

Ephesians 1 pt. 2 v.7-14

At the very beginning of this letter we find Paul wading into theologically deep waters.

When we consider these verses we see that they do have some common traits along with the doxologies of the new testament.

A doxology is used to communicate, praise, and doctrine simultaneously.

As one text puts it, “A ‘doxological’ approach to theology stresses the importance of praise and worship in theological reflection.”
(Christian Theology, A. McGrath, 2017)

It is not only that we are considering substantial truth in an intellectual sense but also in a spiritual/emotional sense. We are moved to praise and worship because of the truths that we are considering.

Perhaps one of the most famous doxologies in the NT is found in Jude:

“[Jde 1:24-25 NKJV] 24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present [you] faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, [Be] glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.”

The dual nature of this Spirit inspired literature, as it communicates both praise and doctrine, demands careful reflection. We aren't simply to KNOW the facts, but as the facts travel the distance from our head to our heart they move us to worship in the immediate sense and to live lives of praise and worship to God in an enduring sense.

About our text Matthew Henry writes, “He begins with thanksgivings and praise, and enlarges with a great deal of fluency and copiousness of affection upon the exceedingly great and precious benefits which we enjoy by Jesus Christ. For the great privileges...are very aptly recounted and enlarged upon in our praises to God.” Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 2307). Peabody: Hendrickson.

It is with that in mind that we turn to our text. I want to read through v.3-14 to gain the full picture and then return to v.7 for our study.

V. 7 - Begins with the prepositional phrase - "In Him." This sets the context for the remainder of Paul's thought and will be repeated throughout his writing.

Please take a moment to consider what these words actually mean to us. What does it mean to be IN HIM? What are the implications for our lives? These are big thoughts!

I would submit to you that to be "in Him," indicates our full and total immersion (a true baptism) into the person and work of Jesus Christ.

This carries on the thought found in v.6 as Paul writes that God the Father has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Paul continues to explain to the Ephesians, and to us - the descendants of the Apostolic Church, what it is that we gain as

we exist in our immersion in Christ; namely, redemption through His blood.

This means that we have been set free because of Christ's payment. Our freedom cost something!

The payment made was not in silver, gold, bit-coin or dollars but was purchased through something much more valuable. The currency used to purchase our liberty was the blood of Jesus Christ. It was a bloody affair, Christ on a cross, that loosed the bonds of our spiritual enslavement.

Christ's blood was poured out, drained from His body, on our behalf, abundantly not begrudgingly, according to the riches of His grace.

We cannot ignore the facts! Paul continues to drive home the dominant theme of God's grace towards us. In the first seven verses he has already mentioned grace three times!

This will ultimately culminate in Ephesians 2:8 when Paul declares: [Eph 2:8 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God,

That is the point of grace. No matter how many times we repeat this in our lives we can never say it enough. It is according to the riches of God's grace that we are redeemed from the penalty of sin and death - not because of anything we have done. We have never possessed enough spiritual capital, assets, or cash to pay or bribe our way out of justice.

It is Grace alone, loved one by which we are redeemed. We are redeemed because of who God is and not because of any innate goodness on our own part.

V.8 God has extended His life-giving, sin-conquering, grace toward us abundantly (not miserly) IN ALL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING.

We should take a minute here to understand what Paul is saying.

The adjective ALL indicates to me that this is applied to the characteristics of God and not myself. He alone possesses all wisdom and understanding.

God's plan of salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ is not uncalculated, reactionary, foolish, or without understanding.

On the contrary, God's gracious plan of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ is marked by ALL wisdom and understanding.

“Paul gives to the gospel the magnificent appellations of wisdom and prudence, for the purpose of leading the Ephesians to despise all contrary doctrines. The false apostles insinuated themselves, under the pretence of imparting views more elevated than the elementary instructions which Paul conveyed. And the devil, in order to undermine our faith, labours, as far as he can, to disparage the gospel. Paul, on the other hand, builds up the authority of the gospel, that believers may rest upon it with unshaken confidence. All wisdom means—full or perfect wisdom.”
Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). Commentaries on the Epistles of

Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians (p. 203). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Paul also writes to the Corinthians: [1Co 1:18-24 NKJV] 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 20 Where [is] the wise? Where [is] the scribe? Where [is] the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Far from being reckless, ill-informed, or rash - Paul teaches the Ephesians that God's grace, the riches of Christ's blood applied to us in order to effect our freedom from sin, is both wise and understanding.

V.9 The gifts of God abound to us!

We get to see that in God's unmatched wisdom and understanding He has communicated THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL to us, His creation!

How many times have you wondered, "what is God's will?"

There has been much teaching on God's perfect will versus His permissive will. The plain language version of that centers on the thought of what God desires for our lives versus what He will allow in our lives.

Oftentimes we like to personalize God's will and ask, "What is God's will for my life in particular?"

I would submit to you that God's will for us individually and corporately is nested in what God's will is universally. AND Paul tells us here, that God the Father has made the mystery of His will known to us because it pleases Him for us to know it and He has intended to reveal His will to us.

This is a tremendous gift on top of our redemption, and it is by the redemption that God changes our perspective and is pleased to allow us to see His will, no longer as a mystery but as something we can know.

Story time: In the Army we used to do planning for large operations. No matter where our particular unit fit in the organizational hierarchy we were to understand the mission and intent of each level, two levels up.

We were to understand how our particular operation supported, or was “nested” within, the higher headquarters mission and intent.

Now, it’s not a perfect analogy, but my point is this: the will that God has for our lives individually is nested within the universal Body of Christ, within the eternal Kingdom of God.

It is God’s universal will that we are all to be advancing, not our own version of God’s will!

Everything we do is to be nested in how God is advancing His

kingdom.

V.10. God's will revealed.

So...what is God's will? If it is His good pleasure, and He has purposed in His heart to reveal it to us, what is it?

Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tells us here: “[Eph 1:10 NLT] 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ--everything in heaven and on earth.”

God's will is to wrap all of creation up under the authority and power of Jesus Christ.

As one text reads: God's ultimate plan is to bring together—to ultimately resolve—all things in Christ, either through Jesus as a Savior or Jesus as a Judge; this will happen in the fullness of the times. Guzik, D. (2013). Ephesians (Eph 1:9–12). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

God's will for our individual lives is that we who believe, exist to

advance God's will, not primarily for our own interests, certainly not by our own strength or resources, but because the Spirit of God lives within us and moves us to accomplish His will -- because we have been immersed IN HIM.

But wait, there's more!

V.11 More than redemption, more than being gifted with an understanding of God's will, we also receive an inheritance!

God has orchestrated all of this according to His own eternal purpose before time for His glory so that those who are being gathered together can see, acknowledge, and magnify the glory of the almighty creator and redeemer of mankind.

When all things are finally gathered together before Jesus Christ we who are His will enter into our inheritance once and for all.

V.12-14 Carrying out God's will // the seal of the Holy Spirit

We find an interesting delineation of saints that speaks to the ongoing work of "gathering together all things in Christ." This

speaks to the advancement of God's kingdom in a very real palpable sense.

We see two general parties:

1. "we who first trusted..."
2. "you [who] also trusted after you heard...."

Paul's own life existed within God's perfect will - to gather the elect in Christ.

The gospel didn't stop with Paul even as he considered himself as one who "first trusted in Christ." He continued to preach the gospel, teach the whole counsel of God and to make disciples. Having found God's will, he lived for it. His own will was conformed to God's will.

The gospel shouldn't stop with us either. If it does, what are the implications for that? Are we not interested in advancing the glorious will of our God who has established this plan before time? I pray we are.

What was spoken and what was heard that moved these Ephesians from the realm of unbelievers to those who believed?

The word of truth, the gospel of salvation!

This is amazing! Read again: “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;”

This is what brings people into the kingdom, brings our will into alignment with the mystery of God’s will - the good message, redemption through Christ’s blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us.

Notice Paul doesn’t say that a series of extra-biblical reading material, a tract, a spiritual experience, laying on of hands, debating, feelings, or emotions were the cause of belief.

BUT the substance that moves us from darkness to light is hearing the gospel, the word of truth. Somebody told us the truth and we believed!

[Rom 10:14 NKJV] 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?

Part of our blessed calling inside God's purpose is to speak aloud the good message, the word of truth. Ultimately this is what people believe or reject.

And then we receive ANOTHER GIFT on top of redemption, on top of understanding the will of God, on top of an eternal inheritance. We are gifted with the very Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit who dwells within us; who marks us His own; who signifies to all powers and principalities that we have been redeemed by Christ.

The person of the Holy Spirit marks us in such a way that we are undeniably possessed by God.

The word "seal," ...is often used figuratively for the act or token of authentication, confirmation, proof, security or possession...God by His Spirit indicates who are His, as the owner sets his seal on

his property; and just as documents are sealed up until the proper time for opening them, so Christians are sealed up by the Holy Spirit "unto the day of redemption" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

This is one of the ways that the Holy Spirit relates to the believer - we are marked by our family seal as a sign to all who see that we are part of the Kingdom of God.

Furthermore, Paul's language here indicates that the Holy Spirit that we receive is a sign to us and to those around us that we are "under contract" as it were.

The original language indicates: "...earnest, earnest-money, a large part of the payment, given in advance as a security that the whole will be paid afterwards. Souter, A. (1917). [*A Pocket Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*](#) (p. 38). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

And why has God done this thing? Why has God redeemed us by the blood of Christ? Why has he revealed the mystery of His will to us? Why has he called us into His will to participate in His ongoing work of gathering all things together in Christ? Why has

He given us an inheritance? Why has He set His mark upon us by the Holy Spirit? Why has He gifted us with an inheritance?

To the praise of His glory. So that He may be made known and praised by and for the work of His hands. Our works fail so often, but He will never fail. His glorious work is revealed among His creation for His glory alone - His splendor, brightness, magnificence.

Some people argue that they can't see God at work; that the world is too dark. But look around loved one at the work that the Father has been doing by the Holy Spirit in the life of His saints that were purchased through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The marks of His work are clearly evident. The gathering of all creation together in Christ is happening and shall one day be complete. And we get to be a part of that for the Glory of God alone.

Be encouraged, loved one! You know God's will! Now live it out by the Holy Spirit that lives in you, to the praise of His glory.
Amen.