



**Title:** Predestined According to His Purpose (Ephesians series)

**Text:** Ephesians 1:3-14 & various

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## 1. WHAT HAS SIN DONE TO US?

### 1. Brief survey of the effects of sin:

- Romans 3:23—*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*
- Romans 5:12—*12Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*
- Ephesians 2:1-3—*1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*
- Titus 3:3—*For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.*

### 2. Our sin hasn't just neutralized or diminished us, it has left us unable to love God.

- John 8:34—*Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.*
- 1 Corinthians 2:14—*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*
- Romans 8:7—*For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed it cannot.*

### 3. What about the good works and deeds that unbelievers do?

- Loraine Boettner:
  - *"This doctrine of total inability, which declares that men are dead in sin, does not mean that all men are equally bad, nor that any man is as bad as he could be, nor that any one is entirely destitute of virtue, nor that human nature is evil in itself, nor that man's spirit is inactive, and much less does it mean that the body is dead. What it does mean is that since the fall man rests under the curse of sin...and that he is wholly unable to love God or to do anything meriting salvation." –Loraine Boettner*
- God gives Common Grace
- Even good works—apart from God—are at their core idolatry.
  - God and his glory are the point and reason for being.
  - So, when a creature does something "good" but does not acknowledge His Creator or in response to His greatness, then even that good work becomes an act of rebellion against God.

## 2. DO WE HAVE FREE WILL?

### 1. It depends on what you mean by "free"

- We are free to do whatever our heart desires.
- But our hearts are not good, they are not even neutral.
- Sin has made us incapable of desiring to submit to God.
- Luther: *"Free-will is an empty term, whose reality is lost. And a lost liberty, according to my grammar, is no liberty at all."*

- Boettner: *"As the bird with a broken wing is "free" to fly but not able, so the natural man is free to come to God but not able. How can he repent of his sin when he loves it? How can he come to God when he hates Him? This is the inability of the will under which man labors."* (p.62)
- Romans 8:7—*For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed it cannot.*
- Mark 7:20-23—*"What comes out a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart, comes evil..."*
- Spurgeon: *"I might preach to you forever, I might borrow the eloquence of Demosthenes or of Cicero, but ye will not come to Christ. I might beg of you on my knees, with tears in my eyes, and show you the horrors of hell and the joys of heaven, the sufficiency of Christ, and your own lost condition, but none of you would come unto Christ of yourselves unless the Spirit that rested on Christ should draw you. It is true of all men in their natural condition that they will not come unto Christ."* (Storms, p.59).

## 2. Summary of our natural state before God apart from Christ\*

- There are no good people apart from Christ.
- We don't need improvement or help, we need salvation—to be brought from death to life.
- Man's ability, or freedom, to chose and love God was lost in the Fall.

## **3. HOW DOES GOD SAVE SINNERS?**

### 1. He decides, chooses, elects us "in Christ" in eternity past

- Ephesians 1:4-5—*he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*

### 2. It's clear that God predestines. But based on what?

- Romans 8:28-30—*28And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
  - "THOSE whom he FOREKNEW"—*pro/ginosko*
  - Faulty logic of foreseen faith—if objection that future is fixed, it is still fixed!
  - Golden Chain: foreloved/predestined→called→justified→glorified
- Romans 9:11-18

### 3. Through Jesus' work—his life, death and resurrection

- Propitiation: God puts Jesus forward to bear our punishment, absorb and fully satisfy his justice, and turn God's wrath for our sin into favor.
  - 1 Peter 3:18—*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.*
- Imputation:
  - 2 Corinthians 5:21—*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

### 4. Through the Gospel call

- 2 Corinthians 4:3-6—*3And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. 4In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
- Romans 10:13-15—*13For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15And*

*how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

#### 5. By the gifts of faith and repentance

- Ephesians 2:8—*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
- Saving faith and repentance are gifts!
- Piper's analogy: Fire and light—born again and faith. Where there is a flame, there is light. Simultaneously. But you would never say that the light caused the flame.

#### **4. DOES GOD'S GRACE MERELY ENABLE US TO MAKE OUR OWN CHOICE OR DOES IT ACTUALLY SAVE?**

##### 1. Problem with Enabling (sometimes called Prevenient) Grace:

- If grace merely makes possible salvation, we still are left to wonder why some people are saved and others are not. Is it because one was given more faith? Is it because one was stronger and more able in and of themselves to exercise that faith? If so, ultimately we must trace the Christian's stronger faith back to a decision of God to give this stronger faith to one person and not the other.

##### 2. Three impossibilities from John 6

1. It is impossible for a person to come to Christ unless they are drawn by God. (v.44, 65)
2. It is impossible for someone whom the Father draws *not* to come to him. (v.37)
3. It is impossible for a person who is drawn and who comes to be cast out or lost. (v.37, 39)

##### 3: John 11—The story of Lazarus is a picture of how salvation happens.

#### **5. DOES THIS MAKE GOD UNFAIR?**

##### 1. No. When we understand sin biblically, we realize that no one deserves God's mercy.

##### 2. Illustration: 10 swimmers dead in the bottom of the ocean.

- Either way, God makes a decision not to save all.

#### **6. WHY DOES GOD CHOOSE SOME TO BE SAVED AND NOT OTHERS?**

##### 1. We must approach this issue and our answer with much humility.

- Our knowledge is partial and limited.
  - 1 Corinthians 13:12—*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*
- All of God's will is not revealed to us.
  - Deuteronomy 29:29—*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*
  - Isaiah 55:8-9—*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

##### 2. As a display of His glory.

- Ephesians 1—to the praise of his glorious grace.
- Romans 9:19-24

## **Objection:**

### 1. Why should we pray and do evangelism?

- The certainty of the end does not preclude the necessity of the means.
- God ordains not only what will happen but also the means to make it happen.
- Romans 10, Acts 18:--“Do not be afraid, for I have many in this city who are my people...”
- A.A. Hodge: “If God has eternally decreed that you should live, what is the use of your breathing? If God has eternally decreed that you should talk, what is the use of your opening your mouth? If God has eternally decreed that you should reap a crop, what is the use of your sowing seed? If God has eternally decreed that your stomach should contain food, what is the use of your eating?” (Storms, p.174)

## **Encouragements:**

### 1. To the person wondering if you are chosen.

- The fact that you are wondering is likely good evidence that God is drawing you!
- Do not harden your heart.
- How do you know if you are a Christian?
  - 1 Thess 1:4,9—“4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction...9 For they report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God...”

### 2. To the Christian who is fearful or lazy about witnessing.

- God and his Gospel save, not our persuasion. We are merely the means.
- He has many people in this city! Acts 18.

### 3. To the Christian beaten down by sin and circumstance.

- Be encouraged! God has never lost one of his people!
- You are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus!
- 2 Timothy 1:12—*But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.*
- 1 Peter 1:3-7—*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

### 4. To the person who’s child / loved one / friend has not yet trusted in Jesus.

- Put your hope in the freeness of God’s grace, not the sin-bound will of your loved one.
- Eph 2:4—*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.”*
- He delights in making much of Himself by saving people far from him!

## **Conclusion:**

### Charles Spurgeon:

- “Come in your disorder. I mean, come to your heavenly Father in all your sin and sinfulness. Come to Jesus just as you are: leprous, filthy, naked, neither fit to live nor fit to die. Come, you that are the very sweepings of creation; come, though you hardly dare to hope for anything but death. Come, though despair is brooding over you, pressing upon your bosom like a

horrible nightmare. Come and ask the Lord to justify another ungodly one. Why should He not? Come, for this great mercy of God is meant for such as you. I put in it in the language of the text, and I cannot put it more strongly: the Lord God Himself takes to Himself the gracious title, "Him that justifieth the ungodly." He makes just, and causes to be treated as just, those who by nature are ungodly. Is not that a wonderful word for you? Do not delay till you have considered this matter well." –Charles Spurgeon (*All of Grace*, p.34-35)