

Ephesians 1:1-6

As we begin our study of the book of Ephesians, it would be wise to take some time to review the background information of the book itself. Paul wrote the book during his imprisonment (see chapter 3:1; 4:1; 6:20) and it seems that part of the motivation behind the book was to give the Ephesians, who loved and supported Paul, an update on his confinement. However, like any good preacher, the Apostle took the time to teach the truths of the Gospel to his people!

It seems to me that the theme of Ephesians is reconciliation. Paul's goal in writing the book was to remind the Ephesians that Christ has reconciled a people to himself. This has immense ramifications for creation and also, more uniquely, the Ephesians (and other Christians) within the context of the local church. Consequently, the book is written to Christians (see verse 1) about how the saving work of Christ in adopting and reconciling us to Him and one another, impacts our entire lives both individually and corporately.

Today, I want us to take some time to consider the way that God's work of redemption prompts us to worship, as our common adoration and affection for Christ is the very ground of our unity.

1. Paul's emphasis on worship

- a. After the brief introduction, Paul jumps into a glorious summary of the cause of Christian praise
- b. Verse 3 begins with the word "blessed"
 - i. The term is used 8 times in Scripture and it is often employed in the context of praise
 - ii. In fact, the word means "worthy of praise"
- c. In light of this truth, we can see how this first paragraph flows...
 - i. Paul begins the paragraph with an assertion (God is worthy of praise) and then he goes on to specify who this God is and why He deserves the glory we ascribe to Him

2. Who we worship

- a. Notice here that we have Trinitarian language
 - i. Two of the members of the Triune Godhead are explicitly mentioned
 1. Paul says that God the Father blessed us in Christ
 2. These two figures Divine
 3. The third member of the Trinity (the Holy Spirit) is present in this passage as well
 - a. We see Him in v. 3 as we are reminded that all that God has blessed us with is "spiritual"

- b. The term “spiritual” conveys that these blessings are conveyed upon us by the Spirit (the root word of the Greek term translated as spiritual)
 - c. We can conclude then that a primary point of the first portion of Ephesians, therefore, is to remind believers of the God we serve!
 - ii. The picture here is beautiful! Our Triune God works for redemption as each of the Persons of the Godhead completes their portion of salvation
 - 1. God the Father planned and purposed our salvation from before the foundation of the earth (v. 4)
 - 2. Christ accomplished the salvation of God’s children on Calvary (hence our salvation is “in Christ”)
 - 3. Finally, the Spirit applies the blessings of salvation on God’s children, adopting them as sons, thereby ushering them into the eternal family of God
- 3. Why we worship
 - a. Notice here that Paul reminds us that this work was totally God’s doing
 - b. We see this in a few ways
 - i. First, the timing
 - 1. God purposed to do this “before the foundation of the earth”
 - a. Do you know what that means? It means that God planned His work of redemption long before you or I were even thought of!
 - b. We had no role to play in designing our redemption, as we weren’t even in existence!
 - ii. Second, the forethought
 - 1. Paul tells us that it was before the foundation of the world that God “predestined” us
 - a. What does this mean?
 - i. The Greek term literally means “to mark out beforehand”
 - 1. The point here is that God worked, before creation, to mark out a plan and a people for redemption!
 - 2. He chose the course of action
 - 3. He chose the subjects of the action (who would benefit from His saving plan)

4. He did all of this because of His grace (none of us deserved this gift of salvation!)
 - ii. The term is active and singular in its utilization
 1. This means that one party actively worked to bring about the action of our redemption
 - iii. There is no mention of cooperation here between man and God as the entire section is about what took place before man lived. Instead, Paul is reminding us that the plan of salvation, was God's idea from beginning to end
2. As believers, we receive a gift
 - a. We didn't plan our redemption
 - b. We didn't execute the plan of our redemption
 - c. We didn't search for our Redeemer (Romans 3:11; Psalm 14:2; 53:2)
 - d. Consequently, we should follow in Paul's footsteps by proclaiming that our God is "blessed" (deserving of our praise)
- iii. Third the result
 1. We worship also because we have been "adopted"
 2. Notice the abiding beauty of this idea... God didn't simply atone for our sins, God brought us into His holy family!
 3. J.I. Packer says it well when he wrote, "Adoption is the highest privilege that the gospel offers: higher even than justification... To be right with God the Judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the Father is greater."
 4. We praise the Lord because He brought us in! Out of the cold darkness that our sin created
 - a. We praise Him because He clothes us in His righteousness
 - b. Calls us by His name
 - c. Gives us a place to eat at His table
 - d. Promises that we can live with Him forever!
4. The goal of worship
 - a. Why would God do this?
 - b. One answer is that He loves us (v. 4)

- i. Surely we see the love of God in redemption
 - ii. Jesus loved us enough to take God's wrath due us upon Himself
 - iii. God loved us enough to send His Son to die in our place (John 3:16)
- c. Notice that there is a second answer given in v. 6
 - i. God sent His Son to die for us "to the praise of His glorious grace..."
 - ii. God redeemed us so that we would worship Him
 - iii. Our worship is a response to God's identity and work of salvation
 - iv. God's goal in salvation is that we would stand to sing to the Lord, pause to give Him praise, bring Him glory through obedience, and bring others to know Him too
 - 1. He deserves our worship
 - 2. He has earned our adoration
 - 3. We have been created to bring Him glory and it is only in Christ that we are restored to that purpose