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The Sufficiency of Christ
Ephesians 1.3-14
Series: We Value...
April 3, 2022
The Village Church at Shell Point

I. **The Core Values**

- A. We have a mission statement
 - 1. Explained in an earlier message
 - a. The result of a strategic planning process
 - b. In which we examined the nature of our community
 - c. Our history
 - d. Our demographics
 - e. Our gifts
 - f. Our limitations
 - 2. As well as the mission given to the Church in scripture
 - a. The Great Commission
 - b. Make disciples of all nations
 - c. Teaching them to obey all the commands of Christ
 - 3. Result
 - a. **We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ**
- B. Five parts to that mission – all of which are critical to who we are as TVC
 - 1. **Building a community**
 - a. We are not a bunch of individuals who happen to share some of the same beliefs
 - b. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, the body of Christ
 - c. And with our gifts and love for one another, we care for one another and grow together into a holy temple in which God dwells by His Spirit
 - 2. **Forgiveness**
 - a. We need to be a forgiven people – have a right relationship with God through faith in Christ alone
 - b. We need to be a forgiving people – reconciled to one another in the church, in our families, and in our communities
 - 3. **Purpose**
 - a. We need to learn what God has for us in these retirement years
 - b. Redefine what gets us up in the morning
 - 4. **Hope**
 - a. We need to recognize that we are on the home stretch of life
 - b. That eternity is in front of us – and not very far in front for most of us

- c. We need to approach eternity with confidence, assurance and hope of an eternity in the glorious presence of our Savior
 - 5. **In Christ**
 - a. All of this can only happen when Jesus Christ is our “all in all,” our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King
- C. We might wonder – of those five elements, which is the most important?
 - 1. Which element is the one we could never do without?
 - a. Which one would completely dissolve TVC if we were to leave it out?
- D. While you’re thinking about that, let me also remind you that in addition to the mission of TVC, we also developed what we call the Core Values of TVC
 - 1. The Core Values are the DNA of TVC
 - a. The non-negotiables which define what kind of people we are
 - b. The put the flesh on the bones of the mission statement
 - 2. Seven Core Values
 - a. **The Glory of God**
 - b. **The Word of God**
 - c. **The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**
 - d. **The Great Commission of Christ**
 - e. **The Body of Christ (the Church)**
 - f. **Prayer**
 - g. **The Sufficiency of Christ**
 - 3. Sermon series has been about these seven Core Values
- E. Of those seven, which one do you think is the most important?
 - 1. Not an easy question to answer
 - 2. Already made the case that the Glory of God is the most important Core Value
 - a. God is more concerned with His own glory than anything else
 - b. God is the only Being in the universe for whom self-exaltation is the chief virtue (Piper)
 - c. For God to value anything above Himself would make God an idolater!
- F. But I would argue the last of our seven Core Values to be considered in this series is the most important one
 - 1. And it corresponds to the most important element in the mission statement
 - 2. Mission statement: We are building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope in Jesus Christ
 - a. **In Jesus Christ** – that’s the most important element of our mission statement
 - b. Apart from Jesus Christ, we have no community
 - c. We have no forgiveness
 - d. We have no purpose
 - e. We have no hope
 - 3. And the final Core Value, the one that we conclude our series on this morning, is **The Sufficiency of Christ**

- a. Which we elaborate as “our resting confidence in His all-inclusive work”
 - 4. The Sufficiency of Christ is not at all inconsistent with the Glory of God and its overriding preeminence as a Core Value
 - a. **John 1:14** (ESV) — 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - b. **John 1:18** (ESV) — 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.
 - 5. It is through Jesus Christ, God the Son, that the glory of God is made known to His people
- G. The Church stands or falls according to our knowledge, understanding, commitment to Jesus Christ
 - 1. This church – TVC – stands or falls according to our fidelity to Jesus Christ
 - 2. So “in Jesus Christ” is the most important element in our mission statement
 - 3. And The Sufficiency of Christ is the most important Core Value for TVC
 - a. Even as it exemplifies the Glory of God for the people of God
- H. But why is that the case?
 - 1. What is it about Jesus Christ that carries such a weighty burden for TVC?
 - a. And for the Church in general?
- I. To discover why we examine another portion of the 1st Chapter of Ephesians
 - 1. You’ll remember we looked at the latter portion of Ephesians 1 in our message on the Core Value of Prayer
 - 2. Today we’ll back up and examine the portion that precedes that section
 - a. Because it bears heavily on why Jesus Christ is so critically important to the Church
 - 3. Ephesians, after all, is a book about the Church
 - a. And we should be surprised to see Paul introduce this remarkable epistle with an extensive hymn of praise for Jesus Christ
- J. Text
 - 1. **Ephesians 1:3–14** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
 - b. 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
 - c. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,
 - d. 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
 - e. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
 - f. 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

- g. 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ
 - h. 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
 - i. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,
 - j. 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.
 - k. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
 - l. 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
- K. The first thing we notice about this text is that this is a bad translation
- 1. It's the ESV
 - a. But it's not just the ESV; it's pretty much every modern translation
 - 2. They're all bad – at least in one sense
 - 3. Take the ESV
 - a. Vv 3-14 has five sentences in the ESV
 - 4. But in the Greek vv 3-14 is just one sentence!
 - a. One long, run-on sentence
 - b. The kind which would make every English teacher cringe
 - c. And put red marks all over a composition that you might submit
 - 5. Why does the ESV do that?
 - a. That's because it's hard for us Western English speakers to make sense of a long sentence like that
 - b. So the translators of the ESV – like pretty much every other translation – have broken it up to help us manage it!
- L. But of course, when you do that, you lose something of the flavor of Paul's intention in writing it the way he did
- 1. I sense that Paul was not so much interested in us breaking down and analyzing elements like an engineer might break apart a machine to see how it works
 - 2. But that Paul, in beginning to teach us about Jesus Christ, just begins to gush with extraordinary superlatives
 - a. Like a dam breaking, creating a veritable tsunami of glorious truths about our Savior
 - b. Truths that define who we are as the Church, as the body of Christ
 - c. Truths that don't just inform us and educate us
 - d. But truths that enflame our imaginations
 - e. And lift our spirits in the heavenlies
 - f. As we realize how Jesus Christ carries us from eternity past, through the present, into eternity future
 - 3. So when he gets started in v 3, he can't stop himself

- a. So he keeps on going
 - b. Until he literally runs out of breath!
 - M. Scholars and theologians, having studied this sentence, have similarly gushed about it
 - 1. Their superlatives seemingly are endless
 - 2. John R.W. Stott summarizes the praise of so many:
 - a. Stott: A gateway, a golden chain, a kaleidoscope, a snowball, a racehorse, an operatic overture and the flight of an eagle: all these metaphors in their different ways describe the impression of color, movement and grandeur which the sentence makes on the reader's mind.
 - N. In a few moments we'll be gathering around the Lord's Table
 - 1. Considering the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ
 - 2. I know of no better text than this to take our spirits, lift them into the heavenlies, so we ourselves gush in our devotion to Jesus
- II. **Everything In Christ**
 - A. The next thing we notice about this text is that it begins with a blessing:
 - 1. **Ephesians 1:3** (ESV) — 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...
 - 2. We bless God
 - a. Because He has blessed us
 - b. Blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places
 - B. More about what those spiritual blessings are in a moment
 - 1. But we must not miss the obvious
 - a. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing – **in Christ**
 - 2. It is our spiritual union with Jesus Christ that gives us the catalogue of blessing found in this sentence
 - 3. And it is what makes our mission statement – building a community of forgiveness, purpose and hope – in Jesus Christ – more than a mere afterthought
 - a. **In Jesus Christ** means Jesus is the source of every blessing of significance in our lives
 - b. Today and for eternity
 - c. Our union with Him carries us – indeed, propels us – into an eternal future of blessed hope and expectation
 - C. **Every blessing is in Christ**
 - 1. Paul, again, gushes with this truth
 - a. Over and over again
 - 2. **Ephesians 1:3–14** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **in Christ** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
 - b. 4 even as he chose us **in him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

- c. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons **through Jesus Christ**, according to the purpose of his will,
 - d. 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us **in the Beloved**. 7 **In him** we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
 - e. 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth **in Christ**
 - f. 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things **in him**, things in heaven and things on earth.
 - g. 11 **In him** we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,
 - h. 12 so that we who were the first to hope **in Christ** might be to the praise of his glory.
 - i. 13 **In him** you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed **in him**, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
 - j. 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
3. 11 times the phrase “in Christ” or “in him” or “in the Beloved” is used to propel us to an exultation of the glories of our Savior
- a. As the various spiritual blessings are enumerated
 - b. We all learned the Sunday school song, “Count your blessings, name them one by one”
 - c. No one captures the essence of that song better than Paul
 - d. As the blessings he recounts are the “golden chain” of redemption that carries us into eternity

III. **Every Spiritual Blessing**

A. **Election**

- 1. What? Election?
 - a. That’s a spiritual blessing?
 - b. That controversial subject?
 - c. Isn’t that Calvinism?
- 2. No – it’s the Bible!
- 3. **Ephesians 1:3–5** (ESV) —
 - a. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
 - b. 4 even as **he chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.
 - c. In love 5 **he predestined us** for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will...
- 4. **Ephesians 1:11** (ESV) —

- a. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...
- 5. I know there are a lot of questions you might have about election
 - a. And there's a time and place to try and sort some of those things out
 - b. But not now!
 - c. Remember – this is Paul's hymn of praise to God for providing every spiritual blessing in Jesus Christ
 - d. And one of those spiritual blessings is that God chose us, that God predestined us
- 6. Now what did He choose us for? What did He predestine us for?
 - a. Well, other spiritual blessings
- 7. He chose us in him (in Christ) that we should be holy and blameless before him
 - a. One of the concerns about election is that it diminishes our motivation for holy living
 - b. But that makes no sense at all to Paul
 - c. Because God's choice of His people is that we should be holy!
 - d. If you don't have a desire for holiness, you might want to wonder about your salvation
 - e. Because if you're really saved, really born again, you have the Holy Spirit
 - f. And the Holy Spirit will not be satisfied with a half-hearted, disinterested posture toward holiness
 - g. He is, after all, the *Holy* Spirit – and He indwells believers!
- 8. Not only that, He predestined us to adoption to Himself as sons of Jesus Christ
 - a. We're part of God's family because of His choice of us
 - b. And you don't want to rejoice in that?
- 9. And not only that, we've been predestined to obtain an inheritance
- 10. And let me ask you something else
 - a. Without God's choice of you, do you think would have had the smarts to choose Him?
 - b. The wisdom to choose Him?
 - c. The righteousness to choose Him?
- 11. **1 John 4:19** (ESV) — 19 We love because he first loved us.
 - a. God was the initiator in our salvation from beginning to end
- 12. And when did God's choice of us take place?
 - a. V 4 – before the foundation of the world
 - b. Before you were even a glimmer in your mother's eye – God chose you – if in fact you are a believer in Jesus
- 13. And Paul is not debating that; or even explaining that
 - a. He's celebrating it!
 - b. It's a spiritual blessing in the heavenly places

- B. **Adoption**
1. **Ephesians 1:5–6** (ESV) —
 - a. 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,
 - b. 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
 2. In Christ He has adopted us into His family
 - a. To the praise of His glorious grace!
 3. Albert Myers sends me cartoons from time to time
 - a. Sent one yesterday
 - b. Had two kids
 - c. One asked the other, “Are you related to anybody famous?”
 - d. The other answered, “I don’t want to brag, I did heard Dad calling God his Father.”
 - e. Are you related to anybody famous?
 4. You bet – it’s one of the spiritual blessings that Paul gushes about
- C. **Redemption**
1. **Ephesians 1:7** (ESV) — 7 In him we have redemption through his blood...
 2. Another spiritual blessing we have in Christ
 3. Redemption implies that we were slaves
 - a. Slaves of sin
 - b. In bondage to sin
 4. But Jesus, by His death on the cross, has bought us out of the slave market of sin
 - a. And He has freed us from our bondage so that we may be bound to another
 - b. To Christ
 - c. And live for Him in the freedom of His grace
- D. **Forgiveness**
1. **Ephesians 1:7–8** (ESV) —
 - a. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
 - b. 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight...
 2. In Christ, we are freed from our bondage to sin
 - a. We have also been forgiven
 - b. Justified by His grace
 - c. No longer liable for the just punishment of our sin
 3. What an incredible spiritual blessing
 - a. All ours in Christ
- E. **Revelation**
1. **Ephesians 1:9–10** (ESV) —
 - a. 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ
 - b. 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

2. Another spiritual blessing in Christ
 - a. That He includes us among the angels, even beyond the angels, in revealing the future
 - b. Revealing the redemptive purposes of God
 3. It's as if we've been invited into the situation room of the universe
 - a. In which God shows us who He is and what He is doing
 - b. To bring all things together under the sovereign headship of Jesus Christ
 4. And Paul celebrates it!
- F. **Inheritance**
1. **Ephesians 1:11–12** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,
 - b. 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.
 2. Recall from the message on prayer from Ephesians 1.15-23
 - a. We learned that the inheritance of Jesus Christ is the saints!
 3. This is simply a recognition that in Christ, we share in the inheritance of our older brother, Jesus Christ
 - a. We receive what Christ receives by way of an inheritance
 - b. We receive one another!
- G. **Sealing**
1. **Ephesians 1:13–14** (ESV) —
 - a. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
 - b. 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
 2. Another spiritual blessing in Christ
 - a. The sealing of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Who is our down payment guaranteeing our inheritance
 - c. Until the time it is consummated
- H. Every spiritual blessing – celebrated by Paul – all in Christ
1. **Election** – chosen by God before the foundation of the earth in Christ
 2. **Adoption** – included into God's family in Christ
 3. **Redemption** – freed from the bondage of sin in Christ
 4. **Forgiveness** – released from the penalty of sin in Christ
 5. **Revelation** – the mystery of God's redemptive purpose unfolded in Christ
 6. **Inheritance** – the glorious gift of the church enjoyed with Christ
 7. **Sealing** – the Holy Spirit's guarantee of our inheritance
- I. In other words – our salvation
1. From beginning to end
 - a. From eternity past, to the present, to eternity future
 2. All given to us in Jesus Christ

3. No wonder Paul gushes about how God has given us in Christ every spiritual blessing

IV. **Doxology**

- A. This “golden chain, this kaleidoscope, this racehorse, this operatic overture, this flight of an eagle” demands a doxology
 1. An oracle of praise
 2. And we find exactly that in the text
 - a. Paul can’t help Himself
- B. V 6 – to the praise of His glorious grace!
 1. V 12 – to the praise of His glory!
 2. V 14 – to the praise of His glory!
- C. How shall we respond to this chorus of redemption?
 1. Election
 2. Adoption
 3. Redemption
 4. Forgiveness
 5. Revelation
 6. Inheritance
 7. Sealing
- D. All in Christ!
 1. And only in Christ!
- E. Praise God from whom all blessings flow...