

Ephesians 1

By Paris Reidhead*

(This is only the first part of the message. The tape was blank thereafter.)

Ephesians, the 1st Chapter. The message that our soloist brought was most appropriate because this is the theme of the portion that we have here. It is God's purpose that every Christian be a missionary. This is the simple truth of the Word of God. We are either a missionary or a mission field. It is irreducible. You cannot go beyond that. This is His intention. And when we understand that, we understand why it is so imperative that we should be all that He has purposed that we should be, and have that He has intended for us. And thus recognizing that as He said, as the Father sent Me so send I you, we are indited by Him to want to understand how He was sent, the purpose for which He was sent, the manner in which He was sent, the resources with which He was equipped in being sent, for similarly we are sent.

And thus it is that I bring you today to the 1st Chapter of Ephesians. I want you to notice as I bring you down toward the Text, and I will announce it later, that Paul is declaring himself to be a missionary. "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ." (Eph. 1:1) The word Apostle, *apostolus* in the Greek, means, The sent one. He was sent. This is what it means. In the Latin it is "mitto," sent, and we have adapted that word to our English and called one a missionary. But it is directly taken from the Latin word mitto, to send. And our Lord Jesus said, "As the Father *apostolus*, as the Father sent Me, as the Father missionaried Me, as the Father missionaried Me, so I have missionaried you." (John 17:18) You recall that Paul wrote to the church at Rome and he said, "I am a debtor, both to the Jews and to the Greeks, to the Barbarians, the (Sythians); both to the wise, and to the unwise. I am a debtor. I am ready, said He, to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also, and I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." (Rom. 1:14-16) This is the one that is writing. Paul, a debtor. Paul who is ready. Paul who is equipped with the power of the Gospel. "Paul, an apostle, a missionary of Jesus Christ, by the will of God to the saints." (Eph. 1:1)

Now this word means, the holy, for it is the same root idea of sanctification or separation, and thus it is established here that the ones to whom he is writing are these that have been set apart, separated unto the will of God and the purpose of Christ for their lives. If you are a Christian this has to identify you. There is no such thing as saints in the hierarchical sense. Everyone that is born of God, everyone that is passed from death to life is, according to the Scriptura1critierian, a saint. It has reference to what has happened to us by our choice and God's operation. On our choice, we renounced our right to rule. On our choice we renounced our right to decide how and what, when and where. Upon our own choice we have committed the sovereignty of our lives into the hands of Jesus Christ, and on His part He has cleansed us from past sins. He has separated us from the guilt and transgression that held us under the sentence of death. There has been remission of these crimes which estranged us from Him, and we are thus said to be saints, holy in His eyes, and then in the other sense of the word set apart for His purpose.

Now we recognize that the babe born again the day of his new birth is a saint. This is not something into which you grow. It is not that you become one by the work of God and your ability and application to do it. You are born a saint. But that does not mean necessarily that you are born saintly, nor does it mean that there is not further work of sanctification to be wrought out in your life. But we must understand that in God's plan and purpose He intended you to be wholly His, and I use that word in the sense, entirely His, and His, and holy because you are His. And I use it in the sense of h-o-l-y. You are to be completely the Lord's and holy unto the Lord. This is what is envisioned for the child of God. There is no provision made in the Scripture for one to remain a carnal Christian. There is nothing of it. We are born babes, and anyone who does a carnal thing is carnal. But the Scripture does not envision people contentedly going on saying, Well, I am born again. I am forgiven. I am pardoned. But you see, I just choose to remain carnal. The Scripture makes no such provision, and anyone who would so envision himself is giving absolute testimony to the fact that he knows nothing of the nature of repentance, nothing or justifying, regenerating grace, and nothing of God's purpose for the redeemed. God did not intend to have two classes. He did not intend to have one group that were eager and sincere and open and devoted, and another group that were insured against hell, content to go on living worldly, compromising, soiled lives. This is not provided in the Word of God. It is not indicated in the Word of God. We must disabuse our minds of such a dualistic scheme as to think that everybody is easy to be saved, and then it is difficult to become a disciple, because the Word indicates quite clearly, absolutely without any mistake as far as I am concerned that the

evidence of regeneration is a hatred of sin on the one hand, and a love for the will of God and the purpose of God on the other. And less than this is less than Christianity. Less than this is completely apart from that which this book teaches regarding the redeeming grace of Christ.

So these are saints, saints at Ephesus, and they are faithful in Christ Jesus, and then we discover as we go down to the 15th verse that they are — “when Paul heard of their faith of the Lord Jesus and their love unto all the saints,” here are the two hall marks of the genuineness of their work: continuing faith, and with it obedience. (Eph. 1:15) For the two go together. He only believes who obeys: He only obeys who believes; and to separate faith from obedience is like separating two sides of a coin. You have destroyed its value and you have made it just meaningless tinkling metal. The two sides of the coin have to be joined to the other before their is to be value attached to them. And consequently faith and obedience are inseparable. He only obeys who believes, and he only believes who obeys. And we cannot distinguish these. They do go together, and so they must remain. And he only loves who believes and obeys. So we have here the inseparable hall mark, this stamp, marked “genuine,” whereby it can be told.

I am told, as you are as you read the newspapers, that there seems to be quite a market in Stradivarius violins these days. There are those that have sought to duplicate the kind of wood, and the kind of glue, and the kind of varnish, the kind of structure, and apparently there have been quite successful counterfeiters that have been able to pawn off on the unsuspecting the violin attributed to that great master of makers, Stradivarius. Well we are told that there are very few that are left, and the few that there are are known. Apparently it is possible for one to turn up now and then. However, the experts can establish the validity of the violin that is marked by that name. It is not enough to have the mark, it is not enough to have the trade mark, it isn't enough to have the symbol, but there is irrefutable proof that is associated with it. And so for one to claim to be a Christian that does not understand that he has been set apart in the mind of God to be holy, doesn't understand that this involved faithfulness, if he does not understand that it involves faith that leads to obedience, and obedience that stirs and attests and stimulates faith, and that all of this is sealed with the hall mark of love, then there is something lacking; either gross immaturity, or spiritual counterfeit are the two possibilities that we would see most plainly here.

And thus it is that these are the people to whom he is writing. This sounds to me as though he ought to have been quite content to have a church of people such as this, faithful saints, with faith and obedience and love, all flowing out of their lives. You would say, Why such a church as this would be a church in revival, a church that God could sign and seal, and signify as being the end of His grace. But the amazing thing is that Paul said, Now that I have heard about this, I have just started to pray for you. Isn't that exciting? When we would say, Why here is the ultimate. This is the epitome of spiritual development, a company of people that are saints and faithful with faith, and obedience, and love manifest so that the Apostle Paul can say, “When I heard of it I gave thanks.” This is what we are after. This is what we are working for. This is the place we are going. This is what we mean when we say, Revive. Well this is what Paul meant when he said, Began, not, ended. They had begun well. This is the starting place. This is the threshold. This is the front door. If you please, this is the hallway, just in up over the front steps. This is not the place to stop. This is the place to start.

And so we find that he said, When I heard of that I put you on my prayer list. Isn't it amazing? We would be inclined to take the people off of the prayer list and say, Well now, let's get busy praying for others, who really need prayer. Look at these people, saints, faithful, with faith, and obedience, and love. Oh my, this is marvelous. Now let's just make our prayer list, revise it upward, and we'll praise God for these folks, and start praying for the others. And Paul said, When I heard of this I started to pray for you.

You say, Why? Why? Why did Paul not say, This is what we are after. This is what we are interested in, this is what we want? Well because God had a far greater purpose in it than that. Notice what he said in the 6th verse. He has predestinated us (and I am reading from verse 5) “unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace...” (Eph. 1:5,6)

Well now His grace certainly meant that we should be well born, and every parent delights when the parent is well born, and gives evidence of being normal. And the first thing the mother will ask the doctor is, Is he normal? Is the child well born? for

there is always the possibility of some deformity and some indication of sickness. And oh the mother's heart rejoices, we are told, as she realizes that the baby that she has borne is well born and healthy. What joy.

But oh my, what heartache and grief there is when that baby, well born as it was, remains an infant in the second year, and the 3rd year, and the 4th year, and does not grow physically, or does not grow mentally. And so it is not just enough to be well born. And Paul said to this church, You are well born. Praise God. This is good. You have a good start. But lest you should be content and say that the start is the finish and confuse the two, I want to disabuse your mind immediately. "God has predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to the praise of the glory of His grace," and God's interest is that He get the glory out of your life that His lavish grace deserves and earned. And thus it has something for the Father in this.

We go on down to the 12th verse. We find that in this portion he is referring to Christ, that He has gathered together all things in Christ. "In Christ we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will that we should be to the praise of His glory." (Eph. 1:11,12) To the praise of the glory of the Lord Jesus who died on the Cross, who gave Himself up to the agonizing death of the Cross. Why? That we would be delivered from hell, certainly. That we should be forgiven of transgressions, certainly. But is this the end? O no, you see. We are adopted as children. We are placed in the family as children. And the end is not to be well born. The end is to glorify the Lord Jesus, to be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. He has something that He has earned in us, and He deserves to receive it. So if you think that the end of salvation is your escape from hell and your certainty of arrival in heaven, you have missed the point.

It is that the Father, who purposed our salvation, should have His grace glorified. It is that the Son who provided our salvation should be glorified, because of His grace toward us.

And now we have the difference between the word, election, and predestination. How frequently they are confused. Election has to do with who is to be redeemed. And predestination has to do with what is to happen to the redeemed. One is out here at the beginning, and the other is out here at the end. And so frequently they are confused. And you must understand that he is not talking... He mentions election of grace here, but he is talking about predestination. And predestination has nothing to say about who. It only has to say — speak of what is to happen to those who have been saved. And you must realize that He has predestinated us, as we read

in the 5th verse, "Unto the adoption of children." (Eph. 1:5) And the Father does not simply want children that resemble Him. He wants them to grow up into all the potentialities of the life that He has imparted. And so our Heavenly Father does not just want us to prove that we have been born into His family, but He wants us to go on to the praise of the glory of His grace. And so our Lord Jesus did not just want to snatch us as brands out of the burning and take us to Heaven. He died for infinitely more than that: Not only to save us from what we have done, but to save us from ourselves, and make us like Himself.

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* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Morning, April 8, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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