

For Good (Part 1) – Eph 1:7-14

Eph 1:7-14; We're in the middle of our Blessed Assurance series, discovering all we can about the most important thing in life – our salvation
And having covered 12 different aspects of it in the first few weeks, we're now looking at individual passages, and allowing the *context* to inform us and teach us
Last week was Titus 3, and this week is Eph 1

[7] In him [in Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. [11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory [might exist to make him look good]. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

The first few verses of this passage cover so many *aspects* of our salvation, it's like Paul is saying . . .

Remember everything (v7-10)

Kind of like a good teacher in school will summarize the material before a test

But in this case there's no test, just assurance

Assurance that in Christ, we're saved – v7; Check it out there, and keep your finger on the text, b/c I'm going to walk us through these few verses

We have *redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses*; That's assurance; With redemption referring to our rescue and release . . .
From the consequences of sin and the power of Satan; We have that
Along with forgiveness of our sins; So that they are no longer held against us
Which equals salvation; We have it; With certainty

Why? B/c of *the riches of [God's] grace* there in the v7b – *which he lavished upon us* [v8], *in all wisdom and insight*; In all perfection
In Christ, in relationship with him, God has poured out his grace on us lavishly, perfectly, and unquestionably

➤ But that's not it; His grace and our salvation, was intentional; *Making known to us* [v9] *the mystery of his will, according to his purpose*
Mystery, his will, b/c it wasn't completely apparent in Old Testament times
But now, he's made it known; And did so *according to his purpose*
According to his design; According to the way he wanted to do things; Intentionally so

When God sent his Son, it was the culmination of his will and plan, that he had been progressively revealing since the beginning of time
Up to that point, everything was but a shadow and portion
But in Christ, it was made clear, and full, and final
So that we're the recipients of God's intentional, perfect, lavish, and certain salvation

➤ *Which he set forth in Christ*, v10; He initiated and embodied our salvation, in Christ
And did so *as a plan for the fullness of time*

IOW God revealed his will, through Jesus, to not only extend his grace and save our souls, but to fulfill his plan to redeem the world; His plan to make all things new

Or, as it says in v10b – *to unite* [or reconcile] *all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth*

Things that apart from God's forgiveness, and mercy, and justification can't coexist;
Can't be in the same room at the same time

Like our sin and his holiness; Our failures and his successes; Heaven's perfection and earth's rejection; Our groan, and their song

Apart from the blood of Jesus, we're separated – separated from all things heavenly, and all things divine

But *in* Christ, that all changes; And *is* changing; And *will* change once and for all

It's part of his plan to save our souls, and make all things whole – for good

That's v7-10, and it's something to remember

Then, in v11-12, Paul assures us that . . .

In Christ eternal life is yours (v11-12)

It's ours; As in, we're saved, for good; V11 – *In him we have obtained an inheritance*
In him, once again referring to Jesus; It's a phrase used 164 times in NT, *in Christ* or *in him*, 10 of which are right here in v3-14

And it means – in union with him; In relationship with him; Within his sphere of protection, and provision, and power

Like a doctor who's "in residence"; They're within the rule and realm of a particular hospital's provision, protection, and power; And usually a certain doctor on staff
So that what he says, goes; What he wants, they do; What he teaches, they learn; What the hospital provides, they glean and benefit from
So that during their residency they eat, sleep, and breathe medicine; They're "*in residence*"

Just like we're *in Christ*; Living and moving and having *our* being, within the realm of his goodness, and greatness, and glory; His protection, provision, and power

➤ And part of that provision, a significant part, is a permanent place in heaven; With all the blessings that go along with it; What we normally refer to as eternal life
That's the inheritance *we have obtained* there in v11, as followers of Christ
We have a permanent place in heaven, forever and ever

And I'm not just making that up; V14 implies it; The Holy Spirit *is the guarantee of our inheritance* [the same inheritance referred to in v11] *until we acquire possession of it*
What is it about our salvation that we have yet to actually take possession of?
A place in heaven, with Jesus; That's yet to come

➤ But don't miss the fact that it's ours right now; V11 says that in Christ, we have obtained an inheritance; We own it
Even though we haven't actually taken possession of it

It's like an 8 year old boy whose wealthy grandparents leave him a *lake* home after they die, with the stipulation that he can't inhabit it until his 25th birthday
Does that make it any less his? No; He *has* obtained it
He's just not able to enjoy it yet; All he can do is look and dream
But he lives confidently, knowing that come his 25th birthday, he'll settle in; He'll take possession of it once and for all

And so too with you; If you're in Christ, the eternal life he promises, is yours; You're living it; And so is the place he's prepared in heaven – that too is yours; Right now
And you can be confident that when Jesus takes you home, you'll take possession of it, and *fully* enjoy it for all eternity
In him we have obtained an inheritance; That's blessed assurance; For good

And it comes . . .

- **By God's choosing**

The eternal life that's yours, is a result of God's choosing
That's the doctrine of election – that those who are in Christ have *been predestined* as v11 says; Chosen by God for salvation
Something we covered at *length* at the beginning of this series
Eternal life is yours, by God's choosing

➤ And he doesn't change his mind

Nu 23:19 says – *God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?* He will; Which once again, is assurance
That what God says, goes; And won't change; Including your salvation*****
And to the extent that you do some kind of interpretive gymnastics to get *around* the fact that God chose you for salvation . . .
You lose the most significant truth of your eternal security

Second, eternal life is *yours* . . .

- **According to God's purpose**

Look at v11 again – *In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will*; His own will

Why God chooses those he does, we don't know; But we *do* know that he has a purpose;
And that he's good, and loving, and compassionate
So we trust; We trust that his purposes are perfect; We trust that his will is best; And we trust that his grip is firm
In Christ, eternal life is ours by God's choosing, according to God's purpose

But it's not just about us; In fact, our salvation is not even *primarily* about us
We're saved . . .

- **For God's glory**

In him we have obtained an inheritance [v12] . . . *so that we who were the first to hope in Christ* [referring to Paul and the first believers] *might be to the praise of his glory*
They were saved, and so are we, for God's *glory*; That we would live in such a way as to make him look good; And magnify him; And exalt him
And add to the chorus of praise in light of his splendor and work

IOW God makes much of us in Christ, so that we'll make much of him, in life

➤ And baptism is one of the best ways to do so (**Summary**)

One of the best ways to glorify the one who saved you; One of the best ways to tell the good news of what he's done in your life – his work of grace
One of the best ways to add your voice and life, to the praise of God's glory, in the fellowship of God's people
In fact, it's commanded by Jesus as the *foremost* way to declare your allegiance and connection to him

➤ So 12 people are following suit this weekend – 4 at our West campus, and 8 here at the Main
And as you *witness* their baptisms, and *hear* their testimonies – let me encourage you to not only rejoice *with* them, but thank God for your *own* salvation and baptism
That together, we might all live and move and have our being – *to the praise of his glory*

(Wrap-up)

What a joy; And I hope it resurrects memories of *your* baptism as a follower of Christ
Making your heart sing to the praise of his glory
Something we're going to do with our voices in a few minutes

But if you're sitting there and *have* no memories of your baptism, b/c you never were – make the commitment to follow through
Pick up a Baptism Packet at the Welcome Center, and start working through the Bible study; Withhold the glory God deserves, no longer

But if you're not saved, or you're not *sure* if you have eternal life in Christ – forget about the Baptism Packet, and respond to God's call; That comes first
Believe, repent, and receive

Believe that Jesus died to save you from the consequences of your sins
And repent – repent of your sin and sinfulness, asking him to forgive you, and committing to turn from it
And receive his gift of life to the full and life forever
Believe, repent, and receive; You can do that right now, and take the first step toward glorifying God with your life

Pray – Prayer of salvation

Lord, thank you for those who were baptized – for their obedience to your word, their love for you, and their desire to glorify you with their baptism and lives; It's all to the praise of your glory
And so is our offering; So help us as we use it to multiply our ministry, spread the gospel, and disciple the saints