

Sermon Outline and Questions

Pastor Dave – Sunday 14th January 2024

The Book of Ephesians – Where the rubber meets the road.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Focus verses 3-6

Reference made to a recent conversation.

In a conversation with an individual on the phone, they wanted to talk about seriously wrestling with assurance of salvation, agonizing over whether or not they are saved they are truly saved, they understand the gospel, as I was talking to them and I laid out the gospel and the necessity of salvation through Jesus Christ and whether or not they put their faith and trust in Christ they said yes.

They said, "I've done that I understand all of that I believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation", yet they were overwhelmed with feelings of grief over past sins, they were wrestling with the feelings that God cannot possibly love them.

Then questioned them – Are you getting into the word of God?

Reference – Christian Apologist – Podcast – Natasha Crane.

Natasha Crain said recently in a podcast she and as a Christian apologist taught was talking about the secular worldview and how so much of our culture has embraced the secular worldview, but she was actually talking about how many Christians and churches have embraced a secular worldview whether they know it or not she laid out what how she kind of describes is the four tenants of the secular world.

#1 - feelings are the ultimate guide.

#2 happiness is the ultimate goal.

#3 judging is the ultimate sin.

#4 God is the ultimate guess.

Christians tend to buy into these tenants.

We need to come back to what the word of God says.

Ephesians 1:3-14 Christian Standard Bible

God's Rich Blessings

³ Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.^[a] ⁵ He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding.^[b] ⁹ He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the right time^[c]—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.

¹¹ In him we have also received an inheritance,^[d] because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, ¹² so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory.

¹³ In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. ¹⁴ The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

Working through verses 3-6.

- Ephesus – in the earliest Greek manuscripts Ephesus is not there at all – the letter then potentially for all of Asia Minor.

2 Main Points.

#1 – We are Gods Chosen People.

- Paul writing to the saints.

Verse 3 -

³ Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.

- A Benediction – long and deep.
- Blessing in the original Greek - Eulogy – praise and commendation.
- Extolling godliness of the one who is worthy of that.

Paul – “In knowing what God has done for the believer and in ore of that.”

Or

Do we just go about our day? – just being thankful for the regular!

- But do with give thought to what God has done for us?

In verse 3 – Question – What are the spiritual blessings he is talking about?

- Heavenly realm and all eternity.

Let into a Little secret! – He has blessed us with being chosen in Him!

- Adoption – the spiritual blessing.

Peter talks about this as well.

- Directly connected to verse 13 –

¹³ In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed.

Connecting the blessings when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Doctrinal Components.

1. Doctrine of election – chosen by God.

Question – What does the bible say about us?

- He chose us in Him.

This isn't the only passage of scripture that talks about this.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 Christian Standard Bible

Stand Firm

¹³ But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning^[a] God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

John 6:37 Christian Standard Bible

³⁷ Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out.

John 6:40 Christian Standard Bible

⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

John 10:27-30 Christian Standard Bible

²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

There is no doubt that the bible teaches the doctrine of election.

- If we read scripture, there is a tension.

Seems to be arbitrary – random!

- We look at it through the wrong lens.

It not based on anything but God’s Grace and His will.

John 13:16 Christian Standard Bible

¹⁶ “Truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master,^[a] and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him.

2 Peter 3:9 Christian Standard Bible

⁹ The Lord does not delay his promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

Wait! – there seems to be a tension here – reality – there is a tension between...

Whosoever will may come and God choosing those who are His.

Romans 8:28-30 Christian Standard Bible

²⁸ We know that all things work together^[a] for the good^[b] of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

- We read verse like this, and we get into discussions and debates of the free will of man etc.

We could look at this our entire lives and never get to the bottom of it – never be able to reconcile these things.

The reality is that the doctrine of election is biblical.

J. I. Packer Quote - Packer says this in his book – Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.

All Christians believe in divine sovereignty, but some are not aware that they do and mistakenly imagine and insist that they rejected what causes this odd state of affairs. The root cause is the same as in most cases of error in the church the intruding of rationalistic expectations the passion for a systematic consistency a reluctance to recognize the existence of mystery and to let God be wiser than men. And an inconsequent subjecting of scripture to the supposed demands of human logic people see that the Bible teaches man's responsibility for his actions they do not see man indeed cannot see how this is consistent with the sovereign lordship of God over those actions. They are not content to let the two truths live side by side as they do in scripture but jump to the conclusion that in order to uphold the biblical truth of human responsibility they are bound to reject the equally biblical and equally true doctrine of divine sovereignty and to explain away the great number of texts that teach it the desire to oversimplify the Bible by cutting out the mysteries is natural to our perverse minds and it is not surprising that even godly men should fall victim to it hence this persistent and troublesome dispute. The irony of the

situation however is that when we ask how the two sides pray it becomes evident that those who profess to deny God's sovereignty really believe in it just as strongly as those who affirm it.

- Packer is saying that there is a tension there.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 Christian Standard Bible

Stand Firm

¹³ But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning^[a] God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Appreciate what James Boyce says-

First – He - talking about God – made our salvation possible by sending Jesus Christ to die for our sins and then he made us capable of responding to Him by sending the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the truth and glory of the gospel. Thus, all the blessings that we enjoy must be traced back to the sovereign electing purpose of God towards us in Christ Jesus.

- Paul does exactly this in the opening verses of Ephesians.

No matter how we feel on a particular day we can go back to the word of God.

Ephesians 2:4-9 Christian Standard Bible

⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,^[a] ⁵ made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace! ⁶ He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— ⁹ not from works, so that no one can boast.

We had opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and respond to it, because the Holy Spirit drew us to the Lord – convicted us of sin – and brought us to Him.

Point #2 – Adopted into His Family.

- Adoption is a result of election.
- Responding to the gospel message and believing.

- Reminded that we were chosen by God – we experienced adoption.

Ephesians 1:5-6

⁵ He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

All accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ – the work of Christ on the cross of calvary for us.

We are adopted as sons and daughters of God.

Question – Have you ever thought about what it means to be adopted into God’s family?

Adoption is a beautiful, wonderful thing, we see it in the life of family members in our church here just it's a wonderful thing.

- We try to apply human adoption illustrations to this that God has done for us, but they fall short.

We tend to look at the kind of the Greco-Roman illustration.

The emperor adopts this slave individual as a son and ultimately, they inherit all of the blessings and benefits with becoming a part of the emperor's family and even one day become the emperor, but that just pales in comparison to what we've experienced as children of God when we've been adopted into the family of God.

S.M. Barr – Quote

The Greco Roman adoptees were often members of the fathers extended relations in the case of believers God has taken the most distant foreigners to be his king for inheritance of his whole estate not the deserving or good ones not many well bored or powerful or wise but those who were by nature not of his kin at all but children of wrath and dark and sons of disobedience his helpless wicked sinful enemies under thrall to the realm of darkness God did not place these new sons into a subordinate inferior family he appoints them all to become coheirs with his natural first born son in whom the whole creation is summarized for Co rule over all things with him as those who have been Co seated with him in the heavenlies.

Scripture threaded throughout this quote.

1 Corinthians 26:1-30; Ephesians 2:3; Ephesians 5:6 and 8; Ephesians 4:17-24; Romans 5:6-10

- Think about this!

Ephesians 1 Verse 10 say this...

¹⁰ as a plan for the right time^[a]—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.

- We will rule and reign with Christ.

Adopted into God's family and all that comes with that.

- We cannot be kicked out of His family! – due to this wonderful passage.

To remember this though – We are not saved and then just to get on with whatever we want!

No – Paul talks about this multiple times in the book of Romans.

Let's come back to the passage we are looking at...

⁴ For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.^[1]

- We are to be growing in holiness and blamelessness.
- Being conformed to the image of His son.
- God doing a work in us – changing our passions – our motivations – our mindset – changing us.

There should be a deeper angst about our sin – because God is doing a transformative work in our life.

- Thinking that we do whatever we want, the thinking of - I have a get out of jail card mentality is not the right thinking of a born-again believer!

As we under the truth of salvation – core doctrine – it actually impacts the way that we live –

Paul tells us later in Ephesians 4 - We need to walk worthy of the calling we have received.

- Live in light of the truth that has been communicated to us.
- Live as believers.
- Our lives should look like someone who has given their life to Christ.

We have assurance of our salvation – but we also are commanded to live as believers.

We are also commanded to stand firm – as believers in the day and age that we live.

Back to 2 Thessalonians Ch 2 – (Paul in Ephesians this is doctrine to theology to practicality)

Paul says very much the same thing in...

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 Christian Standard Bible

Stand Firm

¹³ But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning^[a] God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. ¹⁴ He called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵ So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold to the traditions you were taught, whether by what we said or what we wrote.

- Paul – Don't waver – stand firm.

We should be able to understand what Paul was calling the Thessalonian people to.

We are constantly today pressed to give up what we teach as truth – on issue – after issue, after issue. Things we are told like – we need to get on the right side of history.

- We need to stand firm and say - No – God says that this is wrong – I am going to say that this is wrong – God says this is right – I am going to say this is right.

2 Peter 1:3 Christian Standard Bible

Growth in the Faith

³ His^[a] divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by^[b] his own glory and goodness.

- Called by God.
- We have been given everything for life in godliness.
- Which we can live victorious lives in a sinful world as believers.
- Coming back to what the bible says is true.

⁴By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, ⁶knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, ⁷godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God has called us to be fruitful – not fruitless.

⁹The person who lacks these things is blind and short-sighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.

- People have forgotten this – the devil has them hamstrung.

¹⁰Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things, you will never stumble. ¹¹For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

As we understand these doctrinal truths – it impacts the way that we live.

- We have assurance of our salvation.
- We understand we have everything we need for life in godliness.
- We know how to proceed walking in a holy and blameless way.

Some that trying to pull out the card “You know if you really believe in the doctrine of election then you know you don't even need to evangelize, save God knows who are his, like what's the big deal”.

- That is a totally wrong way of thinking.

God knows who are his – we don't know who are his.

Our responsibility – which the bible makes abundantly clear is for us to go and preach the gospel to every nation.

Paul makes it clear - How are they going to believe if they don't hear and how do they hear without a preacher?

- Somebody needs to go and proclaim the goodness and grace and gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to lost people.

It doesn't negate evangelism – God saves people – we don't!

Question – How many people do we walk past each day, when today could be there last day and no one has gone to them and said to them – “I want to tell you about Jesus Christ and what he has done for you – would you be saved today”.

When we realise what God has done for us – we should then want to go out and say, “I want to tell you what God can do for you”.

Christians – Are we walking in holiness – blamelessness that God has called us to?

May we have a new love for God in this understanding.