

## **MEMBERS SLIDE MEMBERS MEETING**

- Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>
- In-between services
- All are welcome, members vote.
- 3 elder candidates (Kyle Knight, Justin Wellum, Nate Wertz)
- Eric Shelly rolling off
- Speak now or forever hold your peace.

## **PODCAST SLIDE NEW PODCAST**

- Going Deeper podcast
- Every Wednesday
- Topics to help you go deeper.
- [fathomchurch.org/deeper/](http://fathomchurch.org/deeper/)

## **EPHESIANS SLIDE INTRODUCE**

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to Ephesians chapter 1.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to Ephesians 1,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find Ephesians 1 on page **976**.

## INTRODUCTION

I've told you about our yellow lab puppy, Mabel, who actually turned one this weekend!

Now, we plan on having Mabel spayed, ok?

- First, because I love Bob Barker...
- And second, while we love puppies...
  - we don't love them that much...

But our vet told us that with labs,

- they now want you to let the females go through their first heat
- before you have them spayed
- because the hormones help prevent certain cancers.

Now, I've never had a dog in heat,

- so, I Googled it...
  - and got WAY more info than I ever wanted!
- So, we stocked up on doggie diapers,
  - which was kinda an awkward thing to buy.
- and we got prepped for Mabel's first heat.

Well, Mabel went into heat last Thursday.

- So, we diapered her up.
- and we're in it, y'all!
- Here's a picture **PIC SLIDE**
  - She just looks so ashamed...

But I told our 7-year-old daughter, Harper,

- that Mabel was in heat
- and that's why she had to wear the silly diapers.

And Harper was confused...and asked,

- *"What's 'in heat'?"*
  - So, I told her,
- *"Well, it's when a dog is ready to have puppies."*
  - And Harper got very excited!
- But I said, *"But we don't want her to have puppies,*
  - *So, after her heat,*
  - *we're going to get her fixed."*

And she looked confused again...and then proceeded to ask,

- *"Daddy...have you ever been in heat?"*

And I honestly didn't know how to answer her.

- *Do I answer "no"...*
- *OR do I answer "always"?*

## **EPHESIANS SLIDE**

### **PREDESTINED**

Sometimes I just don't know how to explain

- complex and sometimes sensitive things
- to my daughter.

And in today's text we come to one of those things that's difficult to explain,

- and not just to 7-year-olds,
- but to all of us.

The idea is PREDESTINATION, and the larger topic is HOW GOD SAVES.

So, in the free-will/predestination debate,

- even for well-seasoned Christians,
- it can be one of those things that's difficult to explain.

Did God predestine our lives and our salvation from eternity past?

Or, do we have free agency to decide to follow Jesus?

## TRANSITION

Well, these are complex topics.

- And the Apostle Paul jumps right into it...
- at the beginning of the book of Ephesians.

And just a bit of forewarning,

- this is a pretty deep topic,
- and I did a lot of reading and listening
  - to pastors and scholars and theologians
- to put this together.

And one verse that is helpful when we wade into these tough topics is Deuteronomy 29:29.

## SLIDE DEUTERONOMY 29:29

[29] "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

So, there are some things that are revealed,

- and they are clear,
- and we can grasp them.

And then there are some things that the scriptures tell us are secret things.

- And the secret things,
  - no matter how much we philosophize
  - or theologize
  - or systematize...

there's a level of mystery and hiddenness that still remains.

## **EPHESIANS SLIDE**

### **ILLUSTRATION: OCEAN**

It's like this: this summer we took my daughter Harper to San Diego, and she saw the beach and the ocean for the first time in her life.

And when we got to the beach,

- her eyes got real wide...
- and she grabbed my hand...
- and we started wading out into the ocean.
  - And as we got further and further in,
  - and the waves crashing against us got bigger and bigger,
  - she gripped my hand tighter and tighter.
- And by the time the waves were hitting her square in the chest,
  - we're in like 4-feet of water...

- and she says to me...
  - *“Daddy, the ocean is so deep!*
  - *Don’t let go of me!”*
- And I said, *“Oh, I won’t let you go! But let’s go a little deeper.”*
- And we took another step out...
- But I thought to myself,
  - *“Girl, we are only a few yards out...”*
  - *you can’t even imagine how deep this thing goes.”*

## TRANSITION

This is the deep we are wading into today.

- And listen, when it starts to feel deep,
  - and the waves start slapping you in the chest...
  - and you might just think you’ve reached the depths.
- Remember, you’re only a few yards out.

We cannot get our minds completely around this one.

- There are just some secret things.

But we can go in a bit further...a bit deeper...so, let’s get to work!

I want to start by reading the whole passage out loud,

- just so you can get a feel for it with me,
- so please follow along in your text,
- Ephesians 1:1-14

## EPHESIANS 1:1–14

[1] Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

[2] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

## EXPLAIN: GRAMMAR

Now, that is on heck of a passage of scripture.

And in the English this is broken into two paragraphs with 5 sentences.

- But in the original Greek,
- verses 3-14 is one LONG run-on sentence.

It's a 202-word,

- poorly punctuated,
- theological masterpiece...
- and every English teacher's worst nightmare.

## EXPLAIN: ORDER OF SALVATION

Now, we're asking HOW DOES GOD SAVE?

And the best way I know how to do that is to go theologically.

- So, what I want to do is give you a nice list of 10 steps,
  - I'll have this come up on the screen,
- but this is what's known as the *ordo salutis*,
  - which is a Latin phrase meaning
  - **SLIDE ORDER OF SALVATION**

And different theologians over the last 2000 years have tried to systematize what actually happens in salvation.

- Ephesians 1 is one of the primary places
  - they build out this order of salvation.
- Also, Romans 8, which I had read over us, is another place.

So, this is deep, but it's the best way that theologians have come up with to describe the salvation process.



- Step 1 is **SLIDE ELECTION**
  - That is, God's choice of people to be saved.

Now, we'll describe this one in greater detail as we continue on.

- Step 2: **SLIDE** the **GOSPEL CALL**
  - That's when God calls to you from hearing the gospel
- Step 3: **SLIDE** **REGENERATION**
  - This is the moment in time where you are born again.
  - It's the moment when the gospel message clicks,
    - and you are inwardly regenerated.
- Step 4: **SLIDE** **CONVERSION**
  - This is the outward move on the inward regeneration.
  - This is when a person responds
    - to the regeneration
    - in their hearts
    - with faith and repentance.
  - So, this might be when it feels like you
  - "made a decision to follow Christ"
- Step 5: **SLIDE** **JUSTIFICATION**
  - This is a legal term,
  - meaning you are...
    - at that moment
    - in a right legal standing with God.
  - Justification is that moment
    - when you are declared not guilty for your sins,
    - because they were paid for by Jesus on the cross.

- Step 6: **SLIDE ADOPTION**
  - Where we are not only cleared of the charges of our sin,
  - but we are brought in as members in God's family.
  - We are made his sons and daughters.
- Step 7 is **SLIDE SANCTIFICATION**
  - Steps 3-6 happen in a moment...
  - And sanctification BEGINS at that same moment...
    - but it CONTINUES over a lifetime...
  - It's that ongoing and progressive work of
  - growing in the right conduct of life.
  - This is you growing to be like Christ.
- Step 8 is **SLIDE PERSEVERANCE**
  - This just means that if you are a Christian...
  - you remain a Christian.
- Step 9 is **SLIDE DEATH**
  - Which seems strange,
  - but this is a part of your salvation process,
  - that is, going to be with the Lord.
- And step 10 is **SLIDE GLORIFICATION**
  - Which we studied in 1 Corinthians 15,
  - but this is when you receive a resurrected body
  - and live in that glorified state
  - with God for all of eternity.

## TRANSITION

So, this is the ORDER OF SALVATION,

- and we should note that steps 2-6 and the start of part 7
  - are all a part of “becoming a Christian.”
- Part 7 & 8 progress through this life.
- 9 happens at the end of this life,
- and 10 when Christ returns.

## POINT 1: CHOSEN

Now, I only have time to unpack a few of these today...

- We could literally spend a few weeks of sermons
- just on this passage.
  - That’s why I read the whole thing to you.

So, we won’t get to all of them, but we’ll get to a few.

Let’s start with the most controversial. Step 1: ELECTION.

So, look again at Ephesians 1, verse 3.

## EPHESIANS 1:3

[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

- So, God the Father,
  - first person of the Trinity,
- has blessed us in Christ,
  - second person of the Trinity,

- with every spiritual blessing, that is, salvation.
  - And the Holy Spirit shows up in verse 13...
  - just so you know he's not left out.

So, the whole triune Godhead blesses us with salvation...

And now, here's how God did it. Verse 4

## EPHESIANS 1:4

[4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

### POINT 1: CHOSEN

This is step 1 in the order of salvation.

#### SLIDE WE ARE CHOSEN

This is commonly known as election or predestination.

And Paul mentions this a few times in this passage.

- Verse 5: In love he predestined us
- Verse 11: having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will

So, this is so unbelievably important: GOD CHOSE YOU FIRST

- You may have responded in your conversion, ok?
  - That's step 4

That's where we chose...but God chose you first.

In fact, in these 12 verses there are 24 verbs, or action sequences in it:

- and God does 20 of them.
  - Verse 3, God blesses;
  - Verse 4, he chooses;
  - Verse 5, he predestines and adopts;
  - 6, he bestows grace;
  - 7, he redeems and forgives;
  - Verse 8, he lavishes;
  - 9, he makes known and he purposes;
  - 10, he unites together in Christ;
  - Verse 11, he works;
  - And in verse 13, he seals.

And we only do 4...here are the 4 that we do:

- we listen;
- we receive;
- we believe;
- and we hope.

Tell me that's not beautiful!

And the text says that he chose us **before the foundation of the world.**

You know what that means? He chose you...

- Before you ever attended church
- Before you ever prayed a prayer
- Before you ever read your Bible
- Before you ever gave money

- Before you ever served
- Before you did anything GOOD to deserve it...
  - or BAD to disqualify you...

GOD CHOSE YOU!

And this idea of predestination doesn't just show up in the New Testament.

- God's people, the Israelites, were elected...
- and the Old Testament is filled with mysterious explanations
- as to why God chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...

### **SLIDE DEUTERONOMY 7:7–8a**

[7] It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, [8] but it is because the LORD loves you...

This is God saying,

- *"I didn't choose Israel because they were great,*
- *or had such potential!*
- *No! I chose to love you...*
- *because I love you."*

That is a beautiful redundancy.

But that's fatherly love.

- It doesn't need...
  - nor can it give an explanation.
- It just is.

I love you...because I love you.

## ILLUSTRATION: HARPER

The only relationship where I can get a glimpse of this kind of love in is my daughter.

### PIC SLIDE

- You see, on the day my daughter was born,
- I immediately loved her!
  - I didn't know her.
  - I didn't know what she would do.
  - I didn't know if she'd turn out good or bad.
- But I loved her.

And in fact, once I got her home, what did she do for me?

- Nothing!
- She was legit a drain.
  - She made my wife go crazy.
  - She never let us sleep.
  - She only made a mess.
- She was so selfish...
  - I mean, has anybody's kid ever go,
  - "No, no, just finish what you're doing."
  - NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD!

She did nothing to deserve my love.

- But I love her.
  - Why?
- Because I do.

That's the one relationship where I experience love for someone that doesn't have an explanation.

- I don't love her because she is lovely,
  - though she is!
- I just love her.

The doctrine of predestination says this:

- God chose you,
- before time,
- because he loves you.

### **EPHESIANS SLIDE**

### **OBJECTIONS**

Now, there are some objections to this idea.

Some say, *"Well, doesn't God choosing me violate my free will?"*

I'd answer NO.

- The Bible says God's choice is never against our will...
- but always in concert with it.

Sometimes the Bible says things like,

- I chose you before the foundation of the world
  - but in others Jesus said,
- Whosoever WILL may come.

And John 6:44 says:

### **SLIDE JOHN 6:44a**

[44] No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.



So, our choice to come AND the Father's drawing GO hand in hand.

- Our problem is NOT
  - that we WANTED to choose God
  - and we COULDN'T;
- our problem is that deep down
- NONE of us would choose God.

This is why Charles Spurgeon says this,

**SLIDE** *"I have no questions that God chose me, because I am quite sure that if God had not chosen me I should never have chosen him."*

Another objection: *"Well, why didn't God choose everybody?"*

- And this is the part of this discussion
- where a certain amount of mystery sets in/
- But the Scripture never presents a lack of God's choosing
  - as the reason why someone didn't come.
- Not once! It's always on us.

**SLIDE** **MATTHEW 23:37**

[37] "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and YOU WERE NOT WILLING!"

## **SLIDE 2 PETER 3:9**

[9] The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is PATIENT TOWARD YOU, not wishing that any should perish, but that ALL should reach repentance.

## **SLIDE REVELATION 3:20**

[20] Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If ANYONE hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

### **CHART SLIDE**

And I realize there is mystery there, but here is what is revealed:

- If you're a Christian, it's because God chose you.
- If you're not, it's because you have chosen to reject God,
  - and the Lord is not willing that you should perish,
  - but that you should come to repentance.

To quote Pastor J.D. Greear:

- *"Are you chosen?"*
- *If you choose to repent and believe in Jesus, you're chosen.*
- *The choice is yours."*

## **TRANSITION**

So, that's election...predestination...WE ARE CHOSEN.

But I want us to focus on another part of the Order of Salvation in this text  
Verse 5.

## EPHESIANS 1:5

In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will

### POINT 2: CHILDREN

- So, we are predestined for what?
  - For adoption.
  - Yes, step 6 on the Order of Salvation is adoption.

WE ARE CHOSEN.

And **SLIDE WE ARE CHILDREN**

- We are adopted by him
- as sons and daughters
- according to the purpose of his will!

Now, adoption is one step of salvation that we can functionally reject... because it feels too personal!

- Maybe you buy into God choosing you,
- and hearing his gospel call,
- and being born again,
- and responding in faith,
- and having your sins paid for...
- but adoption feels almost too good to be true...it's too intimate!

It'd be like going to court, KNOWING YOU'RE GUILTY, but the judge says,

- *"I find you not guilty...*
- *because my son paid for your crime...*
- *AND NOW I want you to move into my home,*
- *and I'll take care of you,*
- *I want you to be my child now."*

## **ILLUSTRATION: ADOPTION**

Now, we have a bunch of families here at Fathom who serve as foster parents and adoptive parents to children.

- And man, what an incredible picture of the gospel.
- Adoption is a beautiful picture of what happens...
  - when God chooses us.

Think about it: **in adoption the kids don't choose the parents.**

It's not like 8 parents walk into a room and there's a kid in there like,

- *"Alright y'all.*
- *Let me take a look at you.*
- *Number 3, turn around.*
  - *Is that a cell-phone belt holster?*
  - *Sheesh! I'm embarrassed already!*
- *Parents #6, Xbox or PlayStation?*
  - *Sega...what's that?*
  - *You're definitely out!"*

No! The parents choose the child.

And in adoption the parents pay the cost.

Whatever the cost,

- financial,
- emotional,
- and let me tell you, it ain't cheap.

But there's no adoption where the kid moves in and says,

- *"Alright, what do I owe you to stay?"*
- *Do you want me to start paying you back now?*
- *Or after I graduate High School?*
- *Can we do this on an installment plan?"*

No. That doesn't happen.

And in adoption,

- the child takes on the family's name,
- and begins to become like their adoptive parents.
- It's just what happens.
- We become like our parents!

So, if you're young in here...sorry, but you're becoming like your parents.

I freak myself out all the time when I realize I have become Tom Martin.

- I sound like him.
- I look like him.
- I even say some of the things he says.

I'll find myself turning off lights in my house saying,

- "Is there anyone in this room? No.
- Is there anyone in this room? No."

Or just this week, we had the AC is on, and the door was open. I said:

- "Well, I guess we're air conditioning
- the whole neighborhood."

My dad said that! Not me!

But we become like our fathers...that's that sanctification part!

**CHART SLIDE**

## TRANSITION

You see all these woven into this passage!

So, we are chosen...we are children.

One more. Look at verse 13:

## EPHESIANS 1:13

[13] In him you also, when you HEARD the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

## POINT 3: CALLED

- WE ARE CHOSEN...
- WE ARE CHILDREN...
- And **SLIDE** WE ARE CALLED

God calls to us with the message of the Gospel.

And listen, for some of you, this is happening to you right now.

- You may have been to church before.
- You may have heard sermons before.
- But somehow,
  - by the grace of God,
  - maybe today for the first time
  - this stuff is making sense.
- You may not understand all of it...
  - ok, you're only a few yards into the ocean...
- but you're like, *"I think he's talking to me!"*

If you're NOT a Christian:

- You can be chosen!
- You can become his child.
- You're hearing the call...
  - will you respond in belief?
- The choice is yours.

Jesus said, *"I stand at the door and knock."*

- Some of you are here because he is drawing you.
- He's put in you that hunger, that desire to know God.
  - Say yes!
  - Receive his offer of forgiveness
  - and submit to him as Lord
  - and he will save you, right now!

Remember the four things in this passage that we do:

- we listen;
- we receive;
- we believe;
- and we hope.

## EPHESIANS SLIDE WITH PADS

### CONCLUSION

Christian,

- you are chosen.
- You are his child.
- And you are called.

Do you believe that?

- You may not agree with some of the theologies I taught. Fine.
- Frankly, you don't even have to understand how it all works.
  - Listen...I've got multiple degrees in this stuff,
  - and I still feel like I'm getting hit in the chest
  - in 4 feet of water!

But think back when I took Harper to the ocean. She said, *"Don't let go!"*

This I can assure you...

- he won't let you go!
- Take a first step...
- Take another step!
- He loves you, why?
- Because he does!



So, are you chosen?

The choice is yours.

Would you pray with me?

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

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