity rather.

So He's not just going to give us what some might call some ceremonial consecration like the Jews had. You know, they had all that ceremonial consecration, that ceremonial cleansing from blemish, that washings and going through the motions and rites and rituals and you have to wash your hands this way, the priest had to wash this and wash that and wash the instruments, all that ceremonial cleansing. No, it's not some outward veneer of cleansing, it's a total, true, pure passion for God and His truth and to honor Him.

And that begins in this life and increases on into glory. You see, the motions of love in this life are often twisted and tainted by self-consumed flesh that we're all packaged in. Did you know your flesh is just all about self? Self, self, self, self, self, self.

And your flesh is quite masterful at designing religion for self. It's been that way from the beginning. And so often in churches what's called spirituality and love is really just sentimentality and gushy, mushy stuff.

It's not spiritual love at all. It's not the true agape love. All that's going to be purged out when we get to glory.

The flesh is going to be removed and we will possess only a thorough moral excellence from our heart of hearts to honor and please and glorify God. So we see here very clearly that we are chosen in Him from the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him in love. Now that points out to us once

again, election is unto holiness.

A holiness that begins now and consummates in heaven. One good way to view this is this. You are right now pregnant with holiness.

Holiness has been conceived in you and it's going to grow and it's going to be matured and it's going to develop. You're pregnant with holiness. And there's going to be the birthing of full born or blooming of full born holiness when we're in His presence one day.

Second Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 says, Therefore if any man is in Christ, he's a new creation. Something new has been created in him. The old things are passed away and increasingly pass away.

And behold, all things are new and increasingly that newness will be lived out and born out in your life. A new righteousness, a new purity. This new lasting holiness that remains in your life and should be increasing in your life is the evidence of being God's elect.

Being one of His. First John 5 verse 18. Listen to this.

Let no one who is born of God or rather no one who is born of God sins, but he who was born of God keeps Him and the evil one does not touch Him. Now what does that mean? No one who is born of God sins. Well it's a present linear tense verb.

It means the pattern or continuity of sin as a purpose and pattern of your life is no longer there if you're born of God. You sin but that's not who you are. You're a holy one now.

Now the purpose and the pattern of your life is not to walk in sin though you may sin. The purpose and pattern of your life is not to honor and please God and walk in holiness. For one to live in sin and to claim to be elect unto holiness is a contradiction.

You see you're not elect just to miss hell. You're elect to be holy and blameless before Him in love. Well in the last phrase of First John chapter 5 verse 18 he says, "...and the evil one does not touch Him." That word touch the Greek scholars tell us means to grasp and hold.

Once you become a child of God the purpose and pattern of your life is not to walk in sin though you do sin is to walk in holiness and please God. And as you continue on that journey you are one of those Satan cannot grasp and hold. He may mess with you.

He may tempt you but he can't grasp you and hold you. And I want to say something to you. On one hand we should strive to manifest His holiness.

On the other hand we relax in God because He's going to work it out. We depend and rest in Him completely. Well let's go back to Ephesians chapter 1 verse 5. And we're still talking about what He chose for us.

He chose for us to be holy and blameless. And then verse 5, He predestined us to adoption as sons. So He has chosen for us to be sons.

This is an additional and very precious part of our election in Christ. He did not choose us to be captives. A captive is one that's ruled by an iron fist of the master.

He could have. It would not have been unjust just to choose us and make us captives but He didn't do that. He did not choose us to be a bond slave.

A bond slave would be one who worked for his master but apart from his master's love and acceptance. He could have done that. But He didn't choose to do that.

He did not choose me to be a servant. A servant is one who obtains favor on a conditional basis. If I meet these conditions my master may favor me.

And it was somewhat common in this day for some slaves to become a part of the family. They merit their way into it. If they meet the conditions they're welcomed in.

But He didn't choose me to be a servant or a bond slave or a captive. He chose me to be a son. So I'm not just on God's side and I'm not just on God's team.

I'm God's son. It's a glorious truth. Romans 5.18 says we're His children.

We're the sons of God whereby we cry out, Abba, Father. The great scholars tell us that's an endearing term. Papa, Daddy.

Who is my father? Wow. God didn't just save us and say, I'm going to keep you out there at arm's length and you're sort of on probation. I'm going to watch you.

No, now listen. From the very foundation of the world I didn't choose you to be a servant nor just a captive of mine nor a bond slave. I chose you to be my precious son.

Son of God. What a powerful thing. Romans 8.29 tells us that we're not just a son, but we're going to be a son made in the special image of His unique Son, Jesus Christ.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. In other words, Jesus is the first of the type that we all are going to follow in like fashion, in like manner. Jesus was raised from the dead, received a glorified body and now lives in eternity before His Holy Father in heaven.

And so we are going to follow. He's the firstborn of that type and all of us are going to follow in like fashion and share the same glory and share the same nature as Jesus has for all eternity. I'm not just a captive.

I'm not just a bond slave. I'm not just a servant. I'm not just a son.

I'm a son like His very special Son, Jesus. Now how did all that happen? Because I was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. That's how all that happens.

Well, that's what the text here says that He has chosen for us. Now lastly, and I won't spend long here, fourthly, why did He choose us? Well, why did He do this? Why did He do it and why did He do it this way? Well, Paul answers resoundingly clearly with finality. Paul answers that question.

Aren't you glad you're going to get an answer today? You don't have to worry about it anymore. Why did God do it this way? Look at it there. Look at verse 5, the last part, according to the kind intention of His will because He willed to do it that way.

You got a problem with that? Well, God didn't care. He said, this is what I'm going to do. I will do it this way.

And then look at verse 6, to the praise of the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. Now what is grace? Grace is God extending to us the blessing and benefit that we could in no wise earn our merit or deserve and withholding from us the judgment we all fully and properly deserve. And so Paul says the reason God saved us in the way that He did choosing us in Him before the foundation of the world is so that He might manifest forth, reveal, make it seen what He is.

And He is a God of that kind of grace that no other creature even possesses. But that kind of grace could not be seen, administered or manifested had He not saved unworthy, wretched sinners like us. So in saving unworthy, wretched sinners like us, in choosing us before the foundation of the world, He manifests forth some of the grand glory of who He is particularly in this case, His grace.

So for all eternity, you know, we can speculate and speculation is always dangerous. But perhaps we could picture it somewhat like this. That maybe for the first 10 million years of heaven, one at a time we'll be called up by the throne of God in heaven.

And we'll walk up there. And it can't work like this, but just I want to say it anyway. Maybe a mighty angel will say, Wicked, wretched, depraved, evil, corrupt, hell-deserving sinner.

But I chose Him in my son before the foundation of the world. In time and space history, I let my son die to take fully the judgment he should deserve. I have extended to him what he could in no wise ever earn or merit.

He's my son in my glory sharing my holiness. I've withheld from him what he properly should have deserved, my judgment and wrath. And everything in heaven will praise God for a thousand years to the praise of the glory of the grace that saved me.

And for all eternity, God's glorious attribute of saving grace will be manifested in all of heaven. That's why He saved you. Can I say it again, folks? It's not about us, it's about Him.

It's about Him. We need to increasingly grow to have a God-centered view of this thing, not a man-centered view. We might not even have gotten in on it if we hadn't been wretched enough so that it would properly manifest the glory of His grace to save us.

Did you hear that? I mean, that's kind of what you get from Paul here. Luke 12, 32 says, Jesus speaking, Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. That means God is just tickled to death to give us the kingdom.

Now, you know what your stinking flesh does? It's saying, I knew I was a pretty good guy. I knew there was something in me that's sort of special. I knew God was tickled to get me.

I knew I was a good catch. No! God is tickled and pleased and thrilled and glad to give us the kingdom in that giving us the kingdom shows forth how wonderful He is because God delights in showing forth how wonderful He is because God delights in glorifying Himself. Listen, because if God did not delight in glorifying Himself, God would be sinning because He is the only one worthy of glorifying.

So He must glorify Himself. And so He glorifies Himself in saving wretches like us to illustrate how wonderful He is and how big His grace is. Philippians 2, 13, God is at work in us, the text says, for His own good pleasure.

Now listen to that, for His own good pleasure. Now it is wonderful and it is the heart of God to save wretched man. It is in the heart of God to redeem the lost and miserable and downtrodden and discouraged and lost.

That does delight God's heart. But even greater than that, it delights God's heart to show forth how wonderful He is in saving unworthy sinners. 2 Thessalonians 1, verse 12, that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.

God did what He did. God does what He does. That the name of the Lord Jesus, now what do you mean by name, just the name Jesus? No, no, no, name means the attributes of God, the characteristics of God.

God saved us so that His attribute, particularly the attribute of grace, might be glorified through saving people like us. Now folks, that certainly does count for all eternity. When we get to heaven, are you listening church? Some of that should be splashing over to our neighbors and our friends and our family members right now.

As people see the change in us, they have to look to heaven and say, God, you're wonderful to have changed that man, changed that woman, changed that young person to make them what they're becoming. It's all to the praise of the glory of His grace. The preceding message comes from the Expository Preaching Ministry of Senior Pastor Teacher, Dr. Jeff Knoblett.

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