

Ephesians 1:7-14
Chosen... Together... & Walking in Christ

May 1, 2016

Intro:

1. Have you ever faced a **problem** or some **uncertainty** and you weren't sure what to do?
 - a. It's great when you have a **plan** you can fall back on in times like that.
2. Joke:
 - a. That reminds of the story I heard about a new executive who was hired to replace an exec who was leaving the company.
 - b. The two executives had a couple of days of overlap for cross-training.
 - c. On the last day together, the departing exec tells the new guy, *"I have left three numbered envelopes in the desk drawer. Open an envelope if you encounter a crisis you can't solve."*
 - d. Three months down the road there is **major drama** in the office and the new executive feels very threatened by it all.
 - e. He remembers the parting words of his predecessor and opens the first envelope.
 - 1) The message inside says *"Blame your predecessor!"* He does so and gets off the hook.
 - f. About half a year later, the company is experiencing a dip in sales, combined with serious product problems. The exec quickly opens the 2nd envelope.
 - 1) The message read, *"Reorganize!"* He starts to reorganize and the company quickly rebounds.
 - g. Only three months later, at his next crisis, he opens the third envelope.
 - 1) The message inside read, *"Prepare three envelopes."*
3. In our passage today we are reminded that **God's got a plan!**
 - a. Even if you are not sure of what to do or what is going to happen. God's in control!

Let's look at our passage: Read Ephesians 1:7-14 (NKJV)¹ and Prayⁱ

1. Context: Paul is writing to the believers in the city of **Ephesus** to to **explain** some of the great themes and doctrines of Christianity.
2. Theme in Ephesians: We are **Chosen** in Christ, **Together** in Christ, **Walking** in Christ.

¹ Unless otherwise marked, all scripture references taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

3. In addition to seeing that God has a plan today, we'll also see that...
 - a. Christ **redeemed** us through His blood;
 - b. He has **revealed** the mystery of His will; and
 - c. He **rewards** us with an inheritance.

Ephesians 1:7-8 ⁷ *In Him [Christ, the Beloved] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,*

1. The word **redemption** means the price or **ransom** paid to gain freedom for a slave.
 - a. Through His death, Jesus paid the price to purchase us off of the **slave auction block** and to fully secure our release from the slavery of sin.
 - 1) And He did this, verse 7 says, **through His blood**.
 - b. Up in New England when you buy cans of soda you had to pay a nickel deposit on each can.
 - 1) If you brought the cans back, you could cash in at 5 cents a can.
 - a) Doesn't sound like very much? To a 10 year old in 1985 it did!
 - 2) My grandparents, whom I stayed with during the summers, lived on a beach...
 - a) At the end of each day I would go collect all the empty cans I could find from off the beach.
 - Rinse them and then take them to the store and redeemed them for the cash deposit.
 - b) The more cans I brought in, the more money I would get back!
 - c) I was able to buy so much candy with all that money I got back!
 - **Charleston Chews** were my favorite – throw them in the freezer!
 - c. When I presented the cans, the collection point had to release the funds to me.
 - 1) So too, Christ has chosen you, cleaned you up and redeemed you!
 - 2) Instead of trash you are now something important, even treasured in the eyes of the Lord.
 - 3) Your redemption is guaranteed by Christ's blood!

2. We were first redeemed by Christ's shed blood and then forgiven.
 - a. **forgiveness** in the Old Testament was granted on the basis of the shedding of animal's blood.
 - 1) **Leviticus 17:11** For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.
 - 2) **Hebrews 9:22** And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.
3. The **redemption** and **forgiveness** given to us comes **according to the riches of His grace**.
 - a. This is no small thing Christ accomplished at the cross.
 - 1) It is enormous.
 - 2) This is based upon His grace that is spoken of in Ephesians 1:6.
 - 3) **Romans 5:9** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.
 - b. Have you experienced the **riches of His grace**?
 - 1) It comes by faith alone in Christ. Have you given your heart to the Lord and put your faith in Him?
 - c. Christian: Have you continued in **riches of His grace**?
 - 1) It's not that we can lose our salvation, but we can certainly be outside of the fullness of His **riches & grace**.
 - 2) As Christians Christ told us to take up our cross daily (Luke 9:23) and follow Him.
 - d. Here at CCSO, our first value statement is that we are **Committed** to Love God and growing in His Word and Ways.
4. God's plan of saving sinners is accounted as **all wisdom and prudence**.
 - a. I would think that saving messed up sinners is not a wise thing to do?!
 - 1) If you are going to pick a team wouldn't you want the best and not the worst???
 - 2) But according to the inspired words of Paul saving sinners is both the wise and prudent thing to do.
 - b. As we accept and embrace His redemption and forgiveness we are also entering into **all**

wisdom and prudence (or understanding).

- 1) Life can be hard. There are so many decisions to make. Seemingly endless choices. How do we handle it all?
- 2) By being informed by His **wisdom and** acting with godly **prudence**.
- 3) **We have it** if we belong to Him! The question remains, **will you use it?**

Ephesians 1:9 ⁹ **having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,**

1. The word **mystery** in the Scriptures generally refers to something that was previously hidden, but has been made known.
 - a. According to Bible commentator **William Barclay**, “In the New Testament sense a mystery is something which is *hidden* to the heathen but *clear* to the Christian.”
2. God has made known the mystery that we might know **His will**.
 - a. **What is His will** that He has made known?
 - b. **That Christ died to save sinners**.
 - 1) It’s that salvation is available, by grace, through faith for all who will believe upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.
 - c. And this was no accident, God **purposed** it **according to His good pleasure**.
 - 1) This means that God takes pleasure in saving sinners!

God has purposed to save sinner... **Ephesians 1:10** ¹⁰ **that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.**

1. A **dispensation** is the way God runs something at a particular time or the method in which God is revealing Himself and working through us.
 - a. God has not established one way of reaching the people.
 - 1) There is one message, but many ways to communicate that message.
 - b. **Hebrews 1:1–2** **1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;**

2. So if God is speaking to us through His Son then how do we hear the Son?
 - a. Is it by reading the special edition **Time** or **Newsweek** magazine entitle, *Who is Jesus?* Or *Why Did Jesus Have to Die?*
 - 1) There's always some special on the newsstand in the grocery store checkout line.
 - b. In the Gospel of John chapter 1 it says the Jesus is the Word, so we can hear the Word by getting into the Word.
 - 1) How's your personal devotion time been?
3. Back to verse 10, what Paul is saying is that when God sees fit He will **gather together all things in Christ**.
 - a. This will happen when the time is right for Christ to come again and to rule over all things in heaven and on earth.
 - b. Heaven and earth are **not in sync** right now because both Satan and sin are in this world.
 - c. But when Christ comes again He will defeat Satan and do away with sin...
 - 1) And there will once again be a unity between heaven and earth that has not been seen since the days when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden.
4. Jesus is that **great stone** that Daniel spoke of that was cut without hands that struck and destroyed that great image that represented the nations of the world.
 - a. Daniel tells us that this stone, speaking of Jesus, became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.
 - 1) Jesus will reign over all of heaven and all of the earth!
 - 2) I'm not talking about Jesus reigning the lives of Christians all around the world, the Bible tells us that Christ Himself will reign over all the earth!

Ephesians 1:11-12 ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

1. In the present we have part of our **inheritance**, which is the Grace and Peace that Paul speaks of in verse 2.
 - a. But that's nothing compared with what's to come.

- 1) **1 Corinthians 2:9** But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”
2. One of Sonya’s favorite movies is **The Inheritance** based on the book written by Louisa May Alcott, written when she was just 17 years old.
- a. Main character Edith Adelon, an orphan who is taken in by the wealthy Hamilton Family and in many ways treated as a daughter.
 - 1) Though the Hamilton family loved Edith, she is forced to live in the shadows of the stigma of once being an orphan and not a true member of the Hamilton Family.
 - 2) As the story develops she discovers that she is a Hamilton and the true heir to the Hamilton Family wealth.
 - a) It truly is an endearing story of self-sacrifice and love.
 - 3) Her inheritance was always there, but she couldn’t take it until she knew who her father was.
 - a) So too, you have an inheritance if only you will accept that God in heaven is your Father and by faith you accept His Grace.
3. Paul also reveals that part of God plan is that He **works all things according to the counsel of His will**.
- a. This is a reference to the Trinity, the counsel of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
 - b. All three members of the God-head agreed to extend an inheritance to those who would trust in Christ.
 - c. Notice our response in all of this.
 - 1) We can’t earn the inheritance and we don’t deserve it, but we receive it when we trust **in Christ**.
 - d. God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility intersect **to the praise of His glory**.

Ephesians 1:13-14 ¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

1. All believers have been **sealed with the Holy Spirit**.
 - a. In Paul’s day a seal refers to an official mark of identification placed on a letter, contract

or other document.

- b. It's kind of like a signature on a bidding contract.
 - c. This seal speaks of **ownership** and would be a term familiar to Paul's readers in Ephesus.
 - 1) It was at Ephesus that crates were **sealed** with the imprint of merchants' rings before being shipped across the Aegean Sea.
 - 2) The picture is perfect.
 - 3) When you were saved, the Lord put the seal of His Holy Spirit on you, signifying that He owns you...
 - a) And that He would see you through your voyage across the storm-tossed ocean of life to bring you safely to His side as His bride.
2. Paul goes on to say that the **Holy Spirit** is a **guarantee of our inheritance**.
- a. The word **guarantee** literally means **down payment**.
 - 1) Don't confuse this with our no obligation, fully-refunded down payment options we see today.
 - 2) Paul's word means a purchase that is guaranteed, but that more is to come!
 - b. **Philippians 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;
 - 1) You have God's Spirit in you and He's doing a work in you!
 - 2) That's why **1 Corinthians 6:19** says, Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
3. Notice it says, **In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth**.
- a. **Romans 10:14–15** 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"
 - 1) We are supposed to share this with others.

Conclusion:

1. In today's passage we saw that God has a plan ...
 - a. He has **redeemed** us through Christ's shed blood;
 - b. He has **revealed** the mystery of His will to us...
 - 1) That Christ can to save sinners...
 - c. He **rewards** us with an inheritance.
 - 1) That inheritance is secured with the sealing of the Holy Spirit...
 - 2) Grace and Peace right now, and unimaginable spiritual blessing to come!
 - a) Don't accept the cheap knock-offs that Satan offers today...
 - b) Keep your eyes on the Lord and the wonderful things He has in store for those who faithfully follow Him.

ⁱ The following people and commentaries were used in preparing these notes: Life Application Bible, ESV Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, D. Guzik, J. Courson, J.V. McGee