

# **Ephesians**

## *More than a Makeover*

### **His Sovereignty And Our Responsibility**

#### **Ephesians 1:3-13**

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / October 6, 2024*

How can we stay balanced on the biblical truth of God's election and the free offer of the Gospel?

#### **I. Keep Our Sinful Condition In Focus**

The Bible clearly teaches that we're dead in our trespasses and sins, but sometimes our theology would argue that we think we're just weak, feeble, or sick, but that's not severe enough!

**Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-5** "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works among the sons of disobedience... <sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved..."

God found you and breathed life into you because you were lost and completely dead in your sins, but God who is rich in mercy found you, saved you, changed you, and keeps you! That's what the Bible teaches.

#### **II. Keep The Truth Of Salvation In Balance**

##### **A. Don't Try To Ignore God's Electing Love**

**1 Thessalonians 1:4** "...knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God..."

**2 Thessalonians 2:13** "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation..."

**Ephesians 1:4** "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him..."

The Bible says God's choice was not based on anything He saw that you were going to do or not do.

**2 Timothy 1:9** "...who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace..."

**Romans 8:29-30** "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

**John 1:12-13** "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

God's choice was based on His own sovereign love and mercy.

**Titus 3:4-5** "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us..."

## B. Don't Try To Excuse Your Human Responsibility

**V. 4** and **5** are looking at salvation from God's side. But **v. 12** and **13** are looking at it from our side – the human side.

**Ephesians 1:12** “So that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.”

You have to choose to put your hope in Christ. That's the balance and the tension in this passage. Yes, salvation is of God, but you have to choose to do something – put your hope in Christ.

**Ephesians 1:13** “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...”

You had to hear the truth of the Gospel and choose to believe in Him.

**Matthew 11:28** “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”

Jesus didn't say, “Come to Me, all who are chosen and elect and I will give you rest.” He said weary and heavy-laden.

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

If you've never put your faith in Christ to save you, don't think that you can't be saved now because of the doctrine of election! God's gracious offer goes out! It is because of God's electing love and sovereign grace that you can repent and turn to Christ.

**2 Peter 3:9** “[God is] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

**Romans 10:9** “...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

“Shall we never be able to drive into men's minds the truth that predestination and free agency are both facts? Men sin as freely as birds fly in the air, and they are altogether responsible for their sin; and yet everything is ordained and foreseen of God. The fore-ordination of God in no degree interferes with the responsibility of man... Permit me also to add that I have long ago given up the idea of making all my beliefs into a system. I believe, but I cannot explain. I fall before the majesty of revelation and adore the infinite Lord.”

~ C.H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*

Election doesn't excuse us from evangelism, but assures us we're not wasting our time!

**Romans 10:14-15, 17** “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? <sup>15</sup> 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!’... <sup>17</sup> So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

## III. Keep Your Human Pride In Check

In **1 Cor. 1:26-29**, Paul refers the doctrine of election by **4X** repeating the word “calling” or “chosen,” and then ties the doctrine of election to humility by concluding with the phrase “... so that no human being might boast.”

**1 Cor. 1:26-29** “For you see your **calling**, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are **called**.<sup>27</sup> But God has **chosen** the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has **chosen** the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;<sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has **chosen**, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,<sup>29</sup> **that** no flesh should glory in His presence.”

“No doubt it is easy to get the subject of election out of proportion; no doubt it has often been done. But whether this fact gives us warrant to dismiss the doctrine as really unimportant is another question. It does not look as if Paul would have thought so. If we look again at the texts in which he deals with election, we shall see that his attitude to the subject is quite different than ours. To start with, he neither makes an issue of it nor gets embarrassed about it. He is neither puzzled by it nor ashamed of it; he simply accepts and expounds it as an integral part of his gospel. And when Paul introduces election into his teaching it is for one end only – to help Christians see how great is the grace that has saved them, and to move them to a worthy response in worship and life.”

~ J. I. Packer, *God’s Words*

The doctrine of election is first of all **for** Christians and it’s great overarching purpose is to put the “amazing” back into grace and to move us to respond by giving our lives in worship and holy living.

That’s what you see in this first chapter of Ephesians where Paul says...

**Ephesians 1:6** “...to the praise of His glorious grace.”

**Ephesians 1:12** “...to the praise of His glory.”

**Ephesians 1:14** “... to the praise of His glory.”