**“For This Reason”**

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Genesis 9:8-17

Ephesians 3:14-21

Mark 6:45-56

9th Sunday after Pentecost

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.”

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bridge

**For a particular reason worship occurs**.

Ephesians is an Epistle about identity and purpose. If there’s a letter of Paul that defines us as Christians in just a few chapters, Ephesians is it. I use it as a study for pre-marital (or marital) counselling. It’s adult confirmation instruction. Of 6 chapters, 1 through 3 tell us who God’s made a Christian to **BE**. The last 3 chapters (4 through 6) we’re told all (after making one) that He’s made a Christian to **DO**.

August will be our “**instruction manual for the called, gathered, enlightened, and baptized**”. For the 5 weeks of August, we’ll get “instruction” from chapters 4 through 6, and it will be detailed. If you want a **checklist** of “how-to-**act**-Christian”, those will be not-to-be-missed chapters. But today will conclude (for the **moment**) everything from Ephesians chapters 1 through 3 that should make us **extremely comfortable about WHO and HOW we are**. As a matter of fact, we’re going to **praise God** at the conclusion of this first half of Ephesians. It will be a proper and appropriate doxology of correct praise to the One who’s **made us** to be this **comfortable with ourselves in Him**.

**For a particular reason worship occurs**.

**Text**

That **reason** is expounded-upon by Paul through all the chapters (1 to 3) of this letter to the Ephesian Christians. **We were** (the whole world, but more **BLESSEDLY**, the **receptive of the whole world**) **snatched from the hopeless grasp of sin by (as Paul calls it) the “purpose of the will of God”**. With words like “**chosen** in Christ before the foundation of the world”, “**predestined** for adoptions as sons and daughters through Christ”, “**blessed** in the Beloved” (which is Christ), we’re told that “**we have**” **(gifted to us)** “redemption through Christ’s blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, all according to the **riches of His grace**, **lavished upon us**”. “We’ve **obtained** in Christ an **inheritance**, **predetermined** according to the purpose of Him who, then, **works-out all things** **according to the counsel of His will**, **sealed** with the promised Holy Spirit who is the **Guarantee of our inheritance** until we (one day) **acquire possession of it, to the praise of” (not our glory), but “His glory**”. **This** He planned and carried out from before time, you and I baptized for that very (again) **reason** … it’s what “**adoption**” **by God** is, and the “**sealing of the promised Holy Spirit**”. It’s **who** the baptized have been **made to be according to God’s promise**: “do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus **were baptized into His death, buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life**”. We’ll hear more about that in August.

“Baptized believer” is, then, a category … an **identity** that’s God-given which ought to supersede any other description of ourself. We’re **His** (“**chosen**” and “**predestined**” to be, **“adopted” for, then, an “inheritance”) to simply receive by an “amen” to the promise** (the Guarantee by the “sealing”) of that. Martin Luther always use to speak of **his identity** as (without grace) unworthy of life eternal or mercy. He wrote that “Satan was in constant reminder to him of an **identity apart from the grace of God**”. Luther published his **response to Satan**, defeating his attack with an **agreement**, but a **promise from God** by saying back to Satan “you are **right**, however **I am baptized**”.

What draws **us** to our knees so quickly when hearing this **identity given us by God** is that there was a time when our identity **wasn’t that … just potential / didn’t have that promise of God in water and Word / the “seal” / the “Guarantee of the Holy Spirit” / God’s “adoption” of us / an “inheritance” attached to it** (the **event** of **BAPTISMAL PROMISE** **changing that by GOD’S PURPOSE CARRIED OUT**). Paul reminds in chapter 2 of an **estrangement** of **being** (before that) **dead** (“**dead** in the trespasses and sins in which **we once walked**” prior. But, then, chapter 2, verses 4 onward (it was only 3 verses of the reminder to us of what we were prior to God’s will washed upon us) “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 (baptized into Christ)—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**, so that in the coming ages **He might show** the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 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**”.

**Application**

“For **this reason**”, **Paul** bows **his knees** before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named”. Three times in the first half of his letter, Paul **uses this phrase (“for this reason”)** to convey that **everything (from that reason)** in duty and enjoyment and purpose and, literally, **everything**, is a **result** of this **identity which God bestows**. “I am **baptized**” takes on “legs” and a heart and mind and direction and comfort **because of the salvation of God by grace of a baptized-into-Christ believer,** **promised every good thing that’s promised**. ….

There’s not really any **law** to these first chapters other than **not identifying with the Gospel**. The Old Testament reading is, probably, one best in depicting “**missing the boat**” in that coming (at least of the **Great Flood**). But there’s **other** **great floods**, not least of which is **earthly health issues and family and friend relationships (and how those are supposed to be, but often aren’t) then our death one day and all the expectations for this life that God has for us**. Disciples in a small boat may not have been dealing with (on the night of Mark’s account) the **entirety of that**, but they were **rowing** **against current … ever feel that way?**. But Jesus (the Christ into Whom baptism joins us so that His life becomes ours) walked **upon** the water, just **matter-of-factly in the area to, just,** **“pass them by”**. **In their fear**, though, it was also Him close enough to (from the **top of that water / in charge of it**) step into the boat that they were riding in … to **calm their fears** **by His presence and (in this case) change the weather**.

We will spend August hearing about things to **do**. But we will **do them** with only the success of **who God’s made us to BE**. **For a particular reason WORSHIP OCCURS** … and **we have those same reasons that Paul did**. So, with him, **WE worship because of those reasons**:

“To Him who **is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us**, **to HIM** **be glory** **in the Church and IN CHRIST JESUS** **throughout all generations, forever and ever**. In **+Jesus’ name**, and **for (of course)** **His sake**. Amen.”