

“God’s Plan Revealed”

In today’s epistle lesson, read earlier by Lewis, we hear the probable words of Paul in a letter to the church in Ephesus. They are words of praise and thanksgiving specifically showing gratitude to God for all that God has blessed us, humanity with.

While there is nothing new at the beginning of Pauls’ letters what is strikingly different is how much Paul has chosen to “get pretty” and eloquent in expanding on his speech of admiration toward God’s blessings given to us. In verse 4 he says, “He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world.” While I admit I used to understand this verse literally in how God chooses us in God’s act of election, this is not the case here in what Paul is saying to the Ephesians. As one commentary on Ephesians puts it, this verse is not to be taken literally but “instead that God’s choosing has no beginning.”¹ In other words, “it is impossible to conceive of a time when God did not choose on behalf of us, humankind.” This is liberating news! This is better than good news, this is terrific, fantastic news!!! Three points here to take home. Number one: God is constantly, always choosing for us. Number two: the choice is always good, and because it is always good... Point number three: God’s choices are creating a people who are “holy and blameless in His sight.” Thus, God’s choices for us, before us, are making us holy! And who are these people of Gods? We are! You and me, and in Paul’s context the Jew and Gentile. And how are we made into being God’s people? Verse 5 gives us the answer: by adoption through Jesus Christ, but always according to the good pleasure of God’s will. Meaning, everything that has happened to us in being adopted, in being chosen as God’s children is God’s will. It is God’s will, it is God’s plan from the beginning that we be His! And the only appropriate response, Paul says, is one of thanks and praise.

1 Brueggemann, Walter. Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV- Year B

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So what do we give thanks to God for? We give thanks and praise for: Christ’s redemption, Christ’s redeeming work on the cross in place of our sins (verse 7); the forgiveness of our sins (verse 7); the wisdom in knowing his abundant grace (verse 8); and the faith and understanding of all these things (verse 8). This is the Good News!!! There is nothing that we have to do, or can do because everything has already been done for us through Jesus Christ. Now this may be difficult for many of us because what Paul is asking us to do, what he is asking us to be is... to be utterly dependent on God. But to say that God does everything, takes power and choice-making out of our hands, which is terrifying for some of us. It is terrifying to me still today. Never in a million years did I think that I’d be standing here behind this pulpit preaching the Good News to you today, but trust in God’s plans have brought me here.

They say, “if you want to make God laugh, show Him your plans.” However, trusting in God’s plan for us is scary, but it’s worth it to know from my own personal experience God has planned nothing but good things for us. Therefore, our response to today’s text should be nothing but praise and thanksgiving to all God has done and continues to do, not only for us, but before us. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.