

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Prison Letters
Ephesians 1:1-6

Last time...Paul's Divine appointment on Malta and his "on time" arrival into Rome

Acts 28:30-31 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

During those 2 years of waiting for his audience with Nero, Paul was moved/inspired by the Holy Spirit to write "prison letters"

- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- Philemon

This time...we begin our study of the Epistle to the Ephesians

Chronological context

On his 2nd Missionary Journey (Acts 16-18), Paul ministered in

- Philippi
- Thessalonica (3 weeks)
- Berea
- Athens
- Corinth (18 months)

While in Corinth, the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write

- 1 Thes...including the mystery of the Rapture
- 2 Thes...the Day of the Lord (Jesus' 2nd Coming)

On his way back to Antioch, Paul stopped briefly in Ephesus, reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue and promising to return and minister more fully to them

Paul's 1st stop on his 3rd Missionary Journey was Ephesus (Acts 19), where he spent 3 years declaring to them the entire counsel of God (Acts 20:27-31), which would have included

- "1 Thes" (Rapture)
- "2 Thes" (Day of the Lord)
- "Galatians"
- "1 Corinthians"
- "2 Corinthians"
- "Romans"

So, the Church at Ephesus received extraordinary teaching and preaching...very well-fed!
Doctrine matters and they were “doctrinally rich”!

Now, Paul sits under house arrest in Rome and he is inspired to write this letter

This letter is rich

- in doctrine...Ch 1-3, about what God has done
- in practical application...Ch 4-6, how are we to respond to what God has done

The Purpose of this letter is instruction in righteousness regarding our Christian sojourn

- Ch 1-3 sit with Christ
- Ch 4-5 walk with Christ
- Ch 6 stand in Christ

The overarching Theme of this letter is a mystery of God – the Church

The Church is a called out congregation of people who are described as a

- Body
- Temple
- New Man
- Bride
- Soldier

We need to know who we are in order to be who we are!

In about 30 years, the Church at Ephesus is going to receive another letter...from Jesus Himself

Rev 2:1-7

Strong on doctrine and ministry

Weak on the relationship with Jesus

Ministry supplanted Jesus as “Most Important” in their hearts

But the Lord cares more about the minister than He does the ministry

Let us hear what the Spirit says to the churches!

Ephesians, Chapter 1...

we will cover 2 sentences this morning

v1-6

v1-2 **Salutation**

From: Paul

- an apostle of Jesus Christ...the 12th Apostle, replacing Judas
- by the will of God...God's choice, given to Jesus by the Father (John 17:6)

To: the saints which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus

Saints: believers in Jesus Christ who are separated from sin and the world and are consecrated/devoted unto God

hagios – “sanctified”, “holy ones”

NOT an office in the Church or an attainment by men but a state/condition into which God in His grace calls people unto Himself

one who has believed the testimony of God that He has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son...
one who has the Son and therefore has this life

the faithful in Christ Jesus: made a choice to believe the testimony of God and invest their measure of the faith of Christ in Jesus and to follow Him; thereby having positional righteousness before God the Father

the saints and the faithful – synonymous

1. the same people i.e. 2 “names” for the Church at Ephesus?
2. different people i.e. the Church at Ephesus AND all the faithful elsewhere like you and me?

Regardless, saints are faithful and the faithful are saints

Greeting

Grace: Divine favor, which is not deserved

Peace: Rom 5:1...justified by faith in Jesus Christ
a formerly hostile relationship (us toward God) is reconciled and made right
all hostility toward and with God is gone forever
an enemy have been transformed into a child

Same greeting as in all the other Epistles/letters

Same order: must first be given grace in order to have peace
we have peace with God only because of God's grace

v3 Blessed...”adorable”, worthy of adoration

be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...the 1st Person in the Triune Godhead

- a. There is a Personal relationship between the 1st Person of the Triune Godhead and the 2nd Person of the Triune Godhead
- b. And because of God’s grace and subsequent peace with God, saints and the faithful in Christ Jesus also have personal relationships with both the 1st and 2nd Persons in the Triune Godhead

who has blessed us...the Father has spoken well of us, invoked a blessing upon us!

with all...the Father has excluded or withheld nothing!

spiritual blessings...non-material gifts from the supernatural largess of God,
not of the worldly largess of the world (as promoted by the Prosperity gospel)

He is God, we are not nor do we become gods, but the Father has bestowed ALL the benefits of God upon us

in heavenly *places*...heaven, the abode of God where Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father

epouranios/“heavenly” is an adjective (modifies a noun)

it is a plural adjective which modifies a plural noun ala Spanish
the noun is missing/implied and was supplied by the KJV translators

Ch 1:20

Ch 2:6

Ch 3:10

Ch 6:12

Sometimes we hear, read, or say “heavenlies”

“heavenlies” in English is a noun, so would be an incorrect translation of the Greek plural adjective

(I had an interesting rabbit trail if “heavenlies” was a correct translation of the Greek...but, oh, well)

Heb 11:13-16

v13 earth is a strange land

v14 “country” = “fatherland”, “home”

v15 that “fatherland”, “home”

v16 “home” of the Father...heaven, from which comes a city!

That eternal city, the New Jerusalem, comes down to a new, sin-free, curse-free earth, descending out of heaven from God, lightened by the glory of God (Rev 21:9-27)

in Christ...our position before our Father in heaven, which is His home and soon to be ours

Rom 8:16-17 The Spirit itself (Himself!) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ

John 14:1-3 *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.*

Our home is heaven

Our position at home is righteous...in Christ Jesus our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30)

What are **all** the spiritual blessings (all the benefits of God) in heaven (and eternally in the city made by God) in Christ with which God has blessed us?

We are going to have to wait with great anticipation to find out

Even if Paul knew, he could not even put it into words; human language fails!

But such is God's promise to us (and bear in mind Ch 3:20!)

Thinking beyond ourselves, do any of us know anyone that we want to also have all the indescribable benefits of God in heaven?

Hence, we preach the Gospel to them and pray the Father softens their hearts to enter into a right, personal relationship with Him through the Lord Jesus Christ

v4 According as...In that, insomuch that

He...God the Father

has chosen...selected, exercised His Sovereign will to make a choice

us...believers, saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus

in Him...in Christ, the only position of righteousness before the Father

before the foundation of the world...before

Gen 1:1 Elohim

John 1:3 All things were made by him (The Word); and without him was not any thing made that was made.

2 Tim 1:9 (God) Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began

Ch 2:10

that we should be...exist, pronounced to be holy...sin-free, pure

and without blame...unblemished, undefiled, unstained, faultless, unblameable

before Him...in front of His face, standing face-to-face in front of the Holy God

Because a RADICAL change has taken place!

vs Is 59:2 your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and
your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

vs Ps 5:4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness:
neither shall evil dwell with thee.

in love...face-to-face with Him in *agape*, His nature and His perfect, supernatural,
overflowing love

1 John 4:8b

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and
sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

John 3:16

Rom 5:8

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

1 John 4:18a There is no fear (of death or judgment) in love; but perfect love
casteth out fear

As is the Head of the Body, so is the Body (1 Cor 12)!!!

As the Father loves the Son, so the Father loves us!!

v3-4...Who did what to Whom when and why?

Whoa!!!

This is the substance of the shadow in Lev 14, the law of leprosy...

the redemption from death of the sinner by the work and pronouncement of God

v5 Having predestinated...predetermined, ordained
us...believers, saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus

unto the adoption of children...adopted into His Family, the Family of God

John 1:10-13 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the
world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received
him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to
become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:
Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of
the will of man, but of God.

Rom 8:14-16 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of
God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear;
but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,
Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are
the children of God:

by Christ...His Person and Work, NOT ours!

Heb 2:10-11 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

to Himself...the Father Himself adopted as children us...believers, saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus...by His Son

The Father in heaven chose us to be His own children!

according to...in keeping with
the good pleasure...His delight and kindness
of His will...His choice, His desire

What is God's will, God's desire, for Adam's race?

Life, not Death (Adam and Eve chose death by not believing/obeying God)

He drove Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden after they sinned to keep them away from the Tree of Life lest they remain forever in death, the wages of their sin

John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word (words the Father gave Him to say, Jesus' doctrine is the Father's doctrine), and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

John 6:39-40 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Rom 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

1 Tim 2:4 (God our Saviour;) Who will (His desire is to) have all men to be saved (from death), and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 (The Lord) is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Ezk 18:30-32 Repent, and turn *yourselves* from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin...For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye.

Deut 30:15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;
 Deut 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
 2 Tim 1:10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:
 2 Cor 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

The God Who chooses gives every person, created in His image,
 a choice to make
 The Sovereign God gives every person, created in His image,
 sovereignty to choose

The Creator God did not make robots

The Bible teaches
 1. God chooses
 2. man must choose

The God Who so loved us desires that we respond to His love by loving Him
 The relational God wants a relationship with us
 Relationship takes 2 willing volunteers
 Following Jesus is not a forced march

v6 Why v3-5?!
 After all,

Rom 3:10-12 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
 Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

To the praise of the glory of His grace...

Ps 150:6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD.

Ps 98 His people/children

Is 55:12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.

All creation will PTL, His beloved most of all will

- praise God for His goodness that leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4)
- give all worship and honor unto God for His grace

for His Plan of Redemption to save sinners by paying for the sins of man,
whereby He can forgive sinners while preserving His justice

The Father glorified the Son

The Son glorified the Father

The children of God glorify the Father and the Son

wherein He has made...the Maker has re-made

us...believers, saints, the faithful in Christ Jesus, forgiven sinners, new creatures in Christ
accepted...righteous, pleasing, favored
in the beloved...in His Family

Again, Who has done what to Whom and why?

Whoa!

Summary

The first 2 sentences in the letter are doctrinally rich!

There is much for us to meditate upon!

Toward that end, we need to understand what “chosen” (v3) and “predestinated” (v5) mean

Is the world/Church/Self the filter thru which we understand the Bible

or

Is the Bible the filter thru which we understand world/Church/Self?

Do we use the words (doctrines) of men to interpret the Word of God

or

Do we use the Word of God to interpret the words (doctrines) of men?

How did the Almighty, all-knowing, all-seeing God Who inhabits eternity (abides outside of
time, a dimension of His creation) choose and predestinate?

On what basis is God’s choice and predestination made?

God chooses and predestinates based on His foreknowledge of all men’s hearts and choices

God searches the hearts of men (Jer 17:10)

Jesus searches all hearts (Rev 2:23)

The Holy Spirit searches the hearts (Rom 8:27)

Before the foundation of the world...the creation of time and the universe...

God foreknew the choices all people would make, starting with Adam and Eve

He foreknew the depth and the breadth of the problem – sin, missing the mark of perfection

Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Rev 13:8 the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Gen 1:1)

Rom 8:29-30 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

1 Peter 1:2a Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

BEFORE there was anything (before Gen 1:1), the Almighty, all-knowing, all-seeing God knew every person's choice of
Life (His gift to all who believe what He has said and done)
or
Death (unbelief)

And upon that knowledge did God choose and predestinate

Therefore, we must clear up 3 misconceptions, 3 doctrines of man

1. not every person is chosen by God, not every person is a child of God
A doctrine of man, that has infected the Church, is that all people are God's children and all people will go to heaven (hell does not exist)
Yet that is not what God says

This letter is addressed to Whom?

1. saints which are at Ephesus (clearly not all people are)
2. the faithful in Christ Jesus (all believers in Jesus Christ)

The children of God are those who believe/trust/lean on Jesus
(or the revelation of God given to them)...by their choice, choose Life
Those who do not believe/trust/lean on Jesus (or the revelation of God given to them) are children of the devil, children of disobedience, children of wrath...by their choice, choose Death
(have not the Son so have not Life, 1 John 5:12)

To everybody listening:

Choose Life!

Ask Jesus (John 1:4) to come into your heart

2. God did not “make me this way.”

If God chose people to be LGBTQ+/Trans/Drag...as they claim...
then what God said about sexual sin is not true

(Lev 18, Lev 20, Deut 22:5, Deut 23, Rom 1, 1 Cor 6, 1 Tim 1, 2 Tim 3)
and He is not to be trusted

If God made you that way, He made you a sinner, He chose you to be a sinner
separated from Him and to be judged/condemned by Him...
and is not a loving God

If what God said is true AND God chose people to be LGBTQ+/Trans/Drag
then God is malicious and capricious by choosing them to be condemned and
God is not Who He has said He is...He is a liar

But God cannot lie and does not contradict Himself
What God has said is true and God is trustworthy and not malicious or capricious
So God did not make people to be LGBTQ+/Trans/Drag,
they made a choice to behave that way, a choice God says is sin to be
repented of, sin the Father sent Jesus to suffer and die for because He so
loved sinners

Saying “God made me this way” is a lie from hell and you have received the
deception in order to justify your choice of behavior before God
He will not buy that lie or any other lie

God speaks against LGBTQ+/Trans/Drag behavior because it is harmful to people
He loves
His Word is corrective and instruction in righteousness (acceptability) for those
who choose to engage in the behavior

To the LGBTQ, the Trans, and Drag:

God loves you
Jesus loves you
Jesus bore your sin and died for your sins
You are a sinner as is every other person
He is displeased and dishonored by your sin as He is by the liar, thief,
adulterer
He is calling you, inviting you to come to Him and to repent of your sin as
He does the liar, thief, adulterer
Your chosen behavior is self destructive as is the liar, thief, adulterer
He has so much better for you: hope, life, peace, joy, light
He has a gift He paid for, something you can never buy or earn
Come now before it is too late

3. Calvinism is false doctrine

The doctrine of predestination originated in 412 with Augustine who believed and taught that God

- has elected some people and destined them for salvation
- has elected others and destined them for eternal condemnation
- unilaterally predestines some persons to heaven and some to hell

In the 16th Century, during the Reformation, John Calvin believed and taught what has become known as “Calvinism” or “Reformed Theology”

5 Points of Calvinism: TULIP

T = Total Depravity

U = Unconditional Election

L = Limited Atonement

I = Irresistible Grace

P = Perseverance of the Saints

At the heart of Calvinism is the concept of predestination.

Calvinists believe that, at the beginning of time, God unilaterally selected

- a limited number of souls to salvation and there is nothing any individual person can do during their mortal life to alter their eternal fate.
- the rest of mankind to condemnation and there is nothing an individual person can do to alter their eternal fate.
- Jesus died only for the Church (that is, the elect).

If Calvinism is true, God is a liar

John 3:16

1 John 2:2

Yet, Rom 3:4

If Calvinism is true, the pleasure of His will (v5) is

- Life for a few and Death for most
- NOT good or loving but wicked, evil, and corrupt

If Calvinism is true, then

Matt 7:13-14

1 John 5:10-13

are malicious taunts by a cruel God Who is not Who He says He is

If Calvinism is true, then there is no rhyme or reason to salvation

Salvation is purely subjective upon which our behavior has no bearing

Does that sound like the God of order or the author of confusion?

Calvinism uses the words (doctrines, agendas) of men to interpret the
Word of God, thereby corrupting the Truth
The Word of God must be used to interpret the words (doctrines, agendas) of
men...and the Word of God finds Calvinism deficient

The Word of God teaches

- God chooses
- man must choose

NOT a contradiction because of the foreknowledge of the all-knowing God

“I choose Jesus, I choose Life!”

God knew you would before the foundation of the world
He has made you a new creature in Christ

“I don’t choose Jesus, I choose Death!”

God knew you would before the foundation of the world
He is longsuffering, that is not His desire for you, He loves you
and will contend for you to make the right choice as long as
you have breath.

Based on the benefits of God’s choice (v3-6), which is the better choice
for every person?

Life!

John 1:4

John 14:6

John 11:25-26

If anyone here or listening has not yet chosen Life, today is the day of salvation!