“Chosen and Adopted for His Glory”

Ephesians 1:3-6

I remember the first time I put on 3D glasses. It was at Disneyland, and there was an attraction called “Captain Eo”. For those of you who are under 40 you probably have no idea what I’m talking about. But we all put on our glasses and all of a sudden we were brought into another dimension. When you took the glasses off, everything was fuzzy. You could only see properly when you had the glasses on.

Reading God’s Word is a lot like putting on 3D glasses. Especially the book of Ephesians. Paul is unfolding for us cosmic realities in Ephesians. We are seeing things from God’s perspective and we’re made aware of realities that were formerly fuzzy. Things in heaven, things on the earth – God is unfolding for us through Paul things as they really are. We are brought into a new world. When the world as we know it collides with God’s world in Scripture…the collision can be jarring.

Every one of us has a choice to make, we can choose to see things as we’ve been taught to see, or as the world sees, or we can choose to see things the way God sees them.

As we start out in Ephesians, we are beginning our first series: “Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ Jesus” in 1:3-14. A key phrase in this series as well as the entire book of Ephesians is “in the heavenly places” (v.3). God is showing us a heavenly perspective, and we are taught things that might be fuzzy, or might rub against what our current understanding is. ***Will you choose to see things as God sees them?*** My job is to do the best I can to help you put on the glasses - what the Bible says. It’s your job to put on the glasses with me, and to submit your understanding to God’s Word and not to your own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6). Our primary question when approaching Scripture should always be, “What does the Bible teach?” and not, “Does this fit my understanding?”

In this first series, there are two overarching images that we will constantly see: They are heavenly perspectives. They rub against our default way of thinking. They seem fuzzy at first. But they are glorious when we see the image presented in front of us and trust it by faith. If you can catch the image, if you can see the vision, it will radically change the way you look at God, yourself, and the world around you.

Union with Christ – When we put our faith in Jesus, God places us in union with Jesus Christ. We see the language of “union” everywhere in the NT with phrases like, “in” Christ Jesus, or “with” or “through” or “by” Christ Jesus. From God’s perspective, through faith, you are united to Jesus. You have become one with Him so that *who He is* and *what He has done* is applied to you. This is a massive doctrine, and in Ephesians especially it is HUGE. Our first series shows us what are our spiritual blessings IN CHRIST JESUS. It takes 3D glasses to see it!

- ***Who are you going to choose to listen to?*** Will you listen to your own voice, or the voice of your family, coworkers, neighbors, the world around you? Or will you listen to God’s voice tell you who you are as you are united to Christ?

God’s Absolute Sovereignty – God is in total and pervasive control of all things. Nothing happens outside of His providential plan. He has purposes that are underneath and over everything that

happens, even evil. His ultimate motive is to display His glory. All that He does is subservient to that end goal – even our salvation.

Salvation points to the God who saves. God's blessings point to the Giver of the blessings. God's glory is the point of it all. God orchestrates all things in such a way where He is made much of, where He is glorified.

We love to think that we are the center of the universe. This is our default through which we filter reality because everything revolves around us. We have our understanding of our "rights" and what is "fair".

- **Who are you going to listen to?** What YOU think about God? What YOU understand about fairness, justice, love? Or will you put on the glasses of Scripture and allow God to tell you who He is?

There are three possibilities you have when you come to something in Scripture that doesn't line up with your own understanding: 1) You can throw it out. 2) You can twist it to say something it doesn't. 3) You can surrender your own understanding to God's Word.

4 points to look at this morning:

1. Our Blessed Father Who Blesses Us (1:3) – ***"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"***

Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with what is known as a "Jewish Berakah". It is a praise to God. We see them all over Scripture. This is a common, Jewish way to praise God and it always has the formula of blessing God and then giving the reason why He is to be blessed. When the servant of Abraham found Isaac a bride: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master." (Gen. 24:27). When Peter begins his first letter he writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Pet. 1:3).

Paul tells us, we are to bless the Father, who in Christ (union), has blessed us with the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

We actually see here the doctrine of the Trinity - One God, three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But the focus of the Berakah is on the Father. It is the Father who has planned these spiritual blessings to be given. It is the Son, whom the Father sends, who accomplishes these spiritual blessings for us (life, death, resurrection, ascension, Kingdom) – notice they are "in Christ". And it is the Holy Spirit that applies all that Christ has accomplished for us – they are "Spiritual blessings". Everything comes to pass in such a way where it is God the Father who receives the ultimate glory for it all. The Father decrees, the Son accomplishes, and the Holy Spirit applies.

I like to think of God's plans like a blueprint. The Father is the One who plans the blueprint for these spiritual blessings. He is the one who writes up the blueprints from start to finish. It is the Son who accomplishes the plans that God has chosen and decreed. The Holy Spirit is then sent by the Father and the Son to take the plan that have been decreed by the Father and accomplished by the Son and He then applies them to our lives by placing us in union "in Christ" so that what has been accomplished by the

Son is now applied to our account. These spiritual blessings are immediately given to you when you put your faith in Jesus. They come to pass in such a way that each member of the Trinity is active, but the Father receives the ultimate credit.

Example: The Spiritual blessing of forgiveness (v.7) – God the Father sends the Son to be a sacrifice for sin. The Son willingly agrees to die on the cross for the forgiveness of sin. When we put our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit then takes what the Father has decreed and the Son has accomplished and applies it to our account so that inn Him [Jesus] we have forgiveness. (we'll talk more about that next week in v.7). God decreed forgiveness, the Son accomplishes forgiveness by shedding His blood, the Spirit applies forgiveness by putting us in union with Jesus so that His sacrifice is accredited to me.

So Paul here is blessing our blessed Father who blesses us in Christ with blessings of the Holy Spirit

2. **Our Sovereign Father who Chooses us (1:4)** – ***"even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."***

This verse is a powerful verse, because in one quick statement, Paul stretches out the entirety of our salvation in Christ from election to our final presentation to the Father.

- **Election** – God "chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"
- **The presentation** – "that we should be holy and blameless before Him" – the words "before Him" speak of the moment when we stand before the Lord as "holy" and "blameless" because of what Christ has done for us. The words "before Him" in Greek are often used regarding our presentation before God. Later in Eph. 5 Paul will show that Jesus will present the church to the Father "**in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing…holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27). We are chosen for this final presentation where *in Christ* we will be presented as holy and blameless.**

So Paul is stretching out his arms here and showing us that our final presentation before the Father has a foundation that is under every other foundation. It's a foundation that is "*before the foundation of the world*" – this is a DEEP foundation, in fact you can't dig down any deeper than this!

Doctrine of Election –The Doctrine of Election is kind of like the drawing up of the blueprint by the architect. That before the foundation of the world God chose you, like a bride that would be presented before Himself. The word for "He chose us" here is exactly how we would use it – a process of selection. Before the foundation of the world…when there was only Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – God knew you, loved you, and chose you for salvation and a glorious presentation to Himself…like a bride being prepared for her groom.

Paul gives us a perspective that we see everywhere in Scripture, where before you were able to make a choice (all of us choose to either receive or reject salvation in Jesus), before you were even born, God chose you.

- **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you. (John 15:16)**

This obviously brings up all kinds of questions – it challenges all of our categories of "fairness" and "justice" and "love". Again, will you choose to allow God's Word to be the source of truth? Now there is

no way I could ever try to answer all the questions that arise here…and even if I had the time I could never answer the questions fully. There are things we must take by faith! We need to surrender the to what the Scripture says. I do want to point your attention to another passage of Scripture that makes what Paul is saying here blatantly clear that God in saving us this way – through election – has a purpose in mind. It isn't arbitrary.

Jacob and Esau - Paul writes in Romans 9 about the doctrine of election and he uses Jacob and Esau as an illustration. Before Jacob was even born, God chose Jacob to be the recipient of His promises and blessings and not Esau. Well, you might say, God chose Jacob because He knew Jacob would be a man of faith. First of all, that is exactly the opposite of what Paul says in Romans 9 (Mike V. is going to share on this passage). Second, Jacob was often times NOT a man of faith, in fact he was in many ways a deceitful man. But listen to what Paul writes in Romans 9:11 about God's choice to bless Jacob over Esau.

- **God chose Jacob and not Esau….though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls. (Romans 9:11)**

God's choice for Jacob was 1) before he was born; 2) Not based on him doing good or Esau doing bad; 3) so that God's purpose of election might stand – not of works, but because of Him who calls. God wants to be the one who calls, blesses, promises, saves - and He will not be indebted to give blessing…rather, He chooses unworthy, deceitful Jacob's to bless so that in the end He is the one to be praised for His choice. Look **at v.6 "to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."** ***Paul mentions the glory of God 3 times in this passage (v.6,12,14), it's at the end of each spiritual blessing Paul praises the Father for, showing us that the ultimate purpose is that God would receive the glory for every spiritual blessing given.***

God doesn't choose the holy and blameless, He makes holy and blameless those whom He chooses. He is in control of the blueprint. This is the purpose of God, "not of works, but of Him who calls".

If God were small enough for me to understand, He would not be big enough for me to worship! All of us must choose to follow Christ. All of us must pursue holiness in our lives as Christians. But in the end, it is God who will present us to Himself as "holy and blameless" in Christ, and therefore, He will get the glory for it. Will you surrender your thoughts and reasoning to what Scripture says…and BE GRATEFUL THAT GOD CHOSE YOU! If you are here, and you are not sure if God chose you…this morning, put your faith in Christ and you can be sure that God had a plan for you and chose you before the foundation of the world.

3. Our Loving Father who Adopts us (1:5) - In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will

A question that I've heard so many times from Bible believing Christians, "Do you believe in predestination?" It's almost like asking, "Do you believe in prayer?" Yes I do! The Bible teaches about prayer everywhere, and the Bible clearly teaches predestination…the word is right here and the principle is everywhere in Scripture. The word **"predestined" means "to decide beforehand, or predetermine" or "decree". Here it is God who is predetermining everything on the blueprints to come to pass. God**

has a destiny or a decree (1 Cor. 2:7 – "*decreed* before the ages"). This is a destiny that God has decreed to come about before that destiny unfolds. Like the plans on a blueprint.

On the blueprint, God has written "_____ chosen for salvation, adopted to Himself as a son/daughter". Before the foundation of the world, before your life unfolded, your destiny that was decreed by the Father, was to be a TROPHY OF LOVE. In love, He chose you! In love, He adopted you! This was a conscious choice!

HOWEVER! We need to be careful here. God's choice and God's adoption of you to Himself is NOT INTENDED to elevate your worthiness…quite the opposite…it's intended to show how glorious and loving God is! He doesn't adopt the powerful, the loveable, the righteous, the worthy….He adopts sinners, He adopts the lowest! Later in Ephesians 2:1-3 Paul will show the Ephesians a picture of who we were prior to putting our faith in Jesus: "dead in trespasses and sins", following the world, following Satan, sons of disobedience, carrying out our sinful passions and desires, by nature children of wrath…But God reached into all that muck and adopted you! He looked at all of that and said in the blueprints, "I want _____."

Notice that He adopts you "to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ". Verse 6 tells us this blessing of adoption is "in the Beloved" (v.6). Through Christ, we are given the status of sonship! Jesus is the "only begotten, unique, Son of God"…I am adopted. But because I am united to Christ, and Christ is the Son of God, "through Christ", and "in the Beloved" I am given an adopted status of sonship.

4. Our Fathers Ultimate Motive (1:6)

God has purposes that underlie all other purposes; motives that underlie motives. God has an ultimate motive underlying election and adoption – "to the praise of His glorious grace". God has a purpose that underlies all that He does, even the cross! Scriptures tells us this ultimate motive over and over again. It's all to the praise of His glorious grace. Paul tells us this motive 3 times in vv.3-14 (v.6,12,14) at the end of each spiritual blessing. He begins this section in v.3 "blessing God" and he ends this section in v.14 "praising God". The spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus point us to praise God. This is the goal of it all!

Notice in v.5 that His choice and His adoption is "according to the purpose of His will". It was GOD'S will to choose you, to adopt you. You did not choose God, God chose you and therefore He is to be praised for your salvation in Christ. He has a purpose in drawing up the blueprints as He draws them.

- **Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases. (Psalm 115:3)**
- **I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. (Romans 9:15)**

He is the potter, we are the clay. He is the architect, we are a part of His purposeful plan. It's a "good plan" that pleases our God who does what He pleases! The word "purpose" is probably better translated, "good pleasure". The New Living Translation captures this idea in 1:5:

- **This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (1:5 NLT)**

As we close I want to give you two points of Application

See yourself as God sees you - Here's where we need to put on our biblical glasses – when God looks at you, He sees you as a son, a daughter. Do you see yourself as a son/daughter of God? You are! You may not feel like it…you may tell yourself that you are worthless, but God declares that you are a son or a daughter of Almighty God! He chose you, He adopted you, He is going to one day present you to Himself as a spotless bride. Are you worthy of that? No, but Christ is worthy and has made you worthy! Do you feel unloveable? Christ has made you loved by the Father. You have to see yourself with the 3D glasses that Paul is giving you IN CHRIST. The world around you will tell you that you are useless, you are wicked, you are unworthy, you are **nobody…God (we read in Zephaniah) sings over you! God looks at you and is pleased with you because He sees the work that He begun and will complete and He sees you through the lenses of His perfect Son Jesus Christ.**

See God as God sees Himself – The truths of Scripture are shattering to our ego's. You are not the center of the universe, God is the center of the universe! Let God be God and when things don't make sense be open and submissive to let God change your way of thinking and to help you to see another dimension of reality.

Gospel Call: Finally, maybe you're here and you don't know where you stand in all of this. Everything Paul is saying is directed to Christians. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus, this is not for you…but it can be.

Someone once gave an illustration, I think it was Spurgeon, of salvation as a doorway we are invited to walk through to escape eternal punishment in hell. The Bible says that those who one day stand before the Father without Jesus will be punished for eternity in hell…the doorway is the way of escape through faith in Jesus.

On the front of this doorway of escape is a sign "Whosever will may come," but after you walk through the door, if you look back at the other side of that door, you would see another sign that reads, "Chosen before the foundation of the world."

This morning you have a choice before you…to choose God, and to know that He chose you before the foundation of the world. The way of escape is through Christ. All of us have sinned, we are all deserving of eternal punishment. But God has made a way through Jesus to save us if we will respond.

The Bible teaches that God calls us to Himself. But it also teaches, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Rom. 10:13) Will you bow your heads with me and pray?

Communion:

Church we are going to now enter into a time of communion. Here at River Ridge we allow anyone who has received Jesus as Lord and Savior to take communion with us. If you have not yet done that we ask that you would refrain from taking communion as the cup and the bread symbolize something very sacred to us – the Covenant we have with God through Jesus

1 Corinthians 11:23-29 - For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. [27] Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. [28] Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [29] For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Remember, proclaim, examine