

Sunday Sermon, 5.26.19 ~ Ephesians 1:3-6, Chosen in Christ...

Read Ephesians 1:3-6... Among Christians today, there are two major camps of thought in reference to the issue of God's sovereignty vs. man's free will, or predestination, as it is ambiguously called.

It is not my intention to comprehensively settle that issue for you today; but I do want to enlighten you as to what the Scriptures declare concerning this subject.

Let me also say that I do not believe the human mind is capable of solving the dichotomy that arises when we try to resolve the two seemingly opposing truths:

1. God is sovereign in salvation.
2. Man has free will to either accept or reject, God's revelation.

God's Word is very clear that those who reject Jesus Christ will not be saved; God's Word is just as clear that all those who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved, just as God sovereignly has determined (see **John 3:16, 18, 36; 6:44, 65; 14:6; 15:16**).

Consider this illustration: On this side of heaven we see a giant billboard in the sky that says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." But on the way to heaven, passing by the billboard, the backside reads, "Chosen before the creation of the world."

God is the Almighty, the Creator, the Savior, the Sustainer and Judge over All. God alone is sovereign, He alone determines who will spend eternity in heaven; that being those who, apart from any direct knowledge of what the Bible says about Christ's death and resurrection, must believe God exists, has revealed Himself in Creation, is a rewarder of those who seek Him, condemning those who reject Him (cf. **Romans 1:18-20; Hebrews 11:6**).

Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, is also to all who have (or will) come to Christ by faith.

God determined beforehand that He would have a people of His very own (see **1Peter 2:9-12**). All those who believe in and serve God, bring praise and honor to Him on earth now, and for eternity in heaven.

God also ordained that we should become His sons and daughters by faith (adopted into His family, with full birthrights, born of God's Spirit) through Jesus Christ (**Galatians 3:26**), "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Through Jesus Christ we have (**Ephesians 1:3**) been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (see **John 1:12-13; 3:6-8; 1John 3:1-2**).

God (**Ephesians 1:4**) "chose us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him." The Greek word for "chose" implies the One making the choice is selecting a small number from a larger number for a specific purpose.

God has selected, out of all those who will ever live on earth, a people of His own to be set apart for the purpose of bringing Him glory, honor, and praise.

God predestined us to adoption (**Ephesians 1:5**), but that family will include the Old Testament saints, the New Testament Church, and those who believe during the Tribulation period (**Revelation 20:4**), "because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God"; but God's family will also include those born during the Millennial Kingdom who believe in Jesus Christ.

The word "predestined" means "to mark out ahead of time," "to foreknow," and thus "to predetermine," those who would belong to God.

Notice (**Ephesians 1:4-6**), it is sovereignly God who has determined all this (8 times the pronouns He, Him and His, are used to express that this is God's plan, purpose, and intention. He will complete it.

Romans 8:30, "These whom He [God] predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

God was determined to save us, that we might bring honor and glory to Him.

Wow! Even before Adam and Eve, before the curse of sin entered Creation, God had already predetermined to choose for Himself out of all those who would be born on earth, a people He would call His very own, a people who would be the recipients of God's eternal love, through Jesus Christ.

Can we then assume that, since God has predestined some to receive salvation and eternal life, He has also predestined some to remain lost and separated from the love of God that comes through Jesus Christ?

No! In fact, nowhere in Scripture is the word "predestined," or any of its synonyms, ever used to allude to, imply, or infer that God has predetermined for anyone to be "marked out ahead of time," for the purpose of remaining in unbelief, destined for eternal judgment.

The Scriptures declare quite the opposite:

1Timothy 2:3-4, "God our Savior wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

2Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Scripture does not have any such teaching that would allow us to believe that God has predetermined certain people to go to Hell; but Scripture is very clear that God does sovereignly chose some for heaven, and this is in accordance with His good pleasure and will (**Ephesians 1:5**), for "He predestined us to adoption... through Jesus Christ to Himself," that by His grace, we bring praise and glory to Him, through His Son (cf. **Ephesians 1:6**).

God is, by nature, a loving, merciful and gracious God who blesses those who please Him; but He is also a just, jealous, holy and righteous God who must bring judgment and punishment upon all those who reject and/or rebel against Him.

So, by His own pleasure and will, God determined that we would be made holy and blameless in His sight, receiving adoption as His own children, by the manifested grace which has come to all who believe and receive Jesus Christ: crucified, resurrected, and coming again.

John 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Yes, God is sovereign in salvation. And yes, every person will be judged for all of eternity according to what they did or didn't do with the revelation they received from God -- either believing and obeying Him, or remaining in unbelief, rejecting God's salvation.

1John 5:11-13, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

And all God's people said, Amen!

Pastor Mike

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