

The Prison Epistles 02 Position in Christ

by David Clifford

The main theme of the letter to the Ephesians is the church and her union with Christ, which is the distinctive blessing of the gospel dispensation.

Duration: 52:50

Scripture: Ephesians 2:7

Topics: "Union With Christ", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by acknowledging the noise outside the chapel and expresses gratitude for the strong construction of the building. He then highlights the main theme of the sermon, which is the believer's union with Christ. The preacher explains that being in Christ brings blessings, holiness, and acceptance. He also mentions that the letter to the Ephesians emphasizes the concept of heavenly places and the believer's ability to live the Christian life through the power of the Holy Spirit. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the importance of union with Christ in various aspects of the believer's life, such as predestination, regeneration, reconciliation, sanctification, and conversation.

Transcript

The reason why Mr. Willey doesn't remember me from those early years, everything was different then. I was tall, it's true, and dark. I was very fit.

And of course I was very noisy then, I'm very quiet now. When I was a young preacher, when I was a young preacher in those days, I used to take a short text and give a long sermon. Now that I'm an old preacher, everything has changed.

I take a long text and give a long sermon. So we'll read the long text together, shall we? Ephesians chapter one. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and the first chapter.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him. In love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to

himself. According to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. According to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in him, that is in Christ.

That in the dispensation of the poorness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him. In whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things, after the counsel of his own will. Predestinated that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Lord bless to us the public reading of holy scripture for his namesake. Amen. Now those of you who were here on Sunday evening, you may recall that we attempted to give a kind of interesting introduction to the prison epistles of Paul, generally.

His prison letters, those that have come down to us, are four. And he went to prison in Rome, we saw, in the will of God, and there was a lot of blessing out of that. But of course the blessing that concerns us this morning is this.

That while he was there, under the direction and inspiration and control of the spirit of God, he wrote these letters. And the letter to the Ephesians was in all probability the first one of the four or five or six that he wrote. And this was written in A.D. 62, as near as we can fathom that.

And although it says at the heading, the epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, I think it's important to understand that in the best manuscripts and the oldest manuscripts of the original text, the word in verse one, at Ephesus, those words are omitted. And there was a blank, which seems to suggest, and other ideas in the letter suggest also, that he was in all probability a circular letter, written not only to Ephesus, because one manuscript definitely has at Ephesus in it, and that's why it's in our text here. But other names were included, probably Laodicea.

We know that he did write from Rome to the Christians in the church at Laodicea. He said to the Colossians, the letter that I'm writing to Laodicea, you read that as well, they'll send it on to you. And this is what was done, these letters were written and they were sent round.

But this one was sent round in particular because it was to be a sending round a circular letter. You see, there's no special correction here. There's no doctrinal error being corrected particularly.

There's no special reference to any particular problem in the church. And many other ideas seem to suggest that it was a circular letter. My idea in talking about Ephesians this morning and this evening, God willing, is to mention one or two of the major themes.

That's what we should be doing through the week on each of these epistles. It would be very helpful for us to get down to the details exegetically and look at the word microscopically. But it's also very helpful and inspiring to look at the word telescopically and see one or two of the main ideas and the main reasons why the Apostle Paul wrote to these Christians.

Now if we do consider that this letter was definitely sent to the church at Ephesus then it's very important to remember that this church at Ephesus was founded by the Apostle Paul on his third missionary journey.

And Acts chapter 19 would give you some of the details of his ministry there. It was written also at the same time approximately as the letter to the Colossians and the small personal letter to Philemon.

And if you compare the letter of Ephesians to the one to the Colossians you'll find that similar ideas are there, many similar ideas, and similar phraseology and terminology is used. Now the elders of the church at Ephesus were addressed by the Apostle Paul in great detail in Acts chapter 20. And if you are studying Ephesians very, very carefully and systematically and exegetically you would need to study Paul's address to the elders of the church at Ephesus seen in Acts chapter 20 where he gets them to record, he calls upon them to testify that he served the Lord among them in a very wonderful way.

And of course as always the Apostle Paul gave the Lord all the glory. He says I was nothing, I was moved by nothing, I kept back nothing, I was guilty of nothing, I coveted nothing. And he starts addressed by saying after what manner I have been with you at all seasons serving the Lord.

And that is the manner. Those are the ideas of his ministry and it would be good for us to look into that to see something of the Apostle's type of ministry and how very well balanced it was when he was founding the church at Ephesus. But that's not our purpose this morning.

The Apostle Paul in the letter to the Ephesians embraces every doctrine of Christianity which is most remarkable in such a small and short letter. Every doctrine of Christianity. Coleridge says this and you can prove it for yourselves by looking through it very carefully.

I have myself found that there are 21 major doctrines mentioned, some spoken about in more detail than others in this letter to the Ephesians. Therefore it is full of beautiful Christian doctrine. I use the word beautiful advisedly because that is the word to use.

If ever you get down to study the word of God and the doctrines of the word of God, you'll agree with me they are beautiful, soul-inspiring, marvellous to the extent they will, when you understand them, make you bow your head and your heart in worship to God for his great love to us who are guilty sinners in sparing his son for our redemption and all the blessings that come to us as explained in the doctrines of the word of God and not least in the doctrines of this beautiful letter to the Ephesians and to other Christians as it was a circular letter as I said. Now of course I want to dwell upon and emphasise what I think is the main theme of this letter and this is where I shall disagree to a great extent with most of you theologians. So I beg your pardon before I begin and any argument please must not be public but afterwards and we shall enjoy some fellowship together in discussion no doubt.

But I think most would agree that the theme of this letter to the Ephesians, the main theme is the church which is his body. The church of Christ which is his body, his fullness, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. But I think as you look very very closely at the letter you'll see it is that but rather much more.

And I would categorically affirm that the main theme of this letter is the most prominent theme of Christian doctrine and it is the church and her union with Christ. Not just the church but the church and her union with her Lord, the believer and his union with his Saviour. And all the way through, this is emphasised, all the way through Paul's letters and ministry everywhere in the word as we see it but especially here in Ephesians the church and her union with Christ.

Now did you notice I began to emphasise phrases like this when I read it in Christ, in the Lord, in whom, in him, in the beloved and so on. Twenty times in the first two chapters you get these phrases and their

equivalent and all the way through you get these phrases and their equivalent. Because you see it is not just the church but the church's union with Christ that brings the church into the blessings which are hers.

The believer's union with the Lord which makes him what he is in his standing before God and in his life before the world. Now these are the two sections of this beautiful letter to the Ephesians. The believer's position in Christ, the first three chapters, and the believer's practice in Christ, the last three chapters.

So that's a very simple and straightforward and correct analysis if I may say so. The believer's position in Christ and the believer's practice, the last three chapters, in Christ. Well now this union with Christ is the distinctive blessing of this gospel dispensation in which we live.

Because you see out of it every other blessing, indeed every other doctrine to me seems to me to flow out of the believer's union with Christ. If we are redeemed it is because of our union with him. If we are predestinated it is because of our union with him.

If we have died it is because of our union with him in his death. If we are alive in Christ it is because of our union with him in his risen life. We are to be glorified, it's because of our union with Christ to be made real in a coming day in the glory.

And if we are anything in this Christian life, it is because that we have been joined to Jesus. Well now, this is a distinctive blessing of this gospel dispensation. Union of God with man was needed for our redemption.

And similarly, the union of man with God is needed for both our justification, sanctification and glorification. Now if you think I'm emphasizing the alliteration too much, just raise your hand and I'll calm it down. I do that because I come from Birmingham and can't help to do it.

So, justification and so on, you know, it's a sort of our way of speaking. I was saying the other day, I'm hoping that my twang, my Bromidgian twang doesn't put you off. There was one preacher who was talking about this in his ministry at a certain conference we had in England.

And he was the first of two speakers and this was his subject, justification and sanctification and glorification, you see. And then when he'd finished he had to go and get a train to go to London. The next speaker got up and he said, now our first brother who has addressed us has gone to the railway station.

And they all knew that he got the point that the first speaker was an expert in alliteration. Well now, we mustn't reiterate too much, but of course it is here in the word without any attempt at alliteration by us. But union of God, union of God with man was necessary for our redemption.

You know that's true, because God became man. We believe in the incarnation, we don't understand it, we believe in it. If the incarnation were not too wide for our intellect, then the atonement would be too narrow for our salvation.

We believe that God became man. Well you see, God could not die for man. God could not die for man.

God did not die for man. God incarnate could and God incarnate did die for man. His creature sinned.

That's why he became incarnate. That's why the word, the eternal word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He wasn't made flesh to dwell among us, he was made flesh to die.

He wasn't made flesh to teach us. He wasn't made flesh to live, to show us how to live. Thank God for his teachings, thank God for his life.

But he was made flesh to die because God cannot die, but God incarnate can and did. And he died for us. Blessed be his name.

You see, he took humanity into union with deity, but never ceased to be divine. He became what he was not, but never ceased to be what he was, God. So if ever a man was God and God was man, Jesus Christ was both.

This is what I'm trying to say. It was necessary, absolutely imperative, that God should take upon himself union with man for our redemption. Now similarly, the reverse is true.

It is absolutely essential that man should become in union with God, that he might be justified, sanctified and glorified. Well now, this is how it works out. When a guilty sinner puts his faith in the Saviour, the Holy Spirit does a remarkable thing in the soul, in the life of this sinner.

He makes him regenerate, he imparts to him the life of God, and he, at that moment, joins him to Jesus. Joins him to Jesus. Not only to God's family in adoption, but joins him to Jesus in a complete and full and perfect and eternal union he's made one with his Lord.

And from that moment onwards, God looks upon the sinner as he sees him in his Saviour. He doesn't look upon the sinner as he is, now just a saved sinner. He looks upon him as a sinner in the Saviour, and he accepts him because he's in Christ.

And as a matter of fact, God at that moment justifies the guilty sinner who is unjust. Now, he justifies the unjust justly, because the unjust is now in Jesus. In Jesus.

That's the theme this morning. And he sees him in Jesus. And because Jesus died, God sees him in Jesus' death.

And God sees him as having died for his sin in another. Therefore, he is justified and vindicated by a righteous God for his sin and accounted as though he'd never sinned, because he's in Christ. And if he's in Christ, he must be in Christ's death.

Seen by God in Christ's death, as well as seen by God in Christ's life, as well as seen by God in Christ's glorification. I think I ought to explain that before I go any further. And in Scotland years ago, when anybody was hung for murder, they used to put a notice outside the prison door when it was all over.

So and so, Jim Smith, or whatever his name was, this morning at 8 o'clock was justified. Now that was right. Absolutely, terminologically correct.

He was justified. In other words, he was vindicated from that crime. He was cleared from it for all time.

He was now to be accounted as though he had never committed murder because he'd died for the murder. Died for the sin. Justified.

And you and I are only justified, not because Jesus died for us, that's only the beginning of the truth. We are justified, although we're guilty, by a just and holy God, although his absolute righteousness. Because we're in Christ.

The Holy Spirit has placed us into Jesus. God sees us in him, accepts us in him, and he sees that we have died for our sin in him. And the scripture for that, I know you want the scripture for it, but I have to give you the scripture for it before we go any further, is Romans chapter 6 and verse 7. He that has died is justified from sin.

And you'll find that word in the margin, freed from sin in your authorised King James Version. He that has died is justified from sin. So you see the essential, how imperative this truth is, that the believer is one with Christ in a complete union.

You remember, there was a very fine illustration of this in the Old Testament, and they said to Rebekah one day, Wilt thou go with this man? This man was Abraham's servant, who had come to find a bride for his master's son Isaac. And Abraham had given to Isaac everything. And he found Isaac, came to the right place at the right time, said the right words, met the right girl, and everything was right because he was in the right way.

He said, I being in the way, the Lord led me. And he wanted to take the girl back straight away, and they were talking about it together, and her parents said to her, Wilt thou go with this man? She knew very well that this man was to take her to that man, Isaac, to whom she was to be joined. That was the idea, you see.

So they put it to her, Wilt thou go with this man? To be joined to this other man. Of course there was a decision of the will to be made. That is so with you and me, when we are faced with the only Saviour of our souls.

And the Holy Spirit comes to us, and the question is put by the preacher, will you respond to the Holy Spirit, who will draw you to this man, and join you to him eternally. Wilt thou go with this man? She had to leave where she was to be joined to him. Now God will never be reconciled to us, we have to be reconciled to him.

We have to leave our sin, and in repentance quit unrighteousness to be joined to Jesus. We have to respond to the Spirit. A step of faith was needed by Rebecca.

She'd never seen him, but she'd heard about him. She'd heard about Mount Moriah, like you and I have heard about Calvary. And she'd heard about his wealth, his father gave me a wedding, like you and I have heard about the fact that in Christ is all the blessing, because God has given it all to his Son.

Thou hast blessed him forever. All honour and glory and majesty, power, dominion and blessing is his from now and forever. And they said to her, wilt thou go with this man? And she responded and went with him, and he brought her to Isaac.

And they were joined in holy matrimony. So you and I have heard the gospel call, and we have come to, we have responded to the Holy Spirit, we've taken the step of faith, we've heard about Calvary, we've heard about the Saviour's full salvation, all the wealth that is in him for us. Here was the offer of a wonderful union, more wonderful than that offered to Rebecca by Abraham's servant.

And now we find we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, because we've been joined through him. And as I was saying, the first blessing is this, that we are regenerate and justified, accounted as though we had never sinned, because we have died for our sins in Jesus Christ our Lord, and in his death. You know the Apostle entered into this experimentally, or perhaps is the correct term,

experientially, when he said, I am crucified with Christ.

But also he wanted other Christians to whom he was writing to enter into it, experientially. It is always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus shall be made manifest in our mortal flesh. Because not only God sees us in Christ's death, but he sees us in Christ's life.

Now this is our standing in him. We have died in Christ. This is our standing in Christ.

We are alive in him. But of course, what we are in our standing, we should be in our state. What we are in Christ before God, we should be before the world in Christ, in an experimental, very practical way.

And that of course sums up this epistle, because the first three chapters are about our standing in Christ before God. And the last three chapters are about our practice of the Christ life, because of our union with Christ, we can live the Christian life as we are supposed to, as God meant us to, for the reason why he gave us the Holy Spirit, and the reason why we are joined to Christ, so that we could be what we should be. Well now you see, you will find that union with Christ is essentially the underlying main theme of this letter.

In chapter one it is union with Christ in relation to predestination, chosen in him to be holy. And in chapter 2a, it is union with Christ in relation to regeneration, quicken into life, with or in Christ. And 2b, it is union with Christ in relation to reconciliation.

And in chapter 3, it is union with Christ in relation to sanctification, the power that now worketh in us, because we are in him. And in chapter 4, it is union with Christ in relation to conversation, but of course in the New Testament that means the walk, the practice, the manner of life of the believer. And the word there is, put on the new man.

And the new man is where Christ is all, and in all, in an experimental sense. Because we are in Christ, then we should put on Christ and live the Christ life. And then in chapter 5, it is union with Christ in relation to separation.

You are light in the Lord. Light hasn't got any fellowship with darkness. Come out from among the darkness.

Not from other Christians. It never says that in the word. Oh no, sir.

Every Christian is light in the Lord. And the word is, come out from darkness. You are light in the Lord.

Notice what it says. You're not just light, you're light in the Lord. The Lord is light, and you're in the Lord.

That's the subject, you see. Within Christ, he is the light. And you are the light in the Lord.

That means union with Christ in relation to separation. And then in chapter 6, it is union with Christ in relation to preservation. Because the word there is finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

And because you are joined to the Almighty Jesus, the Son of God, you can be strong because he's the strong one. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. So what a wonderful theme this is.

Of course there are lots of other themes, you know. I think we ought to continue on this one this morning. I mean there are lots of other main ideas in the first three chapters which we will never be able to talk about, really just mention one or two in passing at this point maybe while it's on my mind.

In heavenly places is one of the main themes of this letter and that makes a very interesting study. There are five references to heavenly places, high places or heavenly places in this letter. And riches is a very interesting subject as well.

His will is very important here. The purpose of his will for Paul was apostleship, verse 1. And the good pleasure of his will for us is sonship, in verse 5. And the mystery of his will, universal, is Christ lordship, in verse 9. And the counsel of his will is that we might glorify him, in verse 11. So his will is a very interesting and important subject.

Together is an interesting theme, especially when you come to chapter 2. Because chapter 2 is really about one subject with a lot of other ideas brought in, as the apostle always does. The one subject is the togetherness that is between believing Jews and believing Gentiles, that now they are one in the Lord. The word exceeding is emphasised very much in this epistle.

There's exceeding power through believing. This is chapter 1, verse 19. That spells regeneration.

There are exceeding riches through receiving. That's in chapter 2, in verse 7 or 8. That's glorification. And there's exceeding ability through submitting in chapter 3 and verse 20.

And of course that means sanctification, again in an experimental way. But what I wanted to show you at this point is this. And let me illustrate it in this way.

Under an old English law, when two people were joined in holy matrimony, the moment she said, I will, in answer to the preacher's or minister's invitation, the moment she said, I will, then legally, from that time onward, legally under an old English law, all this girl's debts were chargeable to this man. And all this man's property was hers to share. Now of course some of the men in England didn't like that idea.

And they had the law changed. So ladies, I'm sorry, it's no good going to England to get married. It's not like that today.

But it is like that today in the spiritual sense. Because the moment I say, I will, to the Lord Jesus, all my debts become chargeable to him. Because I'm joined to him completely and eternally.

Now he foresaw that, that me being joined to him would bring such a debt upon him. And he came to pay my debt. And it cost him his life to do so.

Blessed be his name. But not only so, the moment I said, I will, to the Lord Jesus, and was joined to him eternally, then all his blessings became mine to share. This is what it says in verse three.

Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Now God never blesses anybody directly. It's true that he sends mercies directly to all.

You'll find there's a great difference between blessings and mercies. Mercies generally are temporal, and blessings are spiritual. Blessings are spiritual and come to us because of our union with Christ.

He has the blessing, and if you're in him, then you have the blessing in him. You share what he has. That's what it says in verse three.

Blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. You see there's common grace when God shows his mercy to saved and unsaved alike. Sends the rain like he did on Saturday on people who are not Christians as well as, on farmers who are not Christians as well as Christian farmers.

And he sends the sunshine, as he does today, on people who are not Christians just as well as on Christians on holiday. You know, this is called common grace. And then there is special grace, which is saving grace.

And in this, the blessings of God come to the person who are found, to the person who is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is joined to him in that full and complete union. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that's worship, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. So all our blessings now are because he is blessed.

God has blessed him forever and with everything. And we are joined to Jesus. Isn't that wonderful? And so let us possess our possessions in Christ.

This is the evident exhortation, the necessary exhortation following that statement. Speak unto the house of Israel that they possess their possessions. Our need is met because we are joined to that wealthy one, the Son of God.

Oh, that we might appropriate day by day what is ours in him. Now in relation to the church and her union with the Lord, the church is seen in three ways. Not just as a body in this epistle, but as a building.

You are built together as a temple of God by the Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ indwelling upon Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone of the building. So if you are the building, he is the foundation. You are joined to Jesus if you use the metaphor of a building.

If you use the metaphor of a body at the end of chapter 1 and in chapter 4 as well, then you are the body and Christ is the head. What's the use of a body without the head? We are joined to the head. Our head is Christ himself.

So if you think of the body it is our union with the head which is the important thing. And then if you think of the church as a bride in chapter 5, she is seen as a bride as well as a building and a body. There's another metaphor I haven't used.

It's one new man in chapter 2. But if you use the metaphor of a bride in chapter 5, what's the good of a bride without a bridegroom? We are joined to the heavenly bridegroom. This is why we are blessed with all spiritual blessings because we're in Christ Jesus. Just as a branch is joined to a vine, just as a branch is joined to the stalk and to the tree, and lives henceforth by the life of the tree flowing through it, and grows and bears fruit by the life of another flowing through it, so you and I as nothing branches join to the Lord Jesus the true vine, grow spiritually by his life in us and through us, and we bear fruit by the life of the true vine in us and through us.

Only the true vine is fruitful unto God. You'll never be able to glorify God in your life at all unless it is the life of the true vine flowing through you, then it isn't you, it's him. It is not I, but Christ.

And that is the secret and the blessedness of the real, normal Christian experience of Christ's life in us and through us. I was at a fruit farm in Eversham in Warwickshire, Worcestershire, England some years ago, and there was a dear brother in the meeting who was showing me round the farm and showing me how they did the grafting, and I was so pleased to see how the branch was cut, and he says, look we put it into the tree just there, but that has to be cut as well at the same angle, you see. Then we said we put it in and we put some material round it and bind it round so that there's nothing to interfere with it, and he said before long you'll find that the sap of the tree, the life of the tree, is flowing through this branch.

He said, look at that one. You can see a leaf coming on that one there. Look at that one there.

That's been on for a little while now. You can see some fruit forming there. And you know in each case this branch would have been nothing absolutely dead and useless apart from its union with the tree, with the stalk, but now by the life of another it is growing and bearing fruit.

So you and I are through faith in Christ by the Spirit joined to Christ, and all spiritual blessings are ours in Him. But I want you to notice, and I think perhaps I ought to close on this theme this morning. I want you to notice just from these first few verses that we read together that not only are we blessed with all blessings because of our union with Christ, but everything comes out of our union with Christ.

Now you look at verse 4 for instance. According as He hath chosen us in Him. Now then, please let me throw a spanner into the works just to make you think about this.

Because some of you I think have been I know I was when I was a young Christian led along a wrong path just here. An unscriptural path just here. It does not say does it? I'm asking you the question.

Does it say that we have been chosen to be in Him? Does it? It does not say so. This is what it says. We are chosen in Him to be holy.

Now does it say that? By, let me compare this verse with verse 3 so that you'll get the sense. I hope my reasoning is clear, but it's very important. In verse 3 it is saying this.

The Apostle by the Spirit says, by virtue of our union with Christ we are blessed with all spiritual blessing. And in verse 4 he says, by virtue of our union with Christ we are chosen to be holy like Christ. Now I hope you can see that.

It's terribly important. And in this epistle of course, Paul emphasizes both the sovereign purpose of God but the responsibility of man as well. And the two run side by side throughout the whole of the Word of God.

And very often we get the sovereignty of God emphasized to such an extent that man's responsibility is nowhere seen. I think that's a big mistake because it's there as plain as a pipe start in the Bible. You see let me give you one illustration of this in Romans chapter 9 which is the classic passage in the Word on the sovereignty of God.

Which I believe in by the way with all my heart. Where it says the clay had the potter has power over the clay to do with it what he wills and so on. And did not God love Jacob and hate loveless Esau? And it seems that man hasn't got a look in at all in the first part of the chapter.

It's all to do with the sovereignty of God. He does what he wills. Now Dr. Tozer very clearly points out that the definition for the sovereignty of God is this.

Not that God does what he pleases but God has the power and the right to do what he pleases. Which of course I think is more scripturally correct. We know that God is providential over all and God is sovereign but you see in his sovereign will and purpose he has designed to give man a free will.

I don't think we ought to progress further along that this morning as we should be getting away from Ephesians chapter 1. But just to show you what I mean, I'm going to emphasize my interpretation of verse 4 not only by making a comparison with verse 3 but comparing it with what the apostle says in the next few verses. For instance it says in verse 5 having predestinated us, that is, foreordained, marked out beforehand according to his fore knowledge, having predestinated us to the position of sons. According to the good pleasure of his will to the praise of his glory.

Predestinated us to the position of sons to the praise of his glory. Am I not giving the right sense? Maybe not. But look again at verse 11 and 12 to prove the point, or I hope to give evidence of my point.

Being predestinated says verse 11 that we should be to the praise of his glory. Now does it say here that we've been predestinated to be saved? Does it say we have been chosen to be saved? My dear friends, taking this idea to an unscriptural extreme, we miss one of the most fundamental scriptural doctrines for the believer in his life today. And this is it.

God's purpose for everyone who has trusted Christ as his personal saviour even in the past eternity before ever we turned to Christ, God's predestinating purpose was that we should be holy and like Christ, bear the image of his Son, bearing out Romans 8 which says exactly the same thing. Because God says that Christ shall be the firstborn among the many brethren and the Lord Jesus is such a wonderful son to the Father. God's purposes, his predestinating purposes that we should be like his Son so that he can bring many sons like Jesus to glory, to be glorified together with him in his presence.

These rude noises you get on your road, I'm not used to. Sounds pretty, I know, but sort of noisy. I thought they were going to cave in on us, but so beautifully built this chapel, I'm sure it'll never do that.

Now this is what I'm going to close with then, because you've had a fair dose of doctrine this morning, and I hope you can follow me, and I do hope you're beginning to really love, I'm sure after all these conferences you have, beautiful Christian doctrine and this letter is just full of it. Alright, verse 3, by virtue of being in him we are blessed with all spiritual blessings. Verse 4, by virtue of being in him we are chosen to be holy.

Verse 6, by virtue of being in him we are accepted, accepted in the beloved. Verse 7, by virtue of being in him, the Redeemer, we are redeemed. Verse 11, by virtue of being in him we are made inheritors because he is an heir of God.

He is the heir of God, and we are inheritors because of our union with him. And verse 18, because of our union, by virtue of our union with him, we have become his inheritance too. Because not only does the bride share all that the bridegroom has and is, but the bridegroom has the bride.

And in this beautiful chapter, the two ideas are very prominent, both our inheritance in Christ, in Christ, in Christ, by virtue of our union in him, and secondly, his inheritance in us. And beloved, the point as I close this is, if we are his inheritance, and we have so much inheritance in him, well how pleasing we should be

to the Lord that we might be a good and a blessed inheritance for the Saviour, so that when we see his face, not only shall we be pleased and say, Oh, that will be glory for me, but when he sees us, he'll be pleased, and that will be glory for him. Thank you, Mr. Willey.

You may close, please. Shall we pray? Blessed God, our Father, we bow in thy presence with worship and praise and adoration for all that we have heard this morning. We thank thee that by thy infinite grace we are in Christ Jesus.

And this morning we've been listening to the wonderful things that we have in Christ. Help us, Lord, that we might fulfill thy will, chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy. O God, help us that we might come up to thy standard, that we may really be called, as thou didst say, in another place, wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.

Help us, Lord, that our lives might conform to these wonderful, wonderful truths, and we might magnify the person and the name of thy beloved Son. We thank thee that in him we're going to be glorified for all eternity. We wait for it, Lord.

Help us, then, we pray thee, to live consistently with the wonderful truth we've heard. We ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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