

—{1}. **Ephesians 1:4** . . . . . **Chosen to Be Saints**

A. Introduction

1. part of the family

a. at the Pan-American games there was a swimmer —{2}.

(A) Greg Louganis who was asked how he coped with the stress of competing in international diving

(B) he replied that when

(1) he climbs to the board

(2) he takes a deep breath and thinks,

(3) “Even if I blow this dive, my mother still loves me”

b. these verses in Ephesians are addressed

(A) to those who are God’s children

(B) to whom God is a heavenly Father

(C) for February, we’ll look at 4-8a, ‘God’s Family Plans’

(D) from these verses comes the message for His children

(E) “Even if I blow it today, my Father still loves me.’

2. Text (1:4), “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. ...”

3. let us take a few moments this morning to look at this text from three different time perspectives

a. pre-historically,

b. presently, and

c. prospectively

B. Pre-historically (or the Past)

1. this time frame is ‘before the foundation of the world’

a. now, in point of time, you cannot get much earlier

- b. this took place before creation
- c. it took place before man existed
- d. before Adam's DNA had been formed
- e. that same DNA that would determine
  - (A) that one day Mike and Elizabeth would have red hair
  - (B) that Glenn would be well over 6 feet tall
  - (C) and that you would look the way you do
- f. 'God chose us' – those who are His children
- g. and in this we find two aspects of His choice
  - (A) positional
  - (B) purpose

## 2. position

- a. you may have heard the expressions
  - (A) we are righteous by position, or,
  - (B) we are holy by position
- b. which is a way of saying that
  - (A) because we are 'in Christ', 'in Him' in this verse 4
  - (B) that God, in looking at us
    - (1) as we mentioned in the Communion service
    - (2) sees not our sin but Christ's righteousness
    - (3) sees not our failure but Christ's perfect holiness
    - (4) sees not those things that are blameworthy in us, but sees that Christ has paid their penalty
- c. so, then, it is because of our position in Christ
  - (A) by faith, by the rebirth by the Holy Spirit
  - (B) that in God's sight we are reckoned
  - (C) to be righteous, to be holy, to be blameless

## 3. purpose

- a. so, this brings us to the purpose of God's choosing, or, to using the word which is closer to the Greek,

His election

- b. people talk about seeking the will of God
  - (A) but for the most part,
  - (B) the will of God is not something to be sought
  - (C) but doing that which has already been declared
  - (D) "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether I speak from Myself.*" (John 7:17 NAS) – following Christ's words
  - (E) "For this is the will of God, your sanctification..." (1 Thessalonians 4:3 NAS) – becoming holy
  - (F) "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18 NAS) – thankful
- c. so this is God's purpose in our being His children ... that we bear the family image; which brings us to

## C. The Present

- 1. Not just positional holiness and blamelessness
  - a. but the Bible teaches that these should be practical as well
  - b. you cannot read far in the Scriptures without realizing
  - c. God wants our lives to be changed because we are His
- 2. Holiness, in practical terms, means separation
  - a. being set aside, marked as belonging to God
  - b. be cleansed, having sin's stained washed away
  - c. "The LORD also said to Moses, 'Go to the people and consecrate {or, sanctify} them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments'" (Exodus 19:10 NAS)
  - d. in the Old Testament, God gave this visible illustration of physical cleansing to demonstrate what holiness meant
  - e. it means washing away sin as it happens, "but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:7, 9 NAS)

3. Blameless (the outcome of practical righteousness)
  - a. means that just as we cannot be accused in Heaven's court
  - b. so, in earthly courts, we cannot be justly accused of wrong
  - c. this we saw in our Bible class
    - (A) is a requirement for the elder-overseer-pastor
    - (B) as well as a goal for every child of God
  - d. that he or she live in such a fashion
    - (A) that no one, in the church or out, can
    - (B) justly bring an accusation of wrong-doing
  - e. and this God would have us be in the here and now

D. Prospectively (or, the Future)

1. For in this present, we with Paul often find that our will
  - a. which has been brought to freedom through Jesus' work
  - b. for Jesus said, "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. ... So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:32, 36 NAS)
  - c. yet our will fails to defeat the old, fleshly nature still in us
  - d. I refer you to the entire chapter of Romans 7, but for this morning, just one verse, 19, "For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want." (Romans 7:19 NAS)
  - e. so, with Paul, we as God's children, are left longing for the day when we will be 'set free from the body of this death'
2. and its coming!
  - a. we are "... awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:7-8 NAS)
  - b. "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NAS)
  - c. what God purposed before time, is working out in us in time, He will consummate at the end of time

## E. Conclusion: Simply Grace

### 1. We have seen, but not dwelt upon

- a. the fact that God's sovereign election brings us salvation
- b. and we would not for a moment diminish that tremendous teaching of the Scriptures, that salvation is by grace alone
- c. but in doing so, we will also recognize that there is a parallel truth, one that may seem a paradox to us, but will in eternity be recognized as totally consistent; it is

### 2. man's responsibility

#### a. that man has a will

- (A) though perverted by sin, deceived by Satan
- (B) *"For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."* (Titus 3:3 NAS)
- (C) that's the kind of will we had; not truly free
- (D) yet we are responsible for the exercise of that will

#### b. and the word of God gives an invitation

- (A) *"... God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,"* (Acts 17:30 NAS)
- (B) the character of the one who invites determines the character of the invitation – so consider ...

### 3. the simplicity of salvation

- a. *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28 NAS)
- b. *"But Jesus called for them, saying, 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'"* (Luke 18:16 NAS)
- c. *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."* (John 6:37 NAS)
- d. *"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."* (Revelation 22:17 NAS)
- e. "Come" ... so simple: to those who obey and come to Christ, the regenerating Holy Spirit will add all those things that accompany salvation, so that the one who comes will know of a certainty that he or she is a child of God

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2. From 1989 Winter ‘Leadership’ by Keith Brown – Kerux illustrations #1796