

God is Praiseworthy Because He Has Predestined Us to Adoption

For the last 5 weeks, we have been looking at Ephesians chapter 1. We are going to look at it again this week, focusing on verses 5-8. Therefore, we are diving back into the swirl of Paul's praise that occurs from 1:3-14. Before we look at verses 5-8, let us first see them in the context of verses 3-14. Feel free to open your Bibles to Ephesians 1 to look with me as I read, or go right ahead and look at the screen above me.

I. Overview of Ephesians 1:3-14

3 *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is praiseworthy,*

***who** blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, **4** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless before him in love*

***5 who** predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ in him, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved; **7** in him 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 who** made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to sum up all things in Christ, 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; **13** in him you also, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

The content of these stanzas is breathtaking. They come from the heart of a man whose joy and praise knows no bounds; literally. This anthem in 1:3-14 is essentially one sentence. It is the longest run-on sentence that I have ever seen. Most translators try to smooth this out for us into 6 or 7 sentences. But this just means that the very grammar and language that Paul was using could not do justice to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, I want you to notice on the screen above me the way I have divided these verses. See how the first statement "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is praiseworthy" is alone at the top and is then followed by three paragraphs. I have done this to show you the progression and structure of the passage. You can see the progression as each paragraph gets bigger. You can see the structure as each paragraph begins with "who". Another way to look at it is this way:

[**Statement**] The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is praiseworthy (vs.3a)

[**Reason 1**] who blessed us with every spiritual blessing...(vs.3b)

[**Reason 2**] who predestined us for adoption as sons...(vs.5)

[**Reason 3**] who made known to us the mystery of His will...(vs.9)

Verses 3-14 are like a song of worship to God with 3 stanzas, each one building on the previous stanza and giving deeper reasons for praise. Or it is like a banner of praise held up by 3 poles of support.

II. God is Praiseworthy Because He has Predestined Us to Adoption

The past 2 weeks, Pastor Danny and Pastor Mike have labored to show us the first “stanza” or pole of support in this passage found in verses 3-4; namely, that God is praiseworthy because he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. We are going to focus this morning on the second “stanza” or second pole of support: **God is praiseworthy because He has predestined us to adoption.** So let’s take another look at verses 5-8:

5 who predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ in him, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has graced us in the Beloved; 7 in Him 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

Now, before I continue, let’s just define what Paul means when he says “us”. He does not mean humanity in general or anyone who’s eyes might have seen this letter in the past 2000 years. When Paul says “us” here, he is referring to himself along with those who believe in the Gospel of Jesus among the Ephesians and applies to all of us here who believe the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus is the Good News of the death and resurrection of Jesus to accomplish the forgiveness of sins for all who believe in Him. So, for those here who are not currently believers in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this passage is an invitation to believe in the glories of this Gospel. By coming to love Jesus more than anything in the world, you can prove yourself to be part of the “us”. I hope you see these glories.

If there is one thing that is clear about this passage, it is that **God’s predestining us to adoption is a gracious gift.** Notice as I’ve bolded the phrase in the passage:

*5 who predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ in him, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of **His glorious grace**, with which **He has graced** us in the Beloved; 7 in Him 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*

What does Paul mean by grace? Does he mean what we often mean in 21st century America? Well, in our times, by “grace” we often mean “elegance” or “beauty with motion”. We may call a deer “graceful” as it walks to a brook. We may call a figure skater graceful as he or she may carve through the ice and accomplish an intricate toe loop or a spin. Although God may be “beautiful in motion” or “elegant”, this is not what Paul means by “grace”. By “grace”, Paul means “ill-deserved favor”. In other words, it is getting something good when you deserve something bad.

This leads us to the question, why would something like being predestined to adoption as sons be a gracious gift? Well, the answer to this question will become obvious when we first look at why God would need to adopt us. Why would God adopt us? That sounds like something strange for the Creator of the world to do. Aren't we all His children? Paul answers this question a little later in Ephesians (2:1-3):

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the **sons of disobedience**-- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind.*

In fact, by nature Satan is our father. Our sonship was forfeited to the Serpent in the garden by Adam and Eve. We are sons of disobedience and therefore we are children that deserve wrath. Therein lies the obstacle which frames the necessary process for adoption: **the Beloved (True) Son provides redemption through His blood, and the forgiveness of our trespasses.**

*5 who predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ in him, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has graced us in **the Beloved**; 7 in Him 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*

Paul refers to Jesus in verse 6 curiously with the title “Beloved”. This is the only time that Paul ever uses this title for Jesus. I believe he got it from the account of the baptism of Jesus. According to the gospels, after Jesus came up from the water,

*“a voice from heaven said, “This is my **beloved** Son, with whom I am well pleased.”*
(Matthew 3:17)

*and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my **beloved** Son; with you I am well pleased.”* (Luke 3:22)

This title speaks of Jesus’ impeccable, true, authentic Sonship. So as we see embedded in this “adoption process”, that since we forfeited our sonship in Adam that it was necessary for Jesus to forfeit His sonship for us to get adopted. He needed to suffer the wrath that we deserve as “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” through his blood so that we could be redeemed and be forgiven of our sins. This process could not

have been more costly to God. Now, there are people in our congregation that have endured the process of adoption and they know how expensive it is. Generally, adoptions range from \$10-50,000. Our adoption as sons of God was the slaying and judgment of the most precious person that exists. Jesus Christ is invaluable and irreplaceable. As a matter of fact, we could not exist without him. He is the Creator and the glue of the universe. **Jesus bled and died for our redemption to adopt us as sons because He is *rich* in grace. God has an endless supply of grace in Jesus which is exactly the cost of our adoption.**

This adoption as sons that God has graced us with was something that God predestined. In other words, God chose us for adoption before the foundation of the world, as verse 4 states. We were preselected, chosen by God up front. But friends, consider the meaning of such a concept. That has to mean that God anticipated (at least) that we would be sons of disobedience and children of wrath before He created us. It also has to mean that God preselected the cost of adoption by offering His beloved Son. Not only that, but it was according to the good pleasure of **His will**. Everything was His plan, His decision, for His pleasure, for His praise.

In view of this gracious reality, that those of us who believe the Gospel were predestined to adoption as sons, how could we not join Paul's anthem of praise? How could we not hold this banner of praise? How could our hearts not be bursting with joy? If this Gospel is just beginning to make sense to you, we would love to talk with you. Pastor Danny, Pastor Mike, and I will linger here up front. If you have any questions, comments, or need clarification about this passage, please feel free to come see either one of us.