
Our Call from God through Truth

Ephesians 1:1-11

Introduction We are in grave danger of losing once again what the reformation recovered for us. What we do not value and do not guard, will eventually be lost.

Reformation Sunday – This is the Sunday set aside to recall and celebrate the Reformation when the Bible and its truths were recovered and restored to the church.

Recovery of the sufficiency & centrality of Christ in the Bible, grace, & faith. Much of the truth of saving faith had been corrupted by a works system of religion whose authority was not located primarily in the Bible.

Reflected in the "Solas" – these Latin terms were used to represent those great truths that fueled the Reformation and are central to the life and doctrine of the church.

- Sola Scriptura – The Scripture alone
- Sola gratia – Grace alone
- Sola fide – Faith alone
- Sola Deo Gloria – for the Glory of God alone

These great truths were not just esoteric theological inventions. They were clear and compellingly in the Bible. They were woven into all the threads of the apostolic deposit of truth. They are deeply rooted in our text today.

As we come to the text, we want the text to drive our exposition. If we are going to celebrate *Sola Scripture* then we had better preach the Scriptures, not our theological frameworks.

Preeminence of Christ

(v. 3)

The book opens by exulting in God in Christ. It spotlights the preeminence of Christ.

In our Praise of the Father

Our worship of God is to exalt Christ while praising the Father. All of the Godhead is to be worshipped. And we may and ought to delight in Christ in our worshipping of God. We bless God when we recognize Him as both God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Purpose of the Father

Why is this so? Because God the Father delights in Christ. Therefore, our praise song we sing here, “We join with God the Father to delight in Christ.” God has chosen to make the Jesus the sum and center of all His purposes and praises. All that we have as spiritual blessings are located in Christ and are enjoyed by being united with Christ.

Provision of our Salvation

(v. 4-10)

What follows is an exultation in some of those spiritual blessings.

Chosen to be Holy

We were chosen before everything was made, in eternity past, to be in Christ. We are here taught the doctrine of election. God chose those who would be in Christ as a free act of His own will and initiative. The purpose of choosing us to be in Christ was so that we might be holy and blameless. Being in Christ was God's chosen way to make His chosen people holy and blameless.

Predestined to be Sons

It is not clear from the grammar whether the "in love" goes with the first or second sentence. Either way, it goes with both. We are chosen and predestined in the love of God. Here, Paul says that we were predestined to be recognized as his very own children who will receive the inheritance given to Christ. Now don't hear the word *adoption* to be referring to making a child who is not your own, you child. The word here refers to the common act in their culture when a father would take a child (natural or not) and publicly declare him to be the heir in full-standing. Adoption then is not how we get into God's family, it is how sons born into the family share in the inheritance that is the Lord Jesus'. In other words, adoption, son-placing, makes us, all of us, joint-heirs with Christ.

This predestination is according to God's purpose and will. It accrues to His very great glory. This predetermined destiny of all God's chosen children that they should be joint-heirs, is a great blessing in His beloved Son. He loved Jesus so much that He wanted to make much of Him by recognizing all His children as heirs. He is so rich in all things that this enriches the praise of Christ, instead of impoverishing any.

Redeemed to be Forgiven

This sentence is so incredibly full. We have been bought by Jesus' outpoured life. This redemption includes the dismissal of charges against us so that we are forgiven our trespasses. This is not a grudging forgiveness. No, it flows from grace that is rich and lavishly bestowed in stunning wisdom and insight. We are freely, fully, fabulously and famously forgiven so that we exult in Christ in God.

Revealed to be United

The final provision of our salvation is that this amazing wisdom and insight, this lavish grace and love, this great aim of magnified glory is uncovered and put on public display in the unity of His people in the fullness of time. As Paul will go on to explain in chapter 2, there is only one true people of God. There is plan and one purpose – to unite all God's people, Jew and Gentile, into one new man in Christ.

If we are going to join with God to delight in Christ then we must highlight these truths in all their stunning beauty and richness. We bless God who has blessed us *in these ways for our good and His glory*.

Possession of our Inheritance

(v.11-14)

If we have been predestined to receive an inheritance with Christ, how are we sure of that? How do we really know that we will possess our inheritance?

Obtained according to His Plan

You will possess your inheritance because God has planned it in His decreed will. We are not moving along in redemptive history with the ends uncertain and dependent on human choice. We are moving along the paths of His choosing to the destinations of His determination. This is not a single thread of what He has determined but is a part of the fabric of all this, which are all set by the purpose of His sovereign will.

Purposed for His Praise

You will possess your inheritance because God has planned to exalt Himself and elicit the praise of all creation by showering His magnanimous benefice for Christ on all His chosen children. Believe me, what He has purposed for His praise will come to pass!

Sealed as a Guarantee

You will possess your inheritance because God has placed a down payment in you at your conversion. He gave you His Holy Spirit as a guarantee that He will complete what He has begun. The seal of the Holy Spirit is the stamp of ownership on us and the sure ownership of our future inheritance.

Two phrases keep repeating through this text: riches of grace and praise of His glory. The centrality of Christ delighted in and celebrated over and fiercely guarded flows from the deep treasures of grace and magnifies the great pleasures of His glory.

Prayer for Insight

(v.15-23)

Since we are blessed in this way then we ought pray as Paul does. This view of the preeminence of Christ gives rise to this kind of praying. We ought to be praying for one another that we will really understand and believe these things.

Grounded in Thoughtful Gratitude

Paul begins by expressing his gratitude for what God has wrought in them already. He is grateful for God's work producing faith and love in them. Having a high view of God ought to shape real love for others and gratitude for every expression of God's grace in their lives.

Petitioning for Spiritual Sight

Paul asks that God will give them real, transforming, spiritual insight into the greatness of God, of His person and His work. He wants them to have an awakening in the soul about Christ's preeminence and God's power. He prays that that insight will them fuel affections for God and actions for others that will glorify God.

Exulting in Christ's Power

The prayer is firmly resting on and exulting in Christ's very great power. That power for us is measured by the exercise of it in the resurrection. That power also has authority and is demonstrated by the ascension of Jesus to the throne of God.

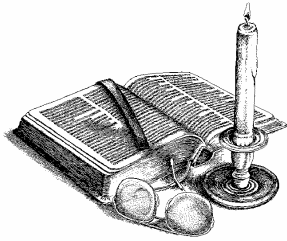
It is instructive that this prayer is both intensely theological and practical, Godward and manward, vertical and horizontal. It can exult in God in a way that encourages and exhorts others. It rings with God glory and resonates for man's good. It is both the right hand of truth and the left hand of obedience firmly clasped together in adoring and asking worship.

Conclusion

So what do we see in this text that illuminates the *Solas* of the Reformation?

- SOLA SCRIPTURA The Scriptures alone are the authoritative and timeless locus of God's revelation. Our insight into the grand wisdom of God is the believing of the Word of God. The apostolic deposit of truth is where what can be known of God in a saving way resides. We are not looking nor praying for an "out of the Bible" wisdom but a Spirit illumination of the Scriptures.
- SOLA GRATIA That we are saved by the rich poise and extended power of God rings out all through this text. God chose to save the way He did in order to highlight His great and amazing grace.
- SOLA FIDE If God has redeemed us by the saving death and life of Jesus, then I am not saved by the works I have done. Jesus' saving work is applied to me by faith – by my believing in Him and bowing to Him. Not by works, but by faith alone.
- SOLA DEO GLORIA God's glory is God's greatest concern. So He has worked all things He has purposed in redemptive history so that in His presence, no one and nothing can boast. All we will do is glory in God – which we can begin today.

Will you join with God to delight in Christ?



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Requests for tapes or questions about this message may
be directed to the church office at (937) 885-2143 or e-mail.

Russ Kennedy uses the *English Standard Version* in his preaching and teaching.

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Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
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