

Accepted in the Beloved

by Paris Reidhead

We are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and this sovereign choice of God is the foundation of our salvation and relationship with him.

Duration: 48:35

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:3-6

Topics: "Acceptance"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Ephesians chapter 1, specifically verse 4. He begins by discussing the previous verses and the concept of God blessing us with all spiritual blessings. The preacher then breaks down verse 4 into three parts: 'according as he hath chosen us in him,' 'before the foundation of the world,' and 'that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' He acknowledges that these words have been the subject of much theological debate and division within the Christian community.

Transcript

Will you turn please to Ephesians chapter 1, our text this evening, the fourth verse. We have seen in these past, last Sunday and today, the second verse is the opening of this series of studies in Ephesians, series of messages from this lovely book. And last Sunday evening, the biography of a sinner, Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

This morning, we were considering again this marvelous promise or declaration that God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. Tonight, the first blessing. Here in this fourth verse, tied so closely as it is to the third, we have the unfolding of the first of these spiritual blessings that the apostle sets forth as our privilege in Christ.

I think that it will be clearer if I read the first verses 3 through 6. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ, according as he has 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. Now, this fourth verse breaks up logically, properly into three portions. The first clause, according as he has chosen us in him.

The second, before the foundation of the world, and then the last clause, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Probably no few verses--it is actually eight or nine, ten words--no few words have been so hotly contested in the scene of more theological battle than the words that are before us now. According as he has chosen us in him.

There have been probably more volumes written on the implications of these words, more division across the body of Christ than any other. Now, I suppose that I shall offend someone tonight. I'm not particularly concerned about that.

I think that the stimulation of your cerebellum will be worth it. And if I can get you to think, if I can get you to actually come to grips with the issue, and even though there should be more heat than light, that's all right. We'll endure that.

What I'm concerned about tonight is that we should actually realize that this too is part of the word of God, and it's ours. And everything in the book is mine, every chapter, every verse, every line, and he said it, and it's ours. Now, let's go to it then forthwith, shall we? The words before us, according as he has chosen us in him.

Now, one of the points of view on this verse is that God chose us foreseeing that we would believe in Christ, and therefore on the basis of our faith, for by faith and faith alone are we in him, he chose us. Or the foreknowledge of God was on the basis of the response of the individual. This is held by many, and in me reading commentators, you'd probably find them if you just take the cross-section of those that have been written, that half of them would hold this point of view.

But again, we come back to find out what the text has to say, what it says for itself. Notice, it says that God has chosen us, not a principle. And were this to imply that he chose those whom he foresaw would believe, then he would have actually chosen a principle, namely, that believing was to be the means by which this number would be completed.

But it didn't say he chose a principle. It says that he chose us, implying persons. Notice, then, that he has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, according as he hath chosen us.

And the implication of this is that faith is bestowed upon those whom he has chosen, because the basis of his choosing was not their believing, but as we find in verse 9, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself. And the source, therefore, of his choosing was not in what we were, but in what he is. He has chosen people, and he has chosen to bestow upon people faith.

He did not choose them because they were holy, but he chose them that they were to be holy. Now that's what the text says, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Now notice, it says he has chosen us in him.

It didn't say he has chosen us to be in him. And we'll have to explore this a little. He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.

And if you understand this as I do, and I could use any other version, and it would still come out the same way as it does here substantially, and therefore there would be no real reason for my doing so. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, indicating that it was then he did it, before the world was founded. Now let's look at some collateral texts that are going to enable us to come to happy grips with

this.

Will you turn please to 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 9. 2 Timothy. Paul writing to the young man Timothy forces him to face the fact that not all are friendly to the gospel, and that he's going to be persecuted and despised as Paul is. And so in verse 8 he instructs him and therefore prepares him.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God who has saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. That's a marvelous verse to lean on when you're being misunderstood and persecuted, when the world seems to rush in upon you as though an avalanche had crushed the little thatch that would protect you from suffering. And Paul is saying that this is the grounds of his confidence, that God has chosen him, called him with a holy calling, according to his own purpose.

Not Paul's ability, not Paul's talent, not his resources, but according to God's purpose and God's grace, which was given, grace which was given, purpose which was given in Christ before the world began. Now that's quite old, and this is what we find. Now if you'll go to Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 11, we find the same truth coming to our hearts.

I read back from verse 8 in order that we could get the context, and verse 11 should stand out before us. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now, under the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And God has not only had purpose for the believer and grace for the believer from before the foundation of the world, but he's had purpose for the church, plan for the church, to be the instrument of displaying to principalities and powers in the heavenlies, both good and evil, the manifold wisdom of God, that consequently we must recognize that since his purpose has been eternal, so his plan has been.

It fits right into what we've been seeing. Now to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, I believe it is. No, it isn't.

I don't know where to go. I've misread it. Well, at any rate, we'll let two suffice, and if you want more, I'll bring them next week.

I can't read my own writing. That's the trouble. Perhaps if I put my glasses on, I'd find out I made a mistake, and that would be terrible, so I'll avoid that.

But let's go to... Let's proceed then with this. There's a substantial difference between what God does through Christ and what God does in Christ. If our verse that's before us, according as he hath chosen us, through him before the foundation of the world, if that were the reading, it would substantially change it.

But it didn't say through Christ, it said in Christ. Now he has redeemed us through Christ. It was the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross that provided our redemption.

It was through Christ, his work in our behalf, his death, his dying for you in your place, in your stead, that redemption became yours. You were justified through Christ, through faith in the work that Christ has accomplished, through that which he's provided. You've been saved through Christ, through that which he has done in your behalf.

But that isn't what our text says. It says we have chosen us in him, in him. Now let's notice how this does not apply, how we were not chosen.

Christ was not the occasion of God's electing love and purpose. We were not chosen because of Christ, that is because of some action of his part. Again, we see it in verse 9, as he hath chosen according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself.

This choosing was not done on the basis of something which Christ had accomplished. It was long before that when the Godhead in glorious, simple triunity chose, and this we have to accept. Notice then how we were chosen.

Let's consider that. First, Christ was chosen. Christ was chosen first out of the womb of God's decree, out of that in the heart of the eternal triune God, first the head and then the body.

And Christ was chosen. Now, whether this isn't a matter of time, and you attach that it was first in terms of time or not, I'm not particularly concerned. I do not think that it was a matter of time, actually.

I think it was a matter of priority, that first God the Father chose the eternal Son to be the head over the church. First Christ was chosen, and then, since he is head, to him was given in choice his body, and we were chosen in him. As it was the act of God, the triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, to choose a head, so it was a decree of his to choose a body, to choose those members which would compose his body.

And so he gave Christ to the church, and he gave the church to Christ. We see that in the end of this first verse, first chapter, if you'd like to turn to it, verse 23, you will find that in verse 22 and three, rather, you will find that it's set forth here in a very lovely way, simply by deleting the italicized words in the King James. Notice, and hath put all under his feet, and gave him the head over all to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

He gave Christ, who is the head over all to the church, by the same token, he gave the church to the head, and he was chosen in him. First the Son was chosen to be head, and then those members which would compose his body were given to him. We were chosen in Christ, therefore, in this sense as well, that he is the pattern to whom we are to be conformed.

We are chosen in him in this sense, that in that purpose of God, he would have those like himself. Romans 8.28 is absolutely essential at this point, if you are to understand the verse in any little sense, and I believe that in understanding it our hearts will be stirred with worship. So here, if you please, Romans 8.28-29, and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Oh, how many times this has been misunderstood. People have given that first expression, first clause, and then stopped. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, period.

It didn't say that. It says we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called ones according to his purpose, for whom he did foreknow. He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

So he chose the head, he chose the body, and he chose them in him in this sense that they are to be like him. They are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. So if you want to know what you're going to be, what God had in mind for you, you get acquainted with the Lord Jesus.

And we'll not be satisfied, dear friends, since God has caused us to be born of his love, until we awaken his likeness. Samuel Rutherford, who was probably, one Dr. Tozer said he probably was the most worshiping man that ever lived, the one who saw more clearly through the veil into the holiest in love and in worship. I could say at 83, I deplore myself, and the nearer I get to heaven and the longer I walk with him, the more I realize the abysmal depths of sin in my heart.

This Samuel Rutherford, whose letters are the means of such great blessing to those who devotedly and sincerely read them, he knew he walked with the Lord and he couldn't be satisfied until he awaked in the Lord's likeness. Well, he put that into your heart. And so when you sing that chorus, you're not simply singing something that a songwriter wrote, but some songwriter caught the echo of the eternal purpose of the Father.

Oh, to be like thee, oh, to be like thee, blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art, and nothing else will satisfy that born-again heart, because we were chosen in him. And we were chosen in him to be like him. And God's going to make us unsatisfied with anything less than that.

That's a very wonderful, wonderful truth. So, we are chosen in him, in Christ. Now, what is our proper response to this? Certainly not one of controversy.

I believe we're to read the Word of God to feed our hearts upon it. Somebody comes to me and says, I don't agree with you. Why, that's wonderful.

I'm just trying to begin to agree with myself, really, finally, because you don't always have all the answers, and you'll find that it's a living thing. So, I'm not trying to sell something. I'm simply trying to feed my heart upon the living truth and let some marvelous truth concerning our wonderful Lord stir again the cockles of my heart and cause me to worship him with that worship that he deserves.

And it's marvelous when you find out that this wasn't just some little thing that happened. He didn't see Paris Redead back there as a wicked little boy that needed grace and said, well, I guess I'll include him. I'm so grateful of the fact that I can look at the Word and see on the outside of this arch of grace over the door whosoever will may come.

And as a sinner with a sense of need, desperate need, can go in and find forgiveness and find pardon and look around on the other side of the same arch and see that it says, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. And to realize that it was chords of loving kindness that made me realize my need and caused me to turn in that door. I came because it said whosoever will may come.

And that was what I had to see for none would be excluded and whosoever will may come. But when I'm there, I find the other side of that arch is so clearly written. So what is it going to mean to you when you discover that you are chosen in him in his love? Well, I think you're going to learn to give to the Lord Jesus the honor and the glory and the praise and the worship that he deserves.

For you're going to discover that all the good, all the blessing, all the happiness, all the joy that comes to you will be in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way that God could have mercy on anyone was because first he chose the head, the Lord Jesus, who was the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world to secure a people. And in choosing the head, he chose the members.

And so you can then having discovered this, revere him and worship him and adore him. Then you can give to God the Father the glory and the honor that he deserves. You are his own.

You've been given to Christ. No time ever has God ever seen you as any place other than in Christ. He's beheld you from before the foundation of the world.

You say, well, there's problems in this. My dear, there are problems. I'm not proposing to answer all the problems.

I'll tell you what we'll do about some of these problems, if you don't mind. Let's take the first 10,000 years off before lunch, shall we, when we get to heaven and settle some of the problems that are here. And instead of tormenting our hearts about the insoluble problems, let's just adore the altogether worthy one and bow at his feet as we see him standing upon the sea of glass with the book in his hand and cry with the redeemed of all the ages and the angels that will never know redemption song and joy.

Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive riches and honor and glory and dominion and majesty and power and praise now and forever. Let's not let the fact that our little finite mind stumble at certain truths of the word rob us of what those truths are intended to bring, namely, a worshipping heart. Therefore, as I behold that I was chosen and you were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, I'm not going to try to press this to its philosophical extreme and develop a system that will answer all the problems of the ages, far be it.

Far be it from that. That's not my intent. What I want to do, when I read, as we've been blessed with all spiritual blessings and the first that he enumerates as we're chosen in him before the foundation of the world, is to bow my head in wonder and in awe and say, oh God, how can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's death? Died he for me who caused his shame? This is what it'll do.

It isn't going to make you a pugilist, a polemicist, combating everyone that doesn't dot their I's and cross their theological T's to suit you. No, but what it will do is help you to realize that neither honors nor possessions nor place nor all that ever could be could ever so much as diminish one whit, that which is the foundation of your eternal joy and happiness, that you are in Christ, chosen before the foundation of the world. Now if you want something to fight about, this is a good place.

But if you want something to stir your heart with worship and to move you to God in love, this is a good place. Stay here, as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. The only important thing in all the universe to you is you're in Christ.

You're in Christ. And this isn't just some happenstance. It's not something that took place last week or last month or last year.

This has been in his plan from before the foundation of the world. That's the next thing. Look at it.

Now you can make this mean anything you want, and I'm sure that some could make it mean other than I see it to mean. But the before the foundation of the world equals eternity. Eternity past, far as I'm concerned.

The moment you look past the world, you put your head up into eternity. Now that's all there is to it. When you look past what's here, you just can go back to the place that you're beyond the beginning, and then you're in that timeless ocean that had no shore called eternity past.

And that's the place where all this happened. It was before there was a world founded, before anything that we know as a material universe had existence, before God made out of nothing. That's what the

Hebrew word bara, or we understand now.

I don't understand it very well, but I've been told, and there are those that seemingly, they write so that, and speak as though they do, that all matter is comprised of energy and various combinations. Well, by him all things are consist, they're put together, and they're held together. Well, he did it.

He did it. But he did something before he did that. Before he ever made a world, before he made anything in this beautiful empty universe that he gloriously filled with his own presence, he chose us in Christ.

Now, that's good news to my heart, for I'm troubled by time, aren't you? You ever looked in the mirror and realized that, as someone said, that white stuff at the edge is, as Russell Blank, Dr. Blank out in Minneapolis said when I was recently there, he said, those are cemetery feathers. Well, I don't know whether that's what they are or not, but I began to realize that it could rightly be so. And I'm, there's so many things I'd like to do, you know.

It's such a wonderful world God's given us to walk in. And here we've just got 70 years, and we sleep about a third of that. And we're growing up, or going out the other third, and there's not much left, and so much to do, so much to do.

I'm so glad that the one I worship didn't have any problems like that. And before there ever was a world, he just decided that he was going to have beloved. Father was going to have children, and bridegroom was going to have a bride, and the elder brother was going to have brethren.

I'm so glad he decided that. And I'm so glad that when he decided it wasn't any accident about what, and who, and when, and how, and that he's God. You couldn't worship anyone that's less than that.

If God were troubled by time, if God learned in sequence the way you do, if God could only be one place at a time, or maybe just many places at a time, it wouldn't help a bit. He'd just be bigger, and so he'd be frightening. But since, you see, he lives in the eternal now, you can put your head back on someone who's always been all he is, and never has become more than, never been less than he is, and never can become more than he is, and never can have other than he has.

You can put your head back on his omniscient shoulder, his eternal shoulder, and you can love him and rest in him. If he were just old, he'd frighten us. But since he's eternal, and if there'd been some time when he decided to do something or learn something that he hadn't known or hadn't decided, it'd be frightening.

God would be monstrous then. But since he's always known, and since he's always chosen, since he lives in this one unlimited existence dependent upon no one but all that he is, you can worship God. You can adore him.

You can love him. And so this expression, before the foundation of the world, enables you not only to go into orbit and pass the moon and out through the Milky Way, but it takes you right out past the time before there was sun and moon and galaxies, and right out into pure unfilled space where God existed in the glory of all that he is. And right about then, when you've passed all time and passed all matter and back before anything was that is, God chose us in Christ.

I don't know how that makes you feel, but I know how it makes me feel. It just takes the tiredness out of my bones and the weariness out of my heart and the sadness off my spirit and says, oh God, worthy are thou. Worthy.

Because he's God, you see. That's what the text is telling us. That's what he wants us to see.

You see, the writer wants the people at Ephesus and in New York to have the same value on God's love as it had with him. You see, since God chose us before he chose to make a world, before he made the world, that means that we were more important than the world is. That's a concept that's eluded our philosophers and many of our pragmatists of the present day just can't believe this.

The whole concept of the superiority of the state over the individual completely ignores this, says there's something more important than man. And God turns around, he says, your soul is worth more than all the world. All the world.

Well, why? Because God chose to make man and chose the man he would have for his son before he made a world, which means that man's just more important than the world. You have more value in God's eyes than worlds do. And he made worlds for you and he didn't make you for the world.

That just ought to stir your heart again. Then you ought to discover something else. Since God planned for you before he made the world, it means that he made the world to fit his plan for you, which then gives us real substance to Romans 8.28. All things work together for good.

Why? Because he was the engineer. He was the engineer of time. He was the engineer of matter.

He was the engineer of the world. All of these things were created by him and for him and through him and everything that God has done in time and in creation, he's done with an eye single to this, which is his crowning purpose to get a people for his son. That's you, because he's chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.

Well, that's something else that throws out of this to your heart. If he's chosen us before the foundation of the world, that means that nothing that's in the world can separate us from him. Would you like to go to Romans 8 again and there in verses 31 and 32, see the implication of this? If he's chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, there's foundation for what we read here in verses 38 and 39.

I am persuaded that neither death nor life, these are incidental to his choosing, to his purpose, nor angels, their created beings, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, because the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord, began before these things ever were. And nothing that's come after can separate from that which was planned and purposed before. Well, that's good.

Somebody's going to say amen, or praise the Lord, or something here before we finish, or at least I hope you do, or in your heart anyway. I don't need to hear it out loud. Then there's something else.

We don't know what's going to happen in this old world. It looks kind of bad. Someone said, what's going to happen to us recently in conversation? I said, I'll tell you one thing, we're never going to get out of it alive.

I know that. We'll never get out of it alive. Unless the Lord Jesus comes for us, that's the only way we're all going to die.

And kingdoms have died. They never thought Rome would die. It took them a lot longer to die than probably will some of our civilizations.

We're working at it to destroy it much faster than they did in Rome. They were slower and more subtle about it. We're just out with a jackhammer trying to trip it up, and destroy it, and powder it, and see if we can do it in two centuries.

And we're about to do it. So let's recognize that kingdoms may rise, and kingdoms may fall. The world may destroy itself with atom bombs, and nations may decide that they'll commit national suicide, but never fear, your being doesn't depend upon them.

You see, the wonderful part of it is, it doesn't even depend upon your being here. This is the thing that motivated the early church. You see, Nero said, well, I'll get those folks, I'll just exterminate them.

What we're going to do is to put crosses up in the Colosseum, and we'll make a spectacle of these Christians, and that will frighten everybody. The only thing that he did wrong was he got the place so crowded, that he got crosses so near to the edge of the loge, where the seats were, where they could sit and watch. Listen, you know what they did? Fox tells us in the Book of Myers, that these men, hanging upon the cross, realizing that the emperor had commanded the people to stay there, saw this to be a marvelous opportunity to witness.

And so they would talk loudly enough to be heard by the people directly in front of them, but not to interfere with those on the next crosses talking to the next group. And so Nero has put the whole of the leadership of Rome there in the Colosseum, and then he suspends these preachers up there for their valedictories, and hanging on the cross and dying. Instead of cursing Nero and their fate, what do they do? They preach Christ.

They preach Christ. Well, why? Well, you see, Rome couldn't hurt them. They had been chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

And what can the little Johnny-come-lately Nero do to anyone like that? What can he do? How can he hurt them? He can't. He's just there as a puppet in the hands of one who rules, and God had no better way to get the gospel out to all of the leading citizens of Rome than this foolishness on Nero's part. If he'd have been as wise as emperors ought to be, he wouldn't have done such a thing.

He'd have gotten them alone. But here he makes all the leading citizens of Rome fill the amphitheater, puts the Christians up as them face the people, thinking that they're going to scream and denounce the Lord. Instead of that, they hang there patiently dying, preaching Christ in their latest breath.

Well, why? They knew that there were one step from seeing him in whom they'd been chosen before the foundation of the world. I don't know what's going to happen to us. No one does.

But God, the one who stands upon the throne and has the book and is worthy to open it, the book of events, and he knows my life and he knows yours. But he also knows this, that he has chosen you that in whatever circumstances you are to come, whatever way you are to go, whatever path you are to tread, he chose you in Christ before the foundation of the world that you should be holy and without blame before him in love. Now this has two aspects.

That perfect holiness, which is yours because you are in Christ and through Christ, which is going to see you gloriously delivered into the presence of the Lord. Now that holiness is his. His holiness.

That we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Now there's another word for this. It's justification.

Oh, that we can understand that he chose us before the foundation of the world and through the finished work of Christ, we should be before him as if we had never sinned. Our sin imputed to Christ, counted to him his righteousness to us so that we are in his presence without blame, holy. This is the birthright of every forgiven sinner.

Every pardoned sinner is at the moment of redeeming grace brought to this place. This is how you stand, justified through faith in his blood. This, I say, is that which is chosen, purposed by God in the Lord Jesus and through his finished work for you.

But this is not the only aspect of that holiness. He's also chosen that in addition to justification, there should be sanctification. And sanctification in that progressive work wherein the Spirit of God is working in your heart and life to enable you to live holy and without blame in a world that hates you and hates Christ.

You come to Christ as a sinner. All the memory of the past, all of that burning, eating acid of grief over the sins committed, all of that which torments and would, if not dealt with, see you out into an unhappy, Christless eternity where there would be no possibility of joy or relief. I say all of that, which was the thing that separated you from God, is carried by Jesus Christ in your behalf.

Your substitute, dying your death, and you've wondered what to do. Perhaps you've thought some means to work away all that grief, and you've perhaps even tried to hide it by drink or some other abuse, expecting these means to give you peace. No, there's only one way, that the conscience which has been burned by the conduct and actions and attitudes can be relieved of that torturous burden, and that's through faith in Jesus Christ who died for you.

But he didn't die alone to give you a right standing before him. He died and rose again all so that he could make you a right person in your situation, in your life. Therefore, we are chosen according as we've been chosen in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, means that God has made provision in Christ to send you back, if you please, into the very circumstances, situation where it was your downfall.

He will enable you to go right back by his grace to that situation where you were tortured and tormented. I suppose no one is finally delivered until they are exposed to the thing which was their downfall and they find Christ's grace is sufficient. Then's when deliverance is sure and certain.

And he's therefore provided sanctification. This work of the Spirit of God inwardly purifying our motives, purifying our desires, purifying our memories, delivering us from the bondage of attitudes and habits of mind and disposition, yes, even of traits, enabling us to stand holy and without blame before him in love. Now, if you find someone that claims to be justified, claims to be forgiven, claims to be pardoned, and he's not concerned about standing holy without blame before him, you find someone that's either greatly confused or he's trying to confuse you, because that's faith which saves, is the faith which puts into your heart a longing to please God, to glorify Jesus Christ.

Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. This is the evidence, the hallmark of the genuineness of his work. What is this holiness? I've dwelt on it in length in our study of 1 and 2 Peter, but essentially holiness is the desire to please God, to glorify God in every relationship, in every attitude, in every action, to think his thoughts, to understand his mind, and choose it.

Therefore he's chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should want to please God, that we should know how to please God, and we should be enabled to please God. The first that we should want to, he does by the power of the precious blood, cleansing our hearts. The second, how that we should know how, he does through the word of God, instructing us by the Holy Spirit.

The third, that we should be enabled to please God, he does by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to do what we want to do and know we ought to do, that we should be holy without blame before him in love. Now this isn't arrived at at a moment. This is the purpose of the pilgrimage, and this is what's transpiring as we are being transformed by the renewing of our mind.

You've committed yourself in repentance to please God. You've known cleansing through the precious blood day by day. Your mind is being renewed, old attitudes exposed, old habits of thinking revealed, and when you find what God's will is, because of this direction that you fixed at repentance and sealed in regeneration, God enables you to deal with that attitude, with this action, with this relationship, and day by day you're being renewed.

Now I am not dwelling on the crisis aspects. I am dwelling now upon the fact that this is the effect of God's grace. It's an election unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

So don't be afraid of it. According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Let us worship God.

It does our hearts good, our Father, we who are so much the creatures of time and sense and so limited by our experience, who feel the awful pressure of the future as we feel the failures of the past, to be lifted by thy word through thy spirit to the place where we know that something in our lives is enduring and something is eternal, and thy purpose for us was eternal. Thou didst never begin to love us. Thou hast loved us before there ever was a world, and thou art going to continue to love us throughout the endless, rolling, ceaseless ages of eternity.

Lord God of grace, melt our hearts now until there shall rise within us adoration and love and a great longing to be like Jesus and an antipathy to everything and attitude or action or life that grieves thee and a simple childlike desire that wherever our lot is cast and whatever we do, we just have an eye single to his glory. We know, Lord, that thou wilt lead us each in our own paths, for thy purpose is particular. Thou didst know some of us will be well and others sick, some of us rich and others poor, some of us known and others unknown, some of us succeed and others fail.

And yet, Lord, all of this in thy great variety of wisdom because of what's best for us and for thee, and we can look into thy face and tell thee that we love thee because from all eternity we've been the objects of thy love, the apple of thine eye, the beloved, the beloved whom thou hast sought for thyself. Grant tonight that someone may open their heart's door and invite Jesus Christ to come in, for it's still whosoever will. Oh, that someone now drawn by such love, such tender love, may make clear their place and part in that love by receiving Christ as Lord and Savior.

May all of us who have turn about and see the other side of that archway and know that thine eternal purpose included us. Let eternity sift into our hearts, Lord, and drive the dust of time away till we'll breathe that pure air of the heavenly heights. We'll not be bound so much by now and time.

We love thee, Father. Our tongues are so ill-fitted to tell thee of our love. We know that we'll have to have new bodies and minds to ever praise thee as thou art worthy, but tonight we love thee, and we long to know how to praise thee and how to adore thee.

We wouldn't have thee any other than thou art. And oh, Father of Jesus, of love's desire, move upon us until we become a worshipping people, until we know thee as thou hast deserved to be known, and we're like thee. We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Before we say amen and pronounce the benediction, if you have need of any kind or you feel we can be of spiritual help, make it known. We do give you an invitation. We wouldn't let a service close without it.

We invite you to him first and for any help that you would believe we could be to you. To that end, hear and heed his invitation. Let us stand for the benediction.

And now unto him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and honor, dominion and majesty now and forever. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23488.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paris-reidhead/accepted-in-the-beloved/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net