

EPHESIANS 1:5c-6  
The Wonderful Work of Salvation  
Message 14, March 21, 1999

INTRO: We have already seen that God has a plan for the believer's life. This is predestination. He has marked out beforehand what He wants us to be when He is done with us. We have seen that He predestined us in love. God knew that to conform us to the image of Christ we would need go through many hardships. In the midst of those hard things we do well to remember that he predestined us in love. We have seen that God predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son that we might be to the praise of His glory.

This morning we will see by whom and to whom He predestined us and on what principle He did all of this.

c. God predestined us in Christ (1:5-6)

- 1) How God predestined us (5a) In love
- 2) What God predestined us to (5b) to adoption
- 3) By whom God predestined us (5c)

God has predestined us to adoption. The words *as sons* are included in the Greek word adoption. When God adopts us we become His sons. But this morning we see that we are predestined by Jesus Christ. The preposition *by* is the Greek preposition *dia* usually translated *through*.

Now here is an interesting fact. God predestined us to adoption *by Jesus Christ*. Way back there, before the foundation of the world, God knew that He would create man. He knew man would sin. And He knew He would only be able to save man by giving His only Son. He knew that only through the death of His Son would He be able to save man from the penalty of sin. Then He knew that only through the death burial and resurrection would He be

able to conform man to the image of His Son. Only through Jesus Christ would He be able to bring man to where He would ultimately be able to adopt the believer into the family of God. Thus we read that He predestined us to adoption by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the means by which He would accomplish the work of sanctification and ultimately adoption.

4) To whom God predestined us

We have seen that God predestined us before the foundation of the world. We have seen that this predestination is to adoption and takes place through Jesus Christ. But for whom is all of this? We note further now that God predestined us in love to adoption, by Jesus Christ TO HIMSELF. Now here is a very special truth. God wants you, dear believer, to Himself.

Now there are some very encouraging truths in the Scriptures with regard to the fact that God wants us for Himself. Psalm 116:15 reads, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." I get the picture from this verse that God can hardly wait till the time of the saint in this life is over because He wants the believer to be with Himself. On the other hand Scripture tells us that God does not want the death of the sinner because the sinner will be forever separated from Him at death. God wants you and me for Himself.

But at death the believer is incomplete. He enters glory with only the soul and spirit, the body is missing. But there is coming a day when the body too will be redeemed. This is called the adoption. Then man will be complete again and will be able to fully participate in all God made him for. The ultimate place of fulfillment will take place when the new heaven and the new earth are in place

(Read Rev. 21:1-7). Here we will truly be the sons of God. Our soul and spirit are born of God and our bodies have been received by adoption and the Scripture says, "...I will be his God and he shall be My son." Glory! This will be true for all eternity.

Maybe you are going through some present difficulty. Maybe you are discouraged or downhearted. Here are some truths that come as great comfort. Yes, God predestined us in love to adoption by Jesus Christ TO HIMSELF.

5) On what principle He predestined us

God predestined us in love. He predestined us to adoption. He predestined us by Jesus Christ. He predestined us to Himself. But now see what was the guiding principle by which He predestined us. It was "...according to the good pleasure of His will."

Now notice this similarity in the character of God with ours. There are things God wants. He has a will. Wow, you say. It must be nice to be God and have things you want because then you could have everything you want! Did you know that not even God gets everything He wants? God does not want anybody to go to hell. But does He get His way? No! God wants us to do some things and He does not want us to do other things. Does He always get His way with you and me? No.

But look at something else in this phrase that you might find surprising. God knows what it is like to feel good. Some things happen that can make God feel good. It is described by this word pleasure. There are some things that God wants which bring pleasure to Him when they happen. There are some things God does not want and they bring displeasure to Him. God becomes

angry. As a matter of fact there is a time period called the tribulation when God's anger will be vented on a wayward world. Read Revelation 6-19 to see what will happen.

But now that we have seen that God wants certain things and that these can make Him feel pleasure, look at our passage again. "He predestined us in love by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the pleasure of His will." When we become objects that bring glory to Him and we become like Jesus Christ then God is pleased and what He wants is happening. At two points in the life of Christ, at His baptism and transfiguration, God said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." God found pleasure in His Son. But when we are conformed to the image of His Son He is pleased with us.

When God predestined us to adoption He did it according to the pleasure of His will. In Eph. 1:11 Paul tells us that God works all things according to the counsel of His will. When God plans things He says, "Let's see. What would be best here?" Then He consults His will. And whatever He wants, that is what He does.

Now you say, that sounds like a terribly self serving God. He is selfish. But here we appeal to the character of God. God's will is grounded in His character and He is entirely good. So whatever He wants is entirely good. You see, God can never want wrong. That is contrary to His nature. So He can consult His will and whatever He wants is good. It is good both for Himself and all those involved. When I do God's will it brings pleasure to Him and it is good for me. When I do not do God's will it displeases Him and is bad for me.

When God predestined us in love to adoption by Jesus Christ to Himself, He

did so according to the good pleasure of His will.

6) To what ultimate purpose He predestined us

When all is said and done the final result will be that the glory of His grace will be praised. It is not God's grace that will be praised but the glory of His grace. Now this seems rather strange at first glance. Why should the glory of God's grace arouse praise and not God's grace itself? Well, God's grace itself is not visible. It is what His grace does that is visible. The manifestation of grace is the glory of His grace.

Let me illustrate it like this. Let us say it is -40 celcius, as it is quite frequently in our winters here. Now let us say the electricity fails when it is -40. The first hour goes by, then the second. Now it is getting cold inside and it is getting dark outside everybody is getting hungry and still the electricity does not come on. Candles are lit. Blankets are brought out and the waiting continues. Now electricity is non-material and invisible. You cannot see when it is on or when it is off. But the glory of electricity is its visible effects.

Now you have waited for four hours. It is cold inside. It is dark. There is no water. The washrooms are used sparingly. The radio won't come on. The computer does not work. And then all of a sudden, bang; the lights come on, the furnace is running, the water is pumping, the radio comes on. Now water is heating and supper is cooking. All of those things are the glory of electricity. You cannot see the electricity any more than you could during the four hour outage but now you see the glory of it.

The praise of the glory of the grace of God is this. Imagine this man going home from the bar. He is drunk. He kicks in the door and walks in. He yells for his wife and calls her nasty names. The kids run for fear. This makes him angrier. He grabs his five year old son and says, "Come here kid. What's the matter with you snivelling little rat. Don't you respect your dad?" His wife does not want to come out of hiding but when her son is endangered she comes on the scene and tries to take her son. And so the scene goes on. This scene and much worse is happening all over our land. There are many worse things happening.

Now picture this man six months later. He has been saved by the grace of God. Oh, you can't see the grace but you can see the glory of it. Here comes the same man. The door gently opens. The kids come running to give him a hug. His wife is glad to see him. And by the way, lately in this home there has been money for groceries and they have a family car. There is the glory of the grace of God. You can't see the grace but you can see what it has done.

The praise of the glory of His grace begins now but continues throughout all eternity. You see the little story I told you makes visible the grace of God. But let me tell you something else about the glory of the grace of God. Look at Ephesians 2:4-7. Come with me now into the future. Come with me to the tribulation time and then on to the millennium. Now come with me past the millennium. Watch now as God remakes this old earth and old heaven and a new heaven and a new earth appears. Now watch as the place He had prepared for us, the New Jerusalem, come down out of heaven. Now look. There in the New Jerusalem is God Almighty Himself. Jesus Christ, my Saviour is there. And if

you keep looking you will see the Christians entering and leaving this city at will. Throughout each of these ages God will show (glory) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And what will it all end up but being the very thing for which God created us. God will be glorified throughout all eternity. Notice now carefully as I read verse 5 and 6 leaving out all the prepositional phrases except the last one. "...having predestined US to the praise of the glory of His grace..." Notice this same thought in verses 11-12.

And now we want to notice one more thing before we close this message. The NKJV says God has predestined us "....to the praise of His glory, *by which He made us accepted* in the beloved." The word translated *accepted* here is the verb form of the noun grace. Literally this should read, "...to the praise of the glory of His grace by (with or in) which He graced us in the beloved." When we become Christians we are placed in Christ. We are in Him. And when we are in Him God freely bestows His grace upon us. This great grace, the glory of which will be praised throughout all eternity, is freely bestowed on us in Christ. But notice that He does not here say it is in Christ, but in the beloved. When we are in Christ we are in God's beloved which qualifies us for the free bestowal of grace.

CONCL: In verse 3 we saw that God is to be blessed. The first reason we should bless Him is because He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. In verse 4 we saw that He is to be blessed because God chose us in eternity past. Then in verses 5-6 we saw that God is to be blessed because He predestined us in Christ before the foundation of the world.

We saw that this predestination took place in the context of love. Then we saw that God predestined us to adoption and that He did this through Jesus Christ. We saw that He predestined us to Himself and that He did all of this on the basis of the principle of what He wants, His will. And we have finally seen what the ultimate goal of God's predestination is.