

I preached last Sunday on the doctrine of predestination. I preached on Ephesians 1:11 which tells us – In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11 NKJ)

I felt God was with me as I preached. I received good comments from my hearers after the sermon. However, by the providence of He Who controls all things this sermon was not successfully recorded. What should I suppose that means?

This Sunday, I will be re-preaching a sermon I had preached before that was not recorded, people asked me to preach it again. Is it God's will I preach this sermon again also?

Here is the sermon outline –

“Predestination, a Conduit for Blessings” Ephesians 1:11

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11 NKJ)

I still remember the first sermon I heard on the doctrine of Predestination, the pastor read Romans 9, and then said ...

“This passage isn't teaching what it seems to be teaching, it is really teaching free will” Let's go on to chapter 10!

I never went to chapter 10 of Romans that day; I just kept reading and re-reading Romans 9 the entire time that pastor preached. Romans 9 was teaching what it seemed to be teaching, and my pastor's less than 20 word sermon on that passage, avoiding its truth, convinced me he was wrong and the word of God, was and is God's Word, whether we like everything it teaches or not! Predestination is a blessing, not an evil doctrine -

I. Predestination is included in Paul's Ephesian 1 list of those blessings we have: “In Him”; “In Christ” –

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him.¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:3-12 NKJ)

1. Note this passage is talking about blessings - :3

2. Note these blessings are things we have "in Christ" :3
"in Him" :4; "in love" - :4; "in the Beloved" - :6; "In Him" - :7; "in Christ" - :10 "In Him" - :10; "In Him" - :11

3. These blessings include:

- A. God's choice of us before the foundation of the world, - :4
- B. for His purposes, that we should be holy and without blame- :4
- C. Adoption as sons into God's family - :5
- D. Our acceptance - :6
- E. Redemption - :7
- F. Forgiveness - :7
- G. Riches of grace - :7
- H. These things are made to abound toward us - :8
- I. These things are made known to us - :9
- J. Unity - :10
- K. An inheritance - :11
- L. Predestination - :5 & :11 to adoption and according to His purpose / plan

II. An inheritance is something we have obtained in Him -

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance... (Ephesians 1:11 NKJ)

The Greek word for inheritance is κληρώ kleroo {klay-ro-o}

Meaning: 1) to cast lots, determine by lot 2) to choose by lot 3) to allot, assign by lot 3a) on to another as a possession 4) in NT: to make a lot, i.e. a heritage, private possession Usage: AV - obtain an inheritance

1. In Israel under Joshua cast lots for their lots of land –

"You shall therefore survey the land in seven parts and bring *the survey* here to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. (Joshua 18:6 NKJ)

We have a lottery, it seems to be a game of chance, and there is a sense that it is, but lots are determined by God –

The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision *is* from the LORD. (Proverbs 16:33 NKJ)

2. Our lot in life in general is not something we just fall into, nor is it something we can make for ourselves, but it is something God predestines us to –

Consider the work of God; for who can make straight what He has made crooked? ¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing *that will come* after him. (Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 NKJ)

The Puritan Thomas Boston wrote a Book about Ecclesiastes 7:13-14 called "The Crook in the Lot" ... There was a time, when people called their destiny, their "LOT in life"

III. What things have influence over our lot in life? Our inheritance?

1. Sin –

To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you." ¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, `You shall not eat of it': "Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In

toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:16-19 NKJ)

Because of sin in the world, because of Adam and Eve's first sin there is:

- A. Pain for women in conception – Genesis 3:16
- B. Difficulty in marriage – Genesis 3:16
- C. Cursed ground, thorns, thistles – Genesis 3:17
- D. Sweat & death – Genesis 3:19

For the wages of sin is death, ... (Romans 6:23 NKJ)

- E. Trials in general –

Why should a living man complain, A man for the punishment of his sins? (Lamentations 3:39 NKJ)

Sin is the reason God has ordained a crook in our lot, even God's people meet with trials in the way –

So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. ²³ Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. ²⁴ And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" ²⁵ So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet..., (Exodus 15:22-25 NKJ)

There were no bitter (poisonous) waters in the Garden of Eden, these difficulties came with the curse, they were and are a consequence of sin!

- 2. Obedience –

There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. And there He tested them, (Exodus 15:25 b NKJ)

²⁶ and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD who heals you." (Exodus 15:26 NKJ)

Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴ The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Psalm 1:1-6 NKJ)

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good *thing* will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11 NKJ)

Compare Deuteronomy 28:1-14 with Deuteronomy 28:15-68

- 3. Christ's cross –

²⁵ So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet. (Exodus 15:25 NKJ)

I believe this tree in Exodus that made the bitter waters sweet, was the type of another tree, the cross of Christ -

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree "), (Galatians 3:13 NKJ)

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJ)

It is only "In Him" that we have that obedience that changes our ultimate lot in life, not so much our life here and now, but our eternal life!

4. *Predestination obviously also has an influence and even control over our lot in life -*

IV. Predestination and God's immutable will –

1. *We were predestined to adoption –*

having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (Ephesians 1:5 NKJ)

2. *We are predestined according to the purpose of Him, who works all things according to the counsel of His will -*

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11 NKJ)

What are the "all things" referred to in this verse?

A. *Sinful actions even the crucifixion of our Lord –*

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ "to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. (Acts 4:27-28 NKJ)

B. *Joseph's brother's selling Joseph into slavery is another example of a sin-filled action of men, working along with the good plan of God –*

So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died. (Genesis 5:20 NKJ)

C. *Even sinful running directly against God's command is under His control –*

Jonah sought to run from God's command –

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ² "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." ³ But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. (Jonah 1:1-3 NKJ)

• *But the LORD brought a storm -*

But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. (Jonah 1:4 NKJ) But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. (Jonah 1:4 NKJ)

• *And a fish –*

So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.¹⁷ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Jonah 1:15-17 NKJ)

- *Jonah prayed, God spoke to the fish and Jonah went to Nineveh just as God had planned*

—
Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. (Jonah 2:1 NKJ)

So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry *land*. (Jonah 2:10 NKJ)

- *Jonah's going and preaching to Nineveh resulted in their repentance and turning to God*

—
Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,² "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey *in extent*.⁴ And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.⁶ Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes.⁷ And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water.⁸ But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.⁹ Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?¹⁰ Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it. (Jonah 3:1-10 NKJ)

- *Jonah knew God intended to save Nineveh –*

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.² So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. (Jonah 4:1-2 NKJ)

I share so much about Jonah for a reason. I have heard sermons about Jonah being a bad guy, and he is: he is disobedient. But is he worse than most? Is he worse than you? Is he worse than me?

God told him to go one way and he went another. God told him to give God's word of judgment to Nineveh and he almost did not! God tells us -

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age*." Amen. (Matthew 28:19-20 NKJ)

God gives us a great commission, just as he gave Jonah, are we obedient to it? Do we run from it? Are we reluctant to share God's Good News? No wonder God has to predestine us!

How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good *things*, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:7 NKJ)

Jonah did this reluctantly; such is true of much ministry. Yet, still it gets done due to God's goodness more than ours.

3. *How is predestination and how are God's decrees different than God's commands, His law?*
 - A. *Different Hebrew and Greek words are used!*
 - B. *God's commands communicate his prescriptive will (His will we are supposed to follow)*
 - C. *God's decrees, predestination speak to God's secret or decretive will (His will we fall into, or that surely happens to us) His plan for our salvation -*

“It is unthinkable that a God of infinite wisdom and power would create a world without a definite plan for that world. And because God is thus infinite His plan must extend to every detail of the world's existence. If we could see the world in all its relations, past, present, and future, we would see that it is following a predetermined course with exact precision. Among created things we may search where we will, as far as the microscope and the telescope will enable the eye to see, we find organization everywhere. Large forms resolve themselves into parts, and these parts in their turn are but organized of other parts down as far as we can see into infinity.

Even man, who is but the creature of a day and subject to all kinds of errors, develops a plan before he acts; and a man who acts without design or purpose is accounted foolish. Before we make a trip or undertake a piece of work all of us set our goal and then work to attain that goal in so far as we are able. Regardless of how some people may oppose Predestination in theory, all of us in our every-day lives are practical predestinarians. As E. W. Smith says, a wise man “first determines upon the end he desires to attain, and then upon the best means of attaining it. Before the architect begins his edifice, he makes his drawings and forms his plans, even to the minutest details of construction. In the architect's brain the building stands complete in all its parts before a stone is laid. So with the merchant, the lawyer, the farmer, and all rational and intelligent men. Their activity is along the line of previously formed purposes, the fulfillment, so far as their finite capacities will allow, of preconceived plans.”

The larger our enterprise is, the more important it is that we shall have a plan; otherwise all our work ends in failure. One would be considered mentally deranged who undertook to build a ship, or a railroad, or to govern a nation without a plan. We are told that before Napoleon began the invasion of Russia he had a plan worked out in detail, showing what line of march each division of his army was to follow, where it was to be at a certain time, what equipment and provisions it was to have, etc. Whatever was wanting in that plan was due to the limitations of human power and wisdom. Had Napoleon's foresight been perfect and his control of events absolute, his plan—or we may say, his foreordination—would have extended to every act of every soldier who made that march.

And if this is true of man, how much more is it true of God! “A universe without decrees,” says A. J. Gordon, “would be as irrational and appalling as would be an express-train driving on in the darkness without headlight or engineer, and with no certainty that the next moment it might not plunge into the abyss.” We cannot conceive of God bringing into existence a universe without a plan which would extend to all that would be done in that universe.”

Boettner, L. (1932). The Reformed doctrine of predestination (p. 21).

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