

Send Us Out to Serve You (1.7.1984)

by Peter Maiden

Peter Maiden's sermon emphasizes the profound blessings of being chosen, adopted, and redeemed by God through Christ, highlighting the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Duration: 1:04:05

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-4, Ephesians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:1, Ephesians 2:8-10

Topics: "Service"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the transformative power of God in our lives. He highlights the desperate state of humanity, dead under God's wrath and captive to Satan. However, the speaker emphasizes that despite our hopeless condition, God chose to love us and have mercy on us. He also explains that God made us alive with Christ, freeing us from the captivity of Satan. The speaker then delves into the concept of election, discussing who chose us (God), how He chose us (in Christ), when He chose us (before the creation of the world), and why He chose us (to be holy, blameless, adopted as His sons, and according to His pleasure). The sermon concludes with a brief mention of the personal implications of these doctrines for the Ephesian believers, reminding them of their previous state of spiritual death and the need for salvation through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

We're going to read the first 14 verses of chapter 1. And then the first 10 verses of chapter 2. And if you just follow in your own language, I'll read in English, that will save us a little bit of time. We don't want to read it in German either. You just read it at the same time as it is in English.

This is a wonderful blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will.

To the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the one he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood. The forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ. To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment. To bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we also were chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. In order that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory. You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

Having believed you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory. Then to chapter 2, verse 1. Chapter 5, verse 10.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air. The spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time.

Gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God who is rich in mercy made us alive with Christ.

Even when we were dead in transgressions. It is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ.

And seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. In order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace. Expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith. This not from yourselves. It is the gift of God.

Not by works so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship. Created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

Which God prepared in advance for us to do. I want to look with you first at verses 3 to 14 of chapter 1. This is probably the longest sentence in the whole of the Bible. This is probably the longest sentence in the whole of the Bible.

In the Greek text there is absolutely no punctuation. It is one long sentence. In the Greek text there is absolutely no punctuation.

It is simply one long sentence. Blessing after blessing, gift after gift from God is coming before the eyes of the apostle Paul. Blessing after blessing, gift after gift from God is coming before the eyes of the apostle Paul.

This is not an artificially made sentence. This comes from practice. I want you to see first of all how each member of the Trinity is involved in bringing blessing to us.

Paul begins with God the Father in verse 4. He says, God chose us in Christ. Election. Many Christians find the doctrine of election very, very difficult.

And there are many things which are mysterious about this subject. But in the passage we have a number of questions about election answered. Let's look at four questions about election together.

First of all, who chose us? Paul gives the answer in verse 4, God chose us. And then a second question, how did God choose us? And again the answer is in verse 4, He chose us in Christ. And the third

question, when did God choose us? And again the fourth verse gives the answer, before the worlds were created.

And then a fourth question, and it's a very important one, why did God choose us? And Paul gives us four answers to that question. Verse 4, He chose us to be holy and blameless. Verse 5, He chose us to be adopted as His sons.

Also in verse 5, He chose us because that was His pleasure, that was His will. And fourthly, verse 6, He chose us that we might be to the praise of His glory. Now I want you to think about election for a moment.

I want you to try if it was possible to think way, way back before the worlds were created. I want you to think for a moment of God the Father. And God starts thinking of me, He starts thinking of you.

Then He looks upon His own Son and He starts thinking about Him. And long before the world was made, He put you and me and Christ together in His mind. And He decided on a purpose, He decided to do something.

He decided to make us, even though we didn't exist, His own children. And He decided to do that through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. A work which as far as time is concerned hadn't taken place yet.

It's a little wonder we can't understand it all, isn't it? God takes us who didn't exist. And He decides to redeem us through a work which hadn't yet taken place. It's an incalculable mystery.

But it should have two results in my life and your life this evening. First of all it should give us absolute confidence. Your faith, my faith, rests completely upon God Himself.

It doesn't rest on anything in me. That would be a very unsteady foundation. It rests absolutely on God.

And you can see that by looking at that question, when did God choose us? Before the foundation of the world, I wasn't very much involved in that, was I? You weren't around, were you? God has done it all. I hope you're resting on that rock this evening. And then a second thing which this great doctrine of election should do for me is it should challenge me.

Why did God, long before the worlds were made, start thinking of me and start thinking of Christ and putting us together? Why did He do it? That I should be holy today, that you should be blameless today. Some people are very worried about the doctrine of election. They say it leads to unholiness.

Some people think that people will reason like this, well God has elected me, there's not very much I can do about it, so it doesn't really matter very much, I'll just live as I am. How I want to live. But we see from this chapter that rather than encouraging sin, the doctrine of election forbids it.

The primary reason God chose me was for holiness. The only way I can truly know that I'm part of His elect is a desire for holiness in my life. So here is something not for idle speculation.

Not for great theological wrangles, I'm tired of all that. Here is something which should lead us tonight to adoring worship. And here is something which should challenge us right to the depths of our lives.

It's a glorious mystery, God chose me and you. Looking at me you might think it's an incredible mystery, why should God do it? Looking at you I can tell you I've got questions as well. An incredible mystery, but the purpose was holiness.

So that's what God the Father has done, He's chosen us, and then Paul moves on to the Lord Jesus Christ. And he shows us in verse 7 how Jesus has redeemed us. In fact God had a double purpose when He elected you and me.

Not only that we might be holy, but secondly that we might become His sons and daughters through Jesus Christ. The doctrine of adoption is one of the most magnificent doctrines in the whole of the Bible. And to understand it you've really got to understand a little bit at least about the Roman world.

In the Roman world the family was based on what was called the Father's power. And under Roman law a father had absolute authority over his children. And that authority was for as long as he and his children lived.

He could sell his children as a slave, just like that. He could even kill his children if he chose. There are only one or two incidents recorded in history of it happening, but there was no recourse to law.

A father could kill his child without question. It didn't matter how old the son became. It didn't matter how high he was elevated in society.

He was still absolutely under his father's power. You can see then how serious adoption was in that kind of world. And the ceremony of adoption was a very serious, solemn ceremony.

Three times the real father would sell his son to the person who was buying him. Three times he would sell his son. And then twice he would buy him back having sold him.

But the third time he wouldn't buy him back. That moment adoption took place. At that moment it was absolute and complete.

The person who was adopted had all the rights of a legitimate son. And he completely lost all the rights of his own family. In Roman law he became a new person.

All the debts, all the obligations of his old life were immediately dealt with the moment he was adopted. Now think again of what Paul is saying here. God has adopted us in Jesus.

We were absolutely under the power of sin. Sin had total dominion over us. But God through Jesus has taken us out of that power.

He's cancelled all the debts, all the obligations of that old life. And now we live completely under the power of Jesus. I've talked to Christians even this week who are still troubled about sins committed before they were converted even.

You really do need to understand adoption if that's your problem. All the debts, all the obligations of that old life, they're finished with. You are a member of an entirely new family.

Paul says, God the Father has chosen you. Now the Lord Jesus has redeemed you. He snapped all that was holding you in your own life, your old life.

He set you free from the dominion of your old life so that you can now be a child of God. And then Paul moves on to what the Holy Spirit has done. And he shows us in verse 13 that we've been sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Imagine you were a child in a slave home in a Roman family. It's a pretty wretched existence. One day your father decided to sell you.

Along came a Roman nobleman. He had no children. And yet he wanted his family to be extended into the next generation.

And he was willing to buy you and to adopt you into his noble family. What a change that would be for that child. The moment he was adopted, the moment his father refused to buy him back that third time, he became in Roman law a full member of his new family.

Now look at verse 13. Having believed, you were marked in Christ with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. And he has a deposit guaranteeing your inheritance.

It's a tremendous family to be adopted into, isn't it? Once we were slaves of sin. There was absolutely no hope. There was no future but hell.

Jesus Christ has adopted us. And our inheritance is guaranteed. Now in the second half of this chapter, verse 15 onwards, Paul prays that the believers might really understand that.

And I hope you have some understanding of this fact. Being a member of the family of God, it is a fact. You have a tremendous inheritance, but I hope you understand something of it.

Now it's very difficult for us to really understand what this inheritance is. What is heaven going to be like? We don't really know, do we? But the Bible does tell us a number of things. One day, I am going to see Jesus Christ.

And I'm going to fall on my knees, and I'm going to look in his face, and I'm going to worship him. And that vision is going to transform me. Because when he appears, the Bible says, I'm going to become like him.

Now I often hope that that means physically I might change somewhat. But in every sense, when I see Jesus, I'm going to be transformed, and I'm going to become like him, like him in holiness. That's part of my inheritance.

Now how do we know that? How can we be absolutely sure that if we died this evening, that would be our experience? How can we be sure? It's the Holy Spirit who gives us that assurance. Paul says the Holy Spirit is two things. Number one, he's a seal.

Number two, he's a deposit. Think first of all of a seal. In the ancient world, and of course in many ways, it's still true today, when a package or a box is being sent somewhere, the crate, the box, is sealed.

The seal often does two things. First of all, it guarantees that it comes from the sender. And secondly, hopefully it guarantees that it's going to arrive intact.

Now that's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. First of all, the Holy Spirit tells the world where you've come from. As the world looks on and sees the fruits and the gifts and the graces of the Spirit in your life and mine, they say, there's a child of God.

I know where he's come from. I know where she's come from. They're God's people.

Secondly, the seal guarantees safe arrival. And I often praise God, I don't know about you, but I often praise God that Paul says here, the Holy Spirit is my seal. He's going to guarantee my safe arrival in heaven.

And when my desire is to go astray from God, the Holy Spirit comes and convicts me. I believe that so often as I seek to live in the Spirit, he directs me around difficulties. He's there to ensure my safe arrival in heaven.

But Paul says he's also a deposit, he's a guarantee. I'm one of those very few OM leaders who actually own a house. If you want to come and talk to me about Luke 14, 33 afterwards, I'll be very happy to fellowship with you.

But you know, how did I buy a house? Well, I bought it long before I entered OM. And I remember the great day arriving when I'd saved up sufficient for a down payment for the property. And when I could put that money down on the table, I was given the keys and I could enter the house.

Mine in one sense, and yet in another sense, not fully mine. It's actually going to be another 20 years before the house is fully mine, if we ever get that far. Now the Holy Spirit is like that.

He gives us a foretaste of heaven. The vision he gives us of God. The joy he gives us in our hearts.

The way he links us together in fellowship with each other. This is a foretaste of what it's going to be like in eternity. We haven't received the whole.

It's not fully ours yet, but we have the Holy Spirit as a taste of what it's going to be. I hope you're beginning to see why Paul forgot his punctuation. It's all enormously thrilling, isn't it? The whole of the Trinity is working together for your blessing and mine.

The Father choosing us. The Son redeeming us so that we can be adopted. Then the Holy Spirit comes and stamps it.

Seals it and guarantees heaven for us. In the rest of the chapter, Paul prays for the Ephesians. He says, this is all fact.

It's all true. But he prays, I long that your eyes will be opened so that you can really understand it and see it. And I pray that more and more this year, our eyes will be opened.

And we'll really begin to understand what Father, Son and Spirit are doing for us. Just before we break bread, I want you to move on to chapter 2, and this will be very brief. Paul has been looking at great doctrines in chapter 1. But in the first 10 verses of chapter 2, he makes it all so much more personal.

And he shows the Ephesian believers four very simple things. First of all, he shows them what they were like before they came to know Jesus Christ. And I think before we break bread together, it's good just to pause and remember that.

Paul says, there's two things I want you to remember about your pre-conversion days. First of all, verse 1, you were dead. Dead.

Lifeless. Without hope. Without hope.

We couldn't help ourselves. No other human being could help us. There's not very much you can do about a corpse, is there? The most brilliant evangelist with the most brilliant evangelistic system can come along to a corpse, but not much is going to happen.

Can you remember those days? Absolute hopelessness. But Paul goes one step further than that. At the end of verse 3, he says, before you came to know Christ, you were by nature objects of the wrath of God.

It's a very interesting phrase, isn't it? You could study it for a long time. You've got the clearest statement here of original sin anywhere in the Bible. By nature we were under God's wrath.

We were born in sin. It wasn't just the practice of our life. It certainly was that, but it was more than that.

We were by nature under God's wrath. So that's what we were before we came to know Christ. And then Paul in verse 2 shows us what we did in those days.

First of all, he says, we followed the ways of this world. I wonder if you can remember those days. All that you were interested in was this world, this age.

You were living today, tomorrow could take care of itself. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die, was your motto. Then God burst into your life.

And all of a sudden there was a much more important day than today. It was the day of God, it was the day of Christ, the day when you'll see Jesus. You were living now for a different day.

All your motivation, all your energy was towards that day when you'd see Christ. And then Paul says, secondly, before conversion we followed the ruler of the kingdom of this world. Many people don't realize it, they'd be horrified if you suggested it.

But every man is a captive of one of two people. You're either a captive of Jesus Christ or you're a captive of Satan. Verse 2 actually speaks of a spirit of evil within a person who does not know Jesus.

This then is the non-Christian, dead and under God's wrath. Living only for today and captivated by Satan. Some of you are looking totally and utterly depressed.

And verses 1 to 3 are pretty black, aren't they? They're bad news for the human race. But then you've got two fantastic words in verse 4. But God. Isn't that the testimony of your life? If you were to stand up here and you're asked to give your testimony, isn't that what you'd say? But God.

I had made an enormous mess. I was in a hopeless condition, but God. So the third thing which Paul does is he shows us what God has done for us.

First of all, verse 4, he has loved us and had mercy on us. Those words slip from your mouth very easily, don't they? God loves me. But it's incredible.

Dead under his wrath. Captivated by Satan. And yet for some reason, only known in the mind of the Godhead, God chose to love me.

And chose to have mercy on me. Now look at the second thing which God did. He made us alive with Christ.

This statement is linked with verse 20 of the previous chapter. He's talking there about the tremendous power of God which raised Jesus from the dead. In verse 1 of chapter 2, he says, you also were dead.

But God not only raised Jesus, he raised you. He raised me with Jesus. We were identified with him in his death and we were identified with him in his resurrection.

His victory on that cross is my victory. It's your victory. His resurrection means absolutely my resurrection, spiritual and physical.

I love taking children's meetings. And I love trying to teach doctrine to children. And one day I was trying to teach this doctrine to children and I wasn't getting anywhere.

So I asked a little fellow to come out to the front of the meeting. And he did. And I said, well, if you keep on coming up, what's going to follow? And he looked at me as though I was very simple.

He was probably right, of course. He said, what do you mean, what's going to follow? I said, if you keep coming up, what's coming next? He said, the body, you idiot, the body. And that's exactly Paul's argument.

The head is alive. The body must rise with it. His victory is our victory.

When we break bread together tonight, we were identified with him in his death. When we think of his resurrection, it's my resurrection. It's your resurrection.

And then the third thing God has done for us is he has saved us, verse 5. He saved us by his grace. The word has the idea of rescue about it, doesn't it? It's got the idea of deliverance about it. I don't know whether this has happened in your country, but there's been a change in terminology in England about salvation.

I can remember when I was a child, people used to talk about getting saved. And then people started talking about making a decision. And now people talk about making a commitment.

You know, I like this word saved. God has saved me. It was hopeless.

But God moved in. And plucked me like you pluck a brand out of the burning fire. So that's what God has done for us.

And finally Paul shows us what we now are. And he does that with one simple statement in verse 10. We are God's workmanship.

We've been put together with the handiwork of God. And if I was to give my testimony tonight, and to be really honest, that's about all I could really say. It's been all of God.

It's His handiwork. I think the first two chapters of Ephesians are just tremendous. All the Trinity has been involved and is involved in bringing blessing into your life.

But it's not just some great doctrine for you to believe. It's marvelously personal. Left to ourselves death and hopelessness.

Captives of the devil. But God. Loved us.

Saved us. Raised us with Christ. We're His work.

And we should be worshippers this evening. Let's pray together. Father what can we say when we read these scriptures? The very best words we can dream up just don't seem adequate to thank you for all that you've done.

And Lord we know that though you love to hear our words, what you're looking for is the sacrifice of our lives. And Lord Jesus we just want to say that we are very very grateful for all you've done for us. And in our gratitude we just want to give ourselves entirely to you again this evening.

Even now Lord as we think of your death and as we take this bread and wine together. Even now Lord as we think of your death and as we take this bread and wine together. We want to give ourselves fresh to you.

In Jesus name. Amen. I wonder if Susie Buss is here.

Is Susie here? She was going to sing to us. Susie is going to come and sing some songs to us. Thank you Susie.

I don't know if you want to translate what I'm going to say. I've given a bit of thought as to what I wanted to sing tonight. And two things really came to my mind.

One was how important it was to recognize that to really please God we need to be His servants. Over the last couple of weeks of the conference that's been very much what the Lord has been saying to me. Not to look for thanks or not to look for you know that's nice, that's good.

But to do it is unto Him. And another thing that has been very much on my heart is how much He loves to hear us worship and adore Him. Thank you.

If I give my life completely I'll have to trust myself to you to get anxious for tomorrow to give yours. My Jesus, I love Thee. I know Thou art mine.

For Thee all the follies of sin I resign. 67 For the Lord Jesus in His death. And to help us to do so I want to just remind you of the events which took place on that hill called Calvary.

I'll read the events from Mark's Gospel chapter 15. And maybe rather than following you just want to sit and think as you hear these words. But I'll read in English and if others could follow in their own language that would help.

It's from verse 6 to verse 39. After this we'll just have an open time of worship when we'd appreciate it if some could lead us as we think of the Lord Jesus in His death. Now it was the custom at the feast to release a prisoner whom the people requested.

A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews? Knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. What shall I do then with the one you call the King of the Jews? Pilate asked them. Crucify him they shouted.

Why? What crime has he committed? Asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder. Crucify him.

Wanting to satisfy the crowd Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace that is the praetorium and called together the whole company of soldiers.

They put a purple robe on Him and wove a crown of thorns and set it on Him. And they began to call out to Him. Hail King of the Jews! Again and again they struck Him on the head with a staff and spat on Him.

Falling on their knees they worshipped Him. When they had mocked Him they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him out to crucify Him.

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon the father of Alexander and Rufus was passing by on his way in from the country and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha which means the place of the skull. Then they offered Him wine mixed with myrrh but He did not take it and they crucified Him.

Dividing up His clothes they cast lots to see what each would get. It was the third hour when they crucified Him. The written notice of the charge against Him read The King of the Jews.

They crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left. Those who passed by hurled insults at Him shaking their heads and saying So, you who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days come down from the cross and save yourself. In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked Him among themselves.

He saved others, they said, but He can't save Himself. Let this Christ, this King of Israel come down now from the cross that we may see and believe. Those crucified with Him also heaped insults on Him.

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani which means, My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me? When some of those standing near heard this they said Listen, He's calling Elijah. One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar put it on a stick and offered it to Jesus to drink.

Leave him alone now. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down, he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed His last.

The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus heard His cry and saw how He died he said, Surely this man was the Son of God. Let's remember Him together.

Let's have a few, just lead us in worship and remembrance.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29291.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/peter-maiden/send-us-out-to-serve-you-171984/>

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