

Receiving Redemption

By Pastor Matt Black

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Lord's Day morning

Ephesians 1:13

Introduction: Open your Bible to Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We are going to see today how God puts all the right ingredients together and brings His elect people to Himself. The title of this morning's message is "Receiving Redemption." Let's stand together and read Ephesians chapter 1 and verses 3 through 14.

[Stand and read Ephesians 1:3-14]

Our text is found specifically in verse 13:

Ephesians 1:13

In whom [CHRIST] ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

The High Calling of Motherhood

This text is a very appropriate one for a mother's calling. It is extremely applicable to motherhood because a mother's highest calling, if she has children is to be a missionary to those children. So this text is quite applicable to the high calling of a Mom.

The Sufficiency of the Bible

Of course every text in the Bible is good for Mother's Day or any other day if you believe that "all scripture is...profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). "And if every text is relevant for motherhood, it is also relevant for fatherhood and singleness, and marriage without children, and widows and widowers. All Scripture is profitable for all people in [every circumstance] when the texts are rightly understood and applied."¹

So the Bible is sufficient for motherhood, and really, it is sufficient for all callings. This verse about the Bible's inspiration and sufficiency is really interesting because it is found in the context of motherhood, and it links our text in Ephesians to motherhood.

Look at 2 Timothy 3:14ff But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, **knowing of whom thou hast learned them** [A GODLY MOTHER EUNICE, AND GODLY GRANDMOTHER LOIS]; 15 And **that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures**, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation **through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Timothy's father seems to have been an unbelieving Greek (Acts 16:3) and probably not in the home much of the time. So he learned his Old Testament Scriptures from his devout Jewish mother and grandmother.

¹ John Piper, "How to Submit to the Righteousness of God." Preached May 11, 2003.

- Mothers, do you realize your high calling? Fathers, you also have the same high calling. You do not and cannot have the influence of a mother. A mother influences a child for the vast majority of his childhood because of the huge amount of hours she spends with the children. But fathers also have this same high calling. In fact each one of us here today needs to take heed to this verse here in Ephesians 1:13. Paul has spent the first twelve verse explaining salvation from God's perspective. We have seen one very important aspect of God in salvation. He is absolutely sovereign. We learned last week that we are "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (verse 11). Way before the world was ever made, when there was only God, Paul tells us in verse 3: "he hath chosen us in him [CHRIST] before the foundation of the world."

So when you ask why was I saved? The answer is clear—because God had mercy on me. He came to me, He pleaded with me, and He convinced me and opened my eyes to the "mystery of His will" as verse 9 says. He has abounded "wisdom and prudence" so that I would no longer be blind to the Gospel. What a gift! This is all what God has done. So why am I saved?—Because of God's free and omnipotent grace.

Now, in verse 13, we come to man's perspective. You must never negate one doctrine for another doctrine. The first twelve verses of Ephesians speak of God's sovereignty. That is a very important doctrine. It gives us hope. If God has saved you, then He will keep you and sanctify you. That should give you great hope. But we come to our text here in verse 13, and we come down to where the rubber meets the road. Look at it now:

Ephesians 1:13

In whom [CHRIST] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

So here we see the human side of redemption. Up to this point, we have seen what God is doing behind the scenes. Now we see from the human perspective what God calls on us to do. How are people saved? How can my children be saved? Perhaps you have an unsaved spouse. How can your spouse be saved? How can anyone be saved? Verse 13 lays it out. A person must trust in Christ. In order to do that, he must hear the word of truth. That takes a prophet and that brings us to our first point.

First we have:

- I. The Unspoken **Prophet**. Romans 10 spells out for us how a person is saved. Turn over there.

Romans 10:13-15 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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, except they be sent?

Who was it that brought the "Word of Truth" "The Gospel of Salvation" to these Ephesians? Who was sent there? Well, he is unspoken in this verse, but if you look back to verse 1, we read, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God."

A. An apostle is “one who is sent” by God. Can you say that you are content that what you are doing right now is the will of God? Where ever you are, and whatever you are doing, God has put you there. Do you believe this? Remember verse 11, Paul assured us that God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Do you realize husband and wife, that God planned your marriage before the foundation of the world? You might say, but the circumstances of my marriage were not right—I displeased God. Do you think Jacob pleased God with having children with four different women? That was not one woman with one man for life! But God’s will can never be frustrated, and God used Jacob, the deceiver and heel snatcher that he was, to fulfill His plan. That’s why when we are saved it’s called “Amazing Grace”! It is absolutely amazing that God would use someone as stubborn and filled with lust as Jacob. You see God had Jacob be born at that time in place, in all of his sinful pride and hard-hearted decisions. Have you made hard-hearted decisions in your life? God has allowed them. Look at your life right now, and realize that you are here to do God’s will with whatever God has given you!!

B. An apostle is one who is called to suffer for God. Paul was known to suffer—to do anything for the Gospel—even if it included the most horrible suffering. Paul says this is every believer’s calling!

- **Philippians 1:29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;
- **2 Corinthians 12:15** And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;
- **1 Corinthians 15:32** I have fought with beasts at Ephesus. We see here that Paul actually went into the amphitheatre and fought with beasts at Ephesus. He evidently prevailed because he lived to write about it. There were two types of entertainment in the Roman amphitheatre. There were those who were given weapons, who at times prevailed against a beast and were set free. There were also those who were given no opportunity to live and were put in the amphitheatre unarmed. Paul must have been armed. Paul says regarding this incident in **2 Timothy 4:17**, “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”

Paul had to face situations in Ephesus where he had to face impossible odds. The calling of a mother is has no less odds. If you are married, you are facing a 50% or higher divorce rate. Everything on television and in the media tells you it is normal to fight, throw things at each other, and divorce for no reason at all. There is no responsibility. What God is calling you to is to be a light in a crooked and perverse generation (Matthew 17:17).

Listen to this poem by Martha Snell Nicholson:

I stood a mendicant² of God before His royal throne
And begged him for one priceless gift, which I could call my own.
I took the gift from out His hand, but as I would depart
I cried, "But Lord this is a thorn and it has pierced my heart.
This is a strange, a hurtful gift, which Thou hast given me."
He said, "My child, I give good gifts and gave My best to thee."
I took it home and though at first the cruel thorn hurt sore,
As long years passed I learned at last to love it more and more.
I learned He never gives a thorn without this added grace,
He takes the thorn to pin aside the veil which hides His face.

So there is an unspoken prophet, but then we see an uncompromising proclamation.

II. The Uncompromising **Proclamation** "Word of Truth" "the gospel of your salvation"

Ephesians 1:13

In whom [CHRIST] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

Notice the things that you must come to grips with in order to be saved:

- The Word of Truth
- The Gospel of your salvation

All the old time evangelists used to say it this way: "Law to the proud, and grace to the humble." That's what we are called to do. We cannot mess with the message.

A. Law to the **Proud** The Message we are to proclaim is to be the Word of Truth. It is called that for a reason.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

James 4:6 God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

² a "mendicant" is a beggar

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

B. Grace to the **Humble**

Remember what the publican said?

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

John 7:22 to the poor the gospel is preached.

So there is an unspoken prophet and an uncompromising proclamation but then we see the unlikely participants.

III. The Unlikely **Participants** “ye also” Do you realize that these Ephesians were about the most unlikely participants in salvation?! Here they were worshipping idols, hating God, and going their own way! But that is how it is in very instance of salvation. All false religions say that man seeks out God, but what does Christianity say? It says we are dead in our trespasses and sins! It says we are blind and we have a heart that is hostile toward God.

False religions say that man is by nature pretty good. Maybe not perfect, but pretty good.

A. Look at the truth of God’s **Providence**

Do you realize that it is God’s providence that brings salvation? Verse 11—all things work after the decree of his will!

God does not deal with all men alike. He most certainly could have done so. He could have condemned the whole world. Aren’t you glad He didn’t do that?! “He could very well enlighten all the world and bring it to pass that there should be no unbelievers at all.”³ He has chosen not to do that, but to choose whomever He pleases, as he says over and over again:

- “according to the good pleasure of his will” (verse 5)
- “To the praise of the glory of his grace” (verse 6)
- “according to the riches of his grace” (verse 7)
- “according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself” (verse 9)
- “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (verse 11)
- “That we should be to the praise of his glory” (verse 12)

Proverbs 19:21 *There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.*

³ John Calvin, *Sermons on Ephesians* (Banner of Truth: Carlisle, PA, 1973), 66.

The whole context of Ephesians tells us that in salvation this is especially so.

B. Look at the example of **Jochebed**

Exodus 2:1-4

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi. 2 And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he *was a goodly child*, she hid him three months. 3 And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid *it* in the flags by the river's brink. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

Acts 7:20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair [**"lovely in the sight of God"**], and nourished up in his father's house three months:

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment

Exodus 6:20 And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram *were* an hundred and thirty and seven years.

Numbers 26:59 And the name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

John Calvin: "But that time is most fit for God to work in, when there is no hope or counsel to be looked for at man's hands."

So there is an unspoken prophet, an uncompromising proclamation, the unlikely participants, and then we see

IV. The Unchanging **Progression**

Ephesians 1:13

In whom [CHRIST] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

- A. There is a **preaching** verse 1 "called to be an apostle" ("one sent" to preach...)
- B. There is a **hearing** Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing" "ye heard the word of truth"
- C. There is a **believing** in whom also after that ye believed
- D. There is a **sealing** ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

Conclusion: Are you part of God's plan of redemption? Have you heard the Word of truth? Have you trusted in the Gospel of salvation? Have you been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise?

Closing Hymn: 639 Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

On your way out, be sure you get a gift from our church—a chocolate bar and a carnation. May you all have a blessed Mother's Day, not only today, but every day let us keep the fifth commandment!