

## Chosen by God

Sermon 2018-07-15 - Year B - Pentecost 7-10 - The Rev. Christopher M. Klukas  
Amos 7:7–15; Psalm 85; Ephesians 1:1–14; Mark 6:7–13

- Picking teams in school
- Team captains alternate back and forth picking players for their team
- The fastest, strongest, smartest ones are always chosen first.
- The less skilled, slower, weaker ones are always chosen last.
- I was usually one of the last ones picked.

## Chosen by God

- Ephesians 1:4a God chose us
- We were chosen before the foundations of the world
  - Before the Grand canyon, before the gulf of mexico, before mount everest, God chose you.
- Ephesians 1:5 “He predestined us...”
  - It is easy to get bogged down in the doctrine of predestination and faithful Christians have been debating the particulars of this doctrine for ages.
  - Augustinian (Calvinist) position: All are totally incapable of responding to God and so God chooses some out of humanity and saves them, allowing them to respond and put their faith in Christ.<sup>1</sup>
    - Preserves God’s sovereignty the giftedness of grace (to make a decision for Christ could be seen as a work).
  - Arminian (Weslyan) position: Sees predestination as “foreknowledge”. All are totally incapable of responding to God. God makes his prevenient grace available to all. This prevenient grace frees the will just enough so that one can choose to accept God’s grace or reject it. The elect are thus those who have positively responded to God.<sup>2</sup>
    - Preserves the idea of freewill and human responsibility. Makes better sense of passages asking people to “repent” or “obey” or “believe”.
  - Both positions are grounded in the scriptures and both have theological advantages and disadvantages. There is an element of mystery that we should be careful not to define to explicitly.
  - The doctrine of Predestination is intended to be a comfort to those who are elect (Article XVII). If you are here and you have put your faith in Christ, you are a part of the elect and you can rejoice in this.
  - All who are saved are saved by faith, and faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:14-17), so we should not neglect the mission of making disciples.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ridleyinstitute.com/election-and-predestination-a-brief-introduction/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.seedbed.com/predestination-and-gods-sovereignty/>

<sup>3</sup> “Reprobation is a biblical reality (Rom. 9:14–24; 1 Pet. 2:8), but not one that bears directly on Christian behavior. The reprobates are faceless so far as Christians are concerned, and it is not for us to try to identify them. Rather, we should live in light of the certainty that anyone may be saved if he or she will but

## Chosen for What?

- While there is some profit in wondering about HOW we are chosen, it is much more important to understand WHAT we are chosen for.
  - Chosen to be holy and blameless before him (v. 4).
    - God didn't choose you because you are holy and blameless (refer back to picking teams in school), he chose you so you could become holy and blameless.
    - Justification: declared righteous before God. (vv. 7-8)
    - Sanctification: growth in holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit. Made perfect only after death.
    - This choosing in "In love" (v. 4)
  - Chosen for adoption (v. 5) - How amazing to think that those who are in Christ are sons and daughters of the most high God!
  - Chosen to praise him and give him Glory (v. 6)!
- John Stott: "Therefore the truth of God's election, however many its unresolved problems, should lead us to righteousness, not to sin; and to humble adoring gratitude, not to boasting. Its practical consequences should always be that we live on the one hand holy and blameless before him (verse 4) and on the other to the praise of his glorious grace (verse 6)."<sup>4</sup>

## Predestined for an Inheritance

- Chosen for an inheritance (v. 11).
  - This is connected to adoption. Adopted sons and daughters become heirs to their adoptive parents. This was one of the primary purposes of adoption in Roman society, when someone didn't have an heir, they would adopt one, often one of their slaves.<sup>5</sup>
  - Inheritors of eternal life
  - Participants in God's plan to unite all things in Christ (v. 10)
- Ephesians 1:13-14 - The Holy Spirit has been given to us as a guarantee of this inheritance.

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repent and put faith in Christ. We should view all persons that we meet as possibly being numbered among the elect." J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 151.

<sup>4</sup> John R. W. Stott, *God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians* (The Bible Speaks Today; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1979), 39.

<sup>5</sup> "A well-to-do but childless adult who wanted an heir would adopt a male, usually at an age other than in infancy and frequently a slave, to be his son." Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (vol. 42; Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1990), 25.