

November 6, 2022

"God Picked You!"
Lesson 1 of Unit

Ephesians 1:1-14

Intro

Our theme for the fall quarter is "God's Exceptional Choice". Unit 1 studied God's choosing of Abraham and Jacob and then Judah. Unit 2 looked at God's choosing of Moses and Gideon, and then the first two kings, Saul and David. Unit 3 which we begin today is titled, "We Are God's Artwork". Just as God chose all those notables in the first two units, He has also chosen each of us who have called on Him as Savior.

The book of Ephesians will be our focus for the next four weeks. It is typical of Paul's other letters in its writing style, but it differs in an important aspect. Unlike the other letters, it doesn't address a problem or issue going on in that church. Instead, it is a reminder and instructional in the nature of the gospel and the Christian life.

Read Ephesians 1:1-14

1. vs. 1: Paul lays out his authority for the things he is going to say to the Ephesians

He is an apostle of Christ Jesus

Jesus calls Paul to fulfill the role of witness/messenger of the Good News

It was God's will that accomplished this (as also it is in our spiritual lives)

He then describes those he's writing to

To those in Ephesus (meaning the surrounding area as well)

He calls them "holy people" and "the faithful in Christ Jesus"

The term "holy people" meant Israel until Jesus came

The people in Ephesus were Gentiles

Paul using this term shows that Gentiles who came to Christ by faith were equally accepted as part of God's family

2. vs. 2: Paul finishes his introduction with a blessing

"Grace and peace to you"

Grace is a reminder that all we have is from God's hand

We have done nothing to earn his favor or demand anything

Peace means more than the absence of violence or problems

It carries the idea of wholeness and wellness

These two things carry the idea of anticipating God's blessing on His people

"from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

Paul begins his teaching right at the start

Putting these two phrases together right away is a reminder

Jesus is equal with the Father

Jesus is the Lord, the Messiah

This is a key teaching that must be accepted to be a follower of Jesus

3. vs. 3: Paul extends his blessing from the people to God Himself

This praise is extensive: from vs. 3 to vs. 14 is all one sentence in the Greek!

Paul describes God as “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

This is the same way Jesus taught about God

The prayer He taught the disciples begins, “Our Father...”

Paul uses the idea of blessing twice in this verse

First, he notes that God has blessed us

Second, he says what the blessing is...

“Every spiritual blessing in Christ”

God has given us every spiritual thing we need through Christ

4. vs. 4: Three things are important to see in this verse

God was in existence “before the creation of the world”

He is eternal, having existed before there was anything else

God chose us in Himself

This shows His connection to us—He wants us with Him

This doesn’t mean people were chosen to be saved

It means God’s intention was always that all people should be with Him

These “chosen” are to be holy and blameless in His sight

This is done through Jesus’ work on the cross

God intended us to be holy and blameless so we could be in His presence

Left to ourselves, we would die in our sins

God’s choosing of us meant our sins had to be accounted for

5. vs. 5: The key idea here is adoption vs. predestination

Paul is writing to a primarily Gentile audience in Ephesus

They would understand God had adopted them into the family of Israel

Adoption is a choice by the head of the family to include others

When Paul says “predestined”, he doesn’t mean “fatalism”

Fatalism means that there is no free will

God chose ahead of time who would be saved

Nothing a person does can change that “predestination”

This view is inconsistent with what Scripture shows

God wants “all to be saved”; He hasn’t chosen just “some”

All who come to Christ for salvation receive it—“whosoever will”

The verse says we were “predestined for adoption...through Jesus Christ”

Note also God’s view on this

It is His will that all come to Christ

It pleased Him to take this action—He loves us so much He sent His Son to die

That’s how much He wanted us to be adopted into His family

6. vs. 6: What Paul describes in this verse is our response to God’s plan for our salvation

Praise!

We praise Him for “His glorious grace”

We do this individually, and we do it together when we sing on Sunday mornings

The reason for this praise is given again

The repetition shows how important / significant this action was

Jesus' death on the cross was "freely given"

He went to the cross willingly

The Father sent the Son into the world freely / willingly

God's "glorious grace" was given to us through the Son's death and then resurrection

7. vs. 7-8a: Paul reminds the Ephesians of the most important aspect of why we praise Jesus

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins..."

The terms *redemption* and *forgiveness* also deal with liberation of slaves

The Ephesians would be familiar with slavery from the Roman world

We are obviously familiar with slavery to sin

Both know the joy of being redeemed, being "bought back"

Both know the joy of being forgiven, of being "let go" from slavery to something

This action happened because of "the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us"

Eph. 2:4 describes God as being "rich in mercy"

One who is rich has an abundance of a valued item

God here has an abundance of grace and mercy that he joyfully gives to us

8. vs. 8b-9: Paul's praise of God continues with acknowledging His wisdom and understanding

God's wisdom and understanding allow Him to rightly deal with His children

We are becoming perfected, but we are not there yet.

God uses wisdom in dealing with us, because He understands our weakness

God used this wisdom and understanding to reveal "the mystery of His will"

Christ was a mystery to scholars until He revealed Himself to man

God's wisdom caused this to occur at the right time, in the right way

God reveals the things of Himself to us in the way He chooses

If some things are currently a mystery, that's not a bad thing

If we understand God perfectly, He may not be God, but a human creation

9. vs. 10: God's will brings "unity to all things in heaven and on Earth under Christ"

Our world is currently suffering because of sin

But in Christ, things and people which are broken are made whole

Groups which are divided can be united in Christ

This was especially true for Paul, with Jews and Gentiles

10. vs. 11-12: Paul here again emphasizes God's plan

Nothing happens that God does not allow

All is happening according to His plan

His will, again, is that we put our hope in Christ

Our response when we do this is praise

11. vs. 13: Note the sequence of actions here

First, a person hears the "message of truth"

Paul specifies it as "the gospel", which brings about salvation

Next, when we believe, we are given the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is only given to believers, and only after a profession of faith

Paul talk about the Holy Spirit as a seal

Roman officials sealed documents with a wax seal, indicating authenticity
The Holy Spirit is God's seal on us, His mark that our faith is authentic

12. vs. 14: Note what is waiting for us

Paul says the Holy Spirit is a "deposit"

There is more to come; the Holy Spirit is only a part of our spiritual inheritance

But He is the "guarantee" of our inheritance

Paul finishes where he began—with praise to God for all He has given us

Application: We have been chosen by God, not because of anything we have done, but because of the depth of the Father's riches and compassion for His creation. He has given us salvation, forgiveness of our sins, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. We have been given an inheritance after being adopted into God's family. Let us consider carefully and wisely what we do with this valuable inheritance.

Prayer: Father God, we are overwhelmed and humbled by your grace and mercy and kindness. Thank You for the reminders in Your word of how much you love us, and what it cost to adopt us into Your family. Thank You for our eternal inheritance in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen.