

Ephesians 1 - (Part 2)

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer explores the profound truths of election and spiritual blessings in Ephesians 1, emphasizing God's sovereign love and the moral state of humanity.

Duration: 1:05:25

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the fallen nature of humanity and the doctrine of election. He highlights that humanity is hostile to God and unable to save itself. The preacher refers to Ephesians chapter two, verses one through three, to support his argument that humanity is dead in sin and controlled by worldly desires. He also emphasizes the importance of simplicity in teaching and understanding God's will. The sermon concludes with a reminder that as Christians, we are pilgrims on a journey, with the world behind us, heaven in front of us, and the Bible as our guide.

Transcript

Well, it's a great privilege for me to be here again with you this morning talking about the book of Ephesians, I want us to begin reading in verse one. On through verse six of chapter one, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God, our father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him in love.

He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, I thank you for the privilege that is mine to be here today.

And to teach from this passage. Lord, our minds are so small and our hearts are so narrow. And it's so difficult for us to grasp even the most simple things.

Lord, I pray for grace. Lord, not for eloquence. But simplicity.

To bring forth from this passage, Lord, the simplicity of your will, simplicity of your word. That it might be taught correctly, that all might understand and beatify. Father, that we would walk out of here with a

greater expression, a greater knowledge of you.

A greater devotion to you. And a greater understanding of your working, that we might have confidence even in the day of trouble. Lord, grant us grace.

To the speaker and to the hearer in Jesus name. Amen. Now, today, I'm going to be, again, looking at my notes quite a bit, I want to be very precise.

There are things that I've written down that I labored over intensely so that so that we would be able to truly. Understand these great truths of scripture now in the first three verses, we were studying about the spiritual blessings that have been granted to us, that as children of God, before even the foundation of the world, God decided for us spiritual blessing. As a matter of fact, everything that is contained in the phrase divine blessing now belongs to God's people in Jesus Christ.

Now, we spoke much last week about authority. Why? Because in these things we must stand on the authority of God's word, because many of these blessings, many of these realities, though real and true, are spiritual. We know them through the scriptures and we experience them as we believe the scriptures and walk in the scriptures.

We are a people of faith. We are pilgrims on a highway, as it was said about the pilgrim and Bunyan's pilgrim progress, he had the world behind him. He had heaven in front of him and he had a book in his hand, that's the way you and I have to be as Christians.

Now, in verse three, we talked about God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. And then we come to verse four and we have a very important conjunction. If you have a New American Standard Bible, it is just as or according to.

Now, why is this here? Paul is going to expand upon what he has told us in verse three. In verse three, we have been granted every spiritual blessing in Christ. Now he's going to expand upon that and tell us exactly what that means and how that came about.

Now, I want to read for you and explain three Greek scholars. Now, I don't usually try to bring in Greek scholars and all this sort of thing and try to impress people, but when it will be helpful to us. Then I'll bring them in now, first of all, I want to read Westcott on this idea of just as or according to, he says, several points which follow the several points which follow verse three display the mode and measure of the blessing with which God has blessed us.

You see, you and I, as we have sung in these songs, we were radically depraved. We were hostile toward God. We were sinners with war declarations on our lips and armaments in our hands against him.

So how does it come to be that you and I are now blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places? Well, Paul is going to tell us the mode or the way in which God accomplished this. And not only that, he's going to expand for us what it means to be blessed as we are blessed. Now, he says the historical fulfillment in time corresponds with the eternal divine will.

Now, what does that mean? Most of us were converted, some of us a few decades ago, some of us a few years ago, it happened in history. And right now you're walking with Christ, it is historic, it is real, you're walking with him. But what you need to understand is that your conversion.

All that you've experienced of God up to this point and all you will ever experience of God is based upon what God did for you before he even created the world decisions that he made with regard not only to you as a group, but decisions that he made with regard to each one of you as individuals and a specific well thought out eternal plan. So everything that is going on in your life and everything that you've experienced, both blessing and trial is due to the fact that God contrived a plan before the world was ever created and God chose you to be a part of that plan. Now, he also goes on to say this St. Paul, St. Paul piles up phrase on phrase to show that all is of God's timeless love.

Some people wrongly believe that God began to love them at conversion. No. Some people wrongly believe that God began to love them when he made them.

No. God set his seal on you to love you again, not just as a group. But as a person, he set his seal upon you to love you.

Before even the foundation of the world, it is an eternal love, a timeless love that knows no beginning. My love for my wife knows a beginning. Beginning.

God's love knows no beginning. And we'll have no end with regard to you. Now, I don't know about you, but that gives me a great deal of confidence.

It gives me a great deal of joy, even in the midst of fiery trials. I know that nothing is outside of the sovereign plan of God for me, which was created, which was contrived before the very foundation of the world. Now, I want to read for a moment Lightfoot.

He writes, the bestowal of blessings was the fulfillment, the realization of the election in the eternal counsels of God again, and I want to labor this point because I want you to understand every blessing that you now realize. Every blessing and fulfillment of blessing that you will one day realize in heaven is a result of God's sovereignty toward you. Not only with regard to a plan, but also with regard to his election of you.

God chose you. Before the foundation of the world, God contrived a plan, and now at your conversion, that plan begins to express itself in real time in history and will continue as a reality being fulfilled. As you walk through the countless years of eternity.

Now, I want to read John Eady for just a moment. These spiritual blessings are conferred on us not merely because God chose us, but they are given to us in perfect harmony with his eternal counsel. Sometimes I hear believers say, how could God be so good to me? And sometimes the same believer almost has the fear that if they do something wrong or they pass a certain line, God's goodness will somehow cease.

And what you need to understand. Is the whole thing that God is doing is not so much with regard to you, but with regard to expressing to all of creation who he is and how good he is. So the plan that he began before the foundation of the world, his choice of you will never fail.

He will not let it fail. He will continue being good to you. He will continue leading you.

He will carry you on to glory. Now, if you're here today and you hear that and you say, wow, if God has contrived this plan that will not fail, then I will be apathetic and live in the world, then that is evidence that you do not know God. But if you hear God elected me before the foundation of the world and God contrived a plan whereby one day I would be with him in the greatest, most indescribable glory.

If you hear that and you say to yourself, therefore, I want to love him more. I want to be more holy, I want to be more blameless. I want to follow him, then that is evidence of conversion.

Now, we are going to look right now at several things regarding election. Now, I treat election in the Bible like I treat many other doctrines, particularly the Trinity. Not everything is explained for us with regard to the Trinity, we have certain absolute truths.

God is one and there are three persons who are God, the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. When we bring both of those together and try to explain them and we should try to explain them, it is still our inference and it does not carry with it the same power as absolute truth. With election, I take the road of Martin Lloyd-Jones, I take the road of Spurgeon, I take the road of the reformers, I take the road of the greatest confessions of church history.

But also, I want you to know. That I acknowledge the mystery and the doctrine. That there is as though we're looking at a thing from the rim and that is all.

And when we pass that rim, there is so much more going on that you and I cannot understand. But just because we can't understand it doesn't mean that we should deny it. I cannot explain the Trinity.

But I will not deny the Trinity, I cannot explain election, but I will not deny election or put it away because it's simply against what men think about themselves. When I come to a passage on election, I must teach the passage on election. So let's look at some things.

First of all, the fact there is a fact here, it says, just as he chose us, there is a fact God chose us and from that choosing springs forth everything else that God does with his people. Every blessing, every plan contrived, everything that God has determined is founded upon the fact that he chose and he chose a people for himself. Now, the word is ecological, ecological, it can mean to choose, to select, to elect.

But here's something within the word that most Greek scholars speak much about, especially in the expositors Greek commentary. And it is this. That it means to look at a number.

Or a mass and to select from that number, taking some and leaving others, for example, if I had thirty five marbles on the table and I selected from that thirty five and brought ten to myself now, it's undeniable that's what the word means. So that's the fact of election. Now, this idea of election also is seen throughout the entire Bible.

I'm sorry. Well, I'm not sorry. But if you're angry with the doctrine, it is found throughout the entire Bible.

And let me just look for a moment at Deuteronomy 14 to with regard to the nation of Israel. God said, for you are a holy people to the Lord, your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be a people for his own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. There was one man, his name was Abraham.

God chose Abraham. There were untold millions, possibly even billions of people on the planet at that time, there were people groups, there were tribes, there were all sorts and kinds of peoples, and God chose Abraham. Now, anything else you might want to go behind that and try to begin to explain things that is your right, but the Bible simply says, no, God chose Abraham.

He chose him. It was God's free and sovereign will that chose Abraham. Now, this same passage in Deuteronomy 14, too, is also taken over into first Peter chapter two, verse nine, and it is applied to the church of Jesus Christ.

He says, but you are a chosen race, a holy priesthood or a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. The very same things that were said about Israel in the Old Testament are now taken by the apostles implied to the church. And the primary thing that I want us to see is the word chosen again.

You were chosen. He chose you. It's undeniable the word is there.

Also, I want to just point out quickly in first Peter to nine, after saying that they're a chosen race, he says so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. In our passage here, we're going to see something very important. He chose us before the foundation of the world that we would be holy and blameless before him.

So there is an ethical and ministerial purpose for God choosing you. He didn't just choose you, but he chose you that you might be holy and blameless before him. He chose you that you not only through your mouth, but through your life would declare his excellencies to all of creation.

Now, let's go on, I want us to look at the background of election for a moment. And I feel like this is very, very important, and also this is going to be very scandalous, I can assure you, but it's absolutely necessary to understand election. We must understand something about the mass of humanity from which we have been chosen.

We must comprehend what humanity is. That's one of the most important truths, whenever you're talking about election and what is humanity? Well, just quickly, let's look in Ephesians, just a few passages in Ephesians, chapter two, verses one through three, and you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them, we too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, even as the even as the rest.

This is the backdrop. This is what humanity is. Look in chapter four, verse 17.

So this, I say, and affirm together with the Lord that you walk no longer as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them because of the hardness of their hearts. And they have become callous, having given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. This exalts the doctrine of election, and this proves the necessity of the doctrine of election.

That humanity is fallen, that humanity is hostile to God, that humanity cannot save itself, and I'll go further than that, humanity does not want to be saved. But God. For the sake of his son and to demonstrate his own glory has chosen out of this mass of humanity, a people for himself.

Now, I want to look at three truths about humanity just quickly, first of all, moral corruption. Moral, well, let me start somewhere else here, I want to get back in my notes. The first truth I want to give you about humanity is this, that humanity is radically depraved.

Now, Webster defines the word radical as relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something, something that is far reaching or thorough. When we say that humanity, that man as an individual and as a group is radically depraved, what we are saying is this, that that depravity, moral depravity permeates every aspect of his being. Here in my in my notes, I have verses to back up what I'm going to tell you, moral corruption has polluted the entire person, the body.

Romans 6, 6, Romans 6, 12, Romans 7, 24, Romans 8, 10, Romans 8, 13. Corruption has polluted man's reason. Romans 121, 2nd Corinthians 3, 14 and 15.

Moral corruption has contaminated or polluted man's emotions. Romans 126 through 27, Galatians 5, 24, 2nd Timothy 3, 2 through 4. And moral depravity has permeated the will of man. Romans 6, 17 and 7, 14 to 15.

What am I trying to say to you? Every aspect of man is permeated with moral depravity. Now, let me put it in another way. Every aspect of man is permeated with evil.

We would rather hear that man is a sinner. We would rather hear that man is depraved. But the scriptures teach that the mass of fallen humanity is evil.

Now, let me go on. Humanity is capable of the greatest evil, the most unspeakable crimes and the most shameful perversions. You do not believe that? Have you never studied Auschwitz? Do not think that something like Auschwitz is a phenomenon in humanity or human history.

It is the course, it is the run of the day activity of man. Even at this moment in our own country, we will slaughter thousands of babies a day for our own convenience. You need to understand that what the Bible says about man is true.

And you can't understand doctrines like election. And you most certainly can't understand the doctrine of hell unless you understand something. Man is morally depraved.

Something else I would like to say is humanity's deterioration into unrestrained moral evil would be inevitable and immediate if it were not for the grace of God that exists to restrain the evil of men. Now, what do I mean by that? You'll look around and you'll go, well, not everybody's in agreement with Auschwitz. The the atheist will say, I'm a good man, I will charge someone's battery when their car goes dead in the cold.

I'm not a killer. And what they don't understand is that the only reason. That all mankind does not rush headlong into the moral depravity of Hitler and make him look like a choir boy is because God's common grace is restraining the evil of men.

So they think so that the universe not tear itself apart, giving God time in order to do a work of redemption among men. But if God was to pull his common grace off of all men who lived on this planet this very day, even the men who deny him. It would self-destruct and moral chaos.

In a matter of a few days. That's why when I remember I'm at a university and someone asked me, what about the good atheist? Will he be judged? And I say most severely, why? Because if he is not murdering, if he is not killing and lying and stealing, it is by the grace of God that restrains his evil, the very God he denies. This is very, very important to understand.

Another thing that I want to share with you is that humanity is hostile toward God and hostile toward the will of God. Now, that's just true. You say, no, there's a lot of people, even on television, Hollywood, everywhere, people who love God know they love a God that they made with their own mind.

And basically what they're doing is they're loving an idol, they're loving a reflection of themselves, do you say? Let me ask you a question. When does God get scandalous for man? I want you to think about this. When does God become scandalous and people say, my God's not like that? I don't want a God like that.

When? When we talk about his love? No. When we talk about his mercy. No.

When do people get angry about God when you talk about his righteousness? Now, think about that. When you say that God is righteous, men get angry. Now, why would men get angry at the idea of a righteous God? Because man is not righteous.

What is the great scandal about the law of God when I'm speaking, especially at universities, what will I hear people say all the time? I don't want to hear about the law of God. Why? It suppresses me and oppresses me and holds me down. I had a student actually stand up and say that one time.

I want to hear about the law of God. It's oppressive. And so I asked him in front of the entire congregation, exactly would you explain to me which law is oppressive? Which one do you hate? Is it love your neighbor as yourself? Is it you shall not lie, bear false witness? Is it that you should not commit adultery and steal another man's wife? Or that you should not reduce another human being to an object to be used for your sexual pleasure? Exactly which law is it that oppresses you? And if God's law does oppress you, then what does that say about you? You see, the reason why men are hostile toward God is this.

God is good. And men are not. And so when we we talk about this massive humanity, we're talking about a mass of people.

Given over to corruption, hostile toward God and hostile toward his law, but also we're talking about a humanity that loves evil and refuses reconciliation. Now, think about that, not just that loves evil. But a humanity that refuses reconciliation, humanity cannot come to God.

Men cannot come to God on their own. Now, when I say that, people say, well, if men cannot come to God on their own, then God is wrong in judging them in the same way we would be wrong for judging a man who is blind for not being able to read a sign on the road. What do you mean, man cannot come to God? I mean that because Jesus said that.

But what's the explanation? And why is such a man held guilty? Here's the reason man cannot come to God because man will not come to God and he will not come to God because he hates him and he hates him because he is good. Have you ever heard maybe an elderly lady whose face is just etched with bitterness and you say to her, ma'am, you must forgive your husband? And she says, I can not. I cannot forgive him.

She speaks the same language. He lives in the same house. She's not saying she cannot.

She's saying she will not. She will not. And why will she not? Because of her hostility toward him.

Or a political prisoner, the king comes down to the dungeon and says, I will throw open the door. All you have to do is bow your knee to me and acknowledge my sovereignty. The prisoner leaps up, grabs the

door, slams it closed and says, I would rather rot in this prison than bow my knee to you.

That is man. That is man. Jesus said this in John 3, 19 through 20, this is the judgment that light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than the light for their deeds were evil.

Light came into the world. I'm always hearing people say if the believers would just live like Jesus, then people would be converted. No, you would have a lot of believers crucified.

Jesus came into the world and what did the world do? They crucified him. Why? He gives us the reason. This is the judgment that the light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than the light for their deeds were evil.

For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light for fear that his evil deeds will be exposed. Now. Jesus said in John 6, 44, no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day.

And in John 6, 65, and he was saying for this reason, I have said to you that no one can come to me unless it has been granted him from the father. Now, I want to read something, a paragraph that I've written here in my notes to make myself as clear as possible. When the scriptures speak about election.

It is not in the context of a massive humanity victimized by the devil that wants to be saved, but lacks the faculties to do so. That's why a lot of times men are presented. Victims.

No, that's not the context, the context is this. It is in the context of a massive humanity that is morally corrupt, hostile toward God, that rejects every offer of redemption and that would rather spend an eternity given over to corruption and the miseries of hell than to be subject to God in heaven. That's what we're talking about.

You see, one of the reasons why certain people have so much difficulty with election and they have certainly so much difficulty with hell is because they think man is good. That there's something good in man that wants God, there's a little spark, there's a little something, there's got to be some goodness in there somewhere, and therefore they say hell is immoral. How could you throw man in hell? What you need to understand is that not true.

That's not true. Hell is moral because men are immoral. And the only reason they may look a little moral in the context of present society is because the grace of God is restraining their evil.

But if he was to pull back. Monsters of iniquity. So every time you see some vile crime that comes out on the local news or some atrocity committed by some government that is beyond even the mind to comprehend, realize that is you.

Apart from the grace of God. That is you. You.

Now. I want to look now at God's motivation in election that I think is very, very important, since we provide no motivation for God to save us, then what can be the motivation? Why would God save us? Why would he choose us? The scriptures give us two reasons that are interrelated, and we'll just look at them briefly. First of all.

God chose us for the sake of his glory. Now, let me read to you what I've written here, that through his work of redemption, the fullness of his glory, that is, his excellencies and his attributes might be

manifested not only to creation, but also before himself for his own delight. God has done this great thing to express who he is to all of creation.

Now, let me give you a few quotes from the Puritans and from other theologians, reformed theologians, Thomas Boston, every rational agent proposes to himself an end in working and the most perfect and highest end. Now, God is the most perfect being and his glory, the noblest end.

Now, what does that mean if I see you standing out in the rain and I walk up to you and say, why are you standing out in the rain? You say, because my shower is broke. I may think that's an unusual reason, but it is at least a reason. But if I walk up to you and say, why are you standing out in the rain? You say, I have absolutely no idea why I am standing out here.

This may prove that you are not rational at that moment. Every rational creature, every rational being has a reason for what they are doing, and if they are truly a rational being, they will choose the highest reason or the greatest motivation. And what is that motivation? The glory and honor of God.

So God looks down at a mass of humanity that is hostile toward him, given over to every evil lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God exalting self over God. He finds in that mass of humanity and even in his in his elect, no reason to save them. But God.

To manifest his own glory and his own power, sets his love upon a people and draws them out to display in them and through them who he is now a hard right, since God himself is infinitely worthier than the sum of all creatures, it follows that the manifestation of his own excellence is the highest and worthiest and conceivable, the highest and worthiest and conceivable. You know, it's amazing sometimes when I'm preaching and I will say something like God saved you for him. God's motivation for saving you was him and people will get angry.

I've always thought that's amazing that if I preach to a group of people, God saved you because of you. They go, yes, amen. Yeah, that's that's right.

That's the way it should be. God created this world for you. Yes, God saved you for you.

Yes. But if you say God created the world for himself and God saved you for himself and everything God's ever done, he's had as his highest motivation, his own glory. They go, that's wrong.

Now. Do you see how humanism so creeps in to our way of thinking? It's absolutely astounding. Now, I want us to listen to Charles Hodge for just a minute.

Men have long endeavored to find a satisfactory answer to the question why God created the world. What end was it designed to accomplish? The only satisfactory method of determining the question is by appealing to the scriptures. There it is explicitly taught that the glory of God, the manifestation of his perfections is the last end or reason for all his works.

Again, let me iterate this point. If God were looking for motivation to save man. Do you honestly think he would find it in man? All man has ever done is give reason God to condemn him, give reason to God to condemn him.

If God is to do something other than condemn man, the motivation must not come from man. It must come from God himself. And one of those motivations is his own glory to demonstrate to all of creation just what

kind of God he is.

Now, interrelated with that, though, is also the love of God, the love of God. Why has God chosen you and saved you? He's done it to demonstrate his own glory. Why has God chosen you and saving you? He has also done it to demonstrate his love.

Now, let me read for you here. God chose us for the sake of his sovereign love. The manifestation of the glory of God would be incomplete without a manifestation of his love.

His love is most manifested in his election and redemption of us, the most unlikely candidates possible for salvation. When we talk about the love of God, what would be the greatest manifestation of that love? To pour out his his goodness and kindness on someone worthy. Or to pour out his goodness and kindness on someone who is absolutely and totally unworthy, and that is what God has done for us.

Why did he choose you before the foundation of the world? It was not because of your love for him. But he sovereignly chose to love you. I want to read a passage that is very important in Deuteronomy 7. Just listen to what it says.

The Lord did not set his love on you. You. The Lord did not set his love on you, nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

But it was because the Lord loved you. And here's almost a tautology that we have in Scripture. The question is basically this.

Israel is asking, why did you love us? And how is that love manifested in the choosing of us? So the question is, why did you love us, God? And God says this, I loved you because I loved you. And what is he saying? I did not love you because of you. I loved you because in my free sovereignty, I chose to love you.

I made a decision to love you before the foundation of the world and to work out that love throughout all the councils of eternity, into the creation of the world and into eternity future. I chose to love you. If you're sitting here today and you belong to Christ.

Then you need to know this. He did not set his love on you because you set your love on him. He did not set his love on you because he looked into the future and saw that you would make a right decision.

But before anyone could run or anyone could walk or anyone could do anything, God in eternity set his heart upon you. And he made a plan to bring you. From a radically depraved, God hating creature into a creature that would stand before him, blameless and without spot in heaven, that's what God has done.

In Romans 5 8, it says, but God demonstrated his own love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And when you put that with the other text, which revealed God's sovereignty and his eternal plan. But God demonstrated his own love toward us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us and this Christ was foreknown or chosen to do that before the world was ever created.

Now, I want to look at the context. It says here in Ephesians chapter four, just as he chose us in him. He chose us in Christ.

Now, what does that mean that he chose us in Christ, that he chose us in the context of Christ, that he chose us in the sphere of Christ and that he chose us with a view toward the person of Christ and what Christ would do for his people? And here's what I want you to see. God makes a sovereign choice to

choose a people for himself. But here's the problem, that people is unrighteous.

How can God simply choose an unrighteous people and make them his own? How can he take an unrighteous people and work a sovereign plan in their lives all throughout eternity and bring them to glory? How can he do that? Well, here's what you need to understand. When God makes a sovereign decision, that sovereign decision must still conform to who he is, which is righteous. So if God is going to choose an unrighteous people, then he must also conform that unrighteous people to the standard of his righteousness.

And he does that through Christ when Christ was on Calvary. So God chose you before the foundation of the world. He also, in his plan, contrived that Christ would come and do what? Walk on this earth and live a perfect life.

Then go to the cross and on that cross that he would carry the sins of that chosen people, that all the wrath of God that should fall upon the ones that were chosen would fall upon the son. And when they fall upon the son. Then justice would be satisfied.

Wrath would be appeased. And this great plan stands in perfect agreement now with the righteousness of God. So even though he chose us before the foundation of the world, it was also necessary that he have a plan and a chosen person to make this entire thing conform to his standard of righteousness.

Now, that's the context. Now, when is the time if you look in chapter chapter one, verse four, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world? Now, why is this important? First of all. God chose you before the foundation of the world, which demonstrates that this plan.

And its completion depends upon God and not upon man. That this is his doing, and that should give you the greatest amount of confidence that he started all this before you were even created and he will bring it all to pass, because the primary purpose of this entire plan is to demonstrate to all. His glory and his power, he will not let it fail now, another reason why this is important.

Because it demonstrates something to you. I have seen believers that are constantly afraid. One moment they think they're saved, one moment they think they're lost, one moment they think they're OK with God, one moment they think they're not OK with God and they live in a terror of never knowing where they are.

But God contrived a plan before the foundation of the world. It was not haphazard. It was not just thrown together.

But everything that needed to happen was contrived in that plan so that finally one day you, his elect people, would stand before him in glory, perfectly whole, perfectly holy and without blame. This is the plan. When a person has lived many years walking with Christ and gone through many, many, many, many trials, not just trials outward, but trials inward.

Doubts and failures and everything else. As this happens, that person becomes weaker and weaker and weaker to the point where the person no longer has any confidence whatsoever in self. Where would their confidence be? If God had not contrived a plan, a plan that was not just thrown together, a plan that was not just haphazard, but a complete and perfect plan.

Done in the perfect wisdom of God that he has the power to bring to completion as every year of my Christian life goes by, I find myself looking less at self and more at God and this great plan that he has

contrived on our behalf. Now, I want us to look at the goal of election. Why did he choose you? If you look in verse four, it says just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him.

There is an ethical purpose, there is a reason why God chose you so that one day in heaven you would stand perfect before God. Now, let's look at a few things. First of all, let's define our terms.

The word holy. It means to be separated from all that is common and profane and sinful. And to be separated unto God.

The word blameless comes from the Greek word, the *ah*, the Greek word is a *mamas*. The *ah* is a negative particle, meaning no, *mamas* means stain. Blame.

Disgrace. Or spot. So why has God chosen you so that one day you will stand before him without a wrinkle, without a spot, without a stain, without one piece of blame.

Without any disgrace. Now, can you imagine for a moment if God had left you in your car, in your course and in your cause, if he had left you there radically depraved, God hating, full of his hostility and standing in your own righteousness when you stood before him in glory and before his glorious light, your whole being would be filled with spot, with wrinkle. With stain, with a putrid disease, disgrace and blame would be written all over you so that all of creation would stand up and applaud God's condemnation of you.

But through this work he has done for you in Christ, you will one day stand before him without blame and without spot. Now, I want to put this in the context of who God is. I want to read a text to you that I think is very important.

Hebrews 4, 12. And there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Now, think about this, think about what I'm saying.

And there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. It's saying that before the eyes of God, everyone is laid bare. The idea can actually actually denotes taking an animal that you've just killed, hanging it up and skinning it so that you're able to see everything inside.

It's like taking the hood of a car, lifting it up and looking inside. It's like the recent advance in genetics before we could understand nothing we could see inside of nothing. Now we see so much more.

I've written here. In the very presence of the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shifting of shadow, you are seen without blemish because he has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Imagine for a moment that all of a sudden you just walk into glory, walk into the very throne room of God, walk into the presence of not only God, but of righteous men made perfect of legions of angels.

And you see their glory, you see their light and you're terrified as you begin to drop your eyes and look toward yourself. Realizing that on this earth you walked in so much blemish and so much stain. But when you drop your eyes, you see.

That he has made you perfectly qualified to be there. Without any shame. Without any spot, without any disgrace, you fit and why do you fit only because before the foundation of the world, he elected you only

because before the foundation of the world, he contrived a plan to do this with you.

Now, I want to look at some some particular things that are very important with regard to this phrase, holy and blameless. First of all. He is talking about future, and I want you to understand this in this text, the main idea.

Is future. Now, what do I mean? He begins with eternity past that God chose you before the foundation of the world. When he talks about holy and blameless before him, he's talking about the end of all things in heaven.

But even though he's talking about future here, it has some implications for us today. And what are those implications? I want to look at them. First of all, our position before God right now.

There is a sense in which we can say we are holy and blameless before him positionally because we have been made the righteousness of God in Christ now. Believer, I want you to grab a hold of this. That although you can look in the mirror of God's word and you can see every kind of stain, every kind of problem.

You must stand on the fact that Christ's redemptive work on your behalf is sufficient and that you stand before God, the righteousness of God in Christ, that you can be in that throne room studying the scriptures, you can be in that throne room in prayer. You can walk in the reality that because of the blood of Christ shed on Calvary for you, you can have confidence with God now. That you are right with him now, so it has a very important present day application, but then there's another application.

We are going to be holy and blameless before him. So how should that impact our lives today? There was a queen, I forget, it was either Elizabeth, Victoria, one of those. In England, and when she was a young girl, no one, all the ones watching her, no one wanted her to know that she was going to be the next queen because they thought she will be unbearable.

She won't listen to anybody. She will act like a little bratty sovereign. So let's keep it hidden from her that she is going to be queen.

Around 12 years of age, everyone noticed a complete change in the girl. A complete change, and I mean for the better. And finally, some of the people who were watching over her, the stewards that were caring for her, they asked her.

What is the difference? What has happened to you? And she said this, I discovered that I will be the queen. So I will start acting like a queen now. And that's the way you and I are to be, we were chosen, we were elected, a plan was made to make us spotless and without blame, holy before God, if we are going to be that.

Then let's do that now. Let's act that way now. And I'm not just talking about little rules that you're supposed to obey here and there, that's not what I'm talking about, what I'm talking about.

Is given over to God with a heart. Being devoted to him, his person before his cause. Loving him, clinging to him, seeking him to know him and then to walk in that.

Not to live your life or better yet, not to waste your life in what is common. Dealing with just frivolous things that don't matter, like a very royal lord in England one time, he dedicated his entire life to growing a

hamster with a figure eight on its back. What a waste of life, and yet we do the same thing in many ways.

It doesn't mean that we're all supposed to quit our jobs or anything like that. No, our jobs are our ministries and they're to glorify God. But what I am saying is that we must constantly not just cut away the bad, but cut away the good.

So that we might go after the excellence. So that we might live this life for him now. I want to read to you a few passages, first Peter one, 15 through 16, but like the holy one who called you, be holy yourselves.

Also in all your behavior, because it is written, you shall be holy for I am holy. And don't just when you hear this, think about morality and rules. When he talks about being holy for he is holy, the primary idea is not nitpicking legalism.

When God says he is holy, that means he is separated from all of the things and he acknowledges his worth above all others. And he loves himself with a higher love than can be given to anyone. For us to be holy is to acknowledge the worth of God.

And to pour out lavish our love upon him, to be devoted to him, to think about him, to love him. Be holy and the morality will flow out of that. It's not just be clean.

But it's to be consecrated, devoted, belonging to him. Second Corinthians seven one, therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. Let me ask you a question.

Now, come on, this is a simple text. Does this describe your life? Look at it. Cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit.

As the Orthodox Jew will go around the house and look for a piece of lint. Or look for a piece of leaven rather. And cast it out to make the house totally clean of leaven, do you go through your life? Do you examine your walk, looking for little things that might defile you and not just things that defile you openly, but it's this defilement of flesh and spirit.

Things that would would make your spirit, make your attitude, your your core of your being ungodly, that would influence you to act certain ways, go throughout your life and eliminate those things. Perfecting holiness, would you if someone said, what are you doing today? Would you say, well, I'm perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. And Christians, if someone gave you an answer like that, would you think they were strange? We shouldn't think that strange.

We should perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Now, listen to what he said to Abraham in Genesis 17. Now, when Abraham was ninety nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him, I am God almighty, walk before me and be blameless.

Now think about that. When you're a young Christian, maybe you're in your teens, your 20s, your 30s, and you're excited about the things of God, and then you find so many men, women that are in their 50s, 60s, 70s, and it's like they're not so excited about growing anymore. They're not pushing.

They're not striving, they're not pressing on to know the Lord, they're kind of older now and they're coasting. Look at what we see here. Abraham is ninety nine years old.

And what does God do? He says, walk before me and be blameless. Go on, Abraham, press in farther. This is what I chose you for, Abraham, to walk before me and to be blameless.

Those of you who are older like me. Don't think that you're going to you made it up the hill, now you're going to coast down the hill. Think of it this way.

Every day you're getting closer to glory. And you need to get serious, if ever you got serious about being blameless and holy before the Lord, you need to do it now. You need to do it now.

Second, Peter 314, therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by him in peace, spotless and blameless. Young people, let me tell you something, there are stains, all stains Christ can remove, but there are stains that can affect your heart and your life all the days of your pilgrimage here. Avoid them like the plague.

Seek to be spotless, seek to be blameless, seek to be holy before him in love. Now, it also speaks of our future hope. Jude 24, now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, blameless and with great joy.

Now, think about this. This is a wonderful thing. I've got a trial right now and I really don't know how it's going to come out in the end.

And you know what that does? That makes you weaker. When you sit there and go, do I fight this with all my might, is it a wasted expenditure of my time? What do I do? Because it would be a shame to devote so much time to this one thing and then to lose it all. But it gives great encouragement and great strength when you sit there and go, no, I'm going to win.

And everything I fight for will not be lost, I will not lose a moment, I will not lose a thing. That's the way it is here. It's not like you and I need to to struggle and try to seek the Lord and follow him and cleanse ourself and work to be holy and strive to be consecrated, thinking that in the end we might lose.

No, look at the promise. He is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in his presence, the presence of his glory, blameless and with great joy. You're going to win.

You're going to be there one day, so now you need to live like it. Look for a moment, just quickly back to Ephesians and look at Ephesians, chapter five. Verse twenty five, husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her so that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

And look at twenty seven. That he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless. On the day of judgment, this will be you.

On the day of judgment, this will be you, if you are in Christ, you will be found blameless and without spot. So live like it today, I want to end with two passages from the Song of Solomon. When the great king looks at his bride, this is what he says, you are altogether beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you.

Can you imagine on the day of judgment when entire nations are condemned? And a little saint stands before the throne of God, covered in the blood of Christ, and God says to that little saint, says to you, you are altogether beautiful, my darling. There is no spot, there is no blemish that I find in you. Song of

Solomon, chapter four, verse nine, you have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride, you have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes and a single strand of your necklace.

Basically, what he's saying is I have cleansed you and I have adorned you and I delight in what I have done. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose, for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to become conformed to the image of his son so that he would be the first born among many brethren and these whom he predestined, he also called and these whom he called, he also justified and these whom he justified, he also glorified. What then shall we say to these things if God is for us, who is against us? Brethren, your future.

Is bright. Your future is bright. And that bright future will not expose a single spot or blemish in you.

Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, because of a plan contrived by God before the foundation of the world now walk in this. Don't be apathetic, but be encouraged, cause this to spur you on. He who began a good work in you.

We'll finish, let's pray.

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