

## To the Praise of His Glory: Ephesians 1:13-14

### READ THE TEXT

Over the past year since I have been with you, we at Victory Baptist Church have been studying the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. This is a document that sprang out of the age of the protestant reformation, an in order to put our study in context, we have been using the principles known as “The 5 Solas of the Reformation” to guide our thinking as we study the points of doctrine contained in the confession.

- Grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, for the Glory of God alone.
- The fifth sola is what I would like to focus on this morning: Soli Deo Gloria – for the Glory of God Alone.

God makes it abundantly clear in His word, that the primary reason that he does all things, His highest goal in working out His providential will, is to bring Himself Glory.

- **Isaiah 48:11: For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.**

God’s people throughout all of redemptive history have been filled with a zeal to see the name of the Lord glorified in their day - and we too desire in our day, in our nation, in our culture, to see Jesus Christ glorified, the name of the Lord lifted up, we long to see the Word of the Lord and the worship of him be cherished and respected in our culture.

- But let’s be honest – that is not what we are seeing – our nation, our culture, our world seems to be going in the opposite direction – and because of this it is very easy to become discouraged if we focus on things from our limited human perspective.
- God has not ceased being God – he is still on his throne – he is just as zealous for His Glory to be manifested in this world as he always has been. And He is carrying out the work of bringing glory to Himself.

The thing that I will seek to demonstrate by this text is this:

- *We cannot glorify God – but God will glorify Himself through us, by demonstrating the glory of His grace in Jesus Christ.*

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This passage picks up in the middle of a great exposition of the blessings that God has poured out on His people IN CHRIST. This is the foundation of God’s **grace** – the person and work of Jesus.

- What does grace mean? Unmerited favor – all of the blessings or benefits that mankind receives from God are not a result of any goodness in Himself – we don’t deserve anything good from God, we only deserve his wrath.
- And yet – in Christ – the believer is overwhelmed with blessings.
  - He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**.
  - He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world
  - **In Him** we have redemption through His blood
  - **In Him** also we have obtained an inheritance

Let’s look at God’s grace demonstrated in the life of the believer:

### The grace of calling and belief

**13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—**

- If you are in Christ – it is because God brought His word to you!

- He may have worked in someone to speak the word of truth to you, gifting a preacher, teacher, evangelist to proclaim the message of truth to you.
- He may have used someone in your family, or one of your friends to bring the message of the gospel to you.
- He may have just used the testimony of scripture as the means to bring the message of the gospel to you.
  - I have heard many testimonies about God working in this way. This is why I encourage everyone at every opportunity to read the scriptures.
- What is the gospel of your salvation? GOSPEL!

#### having also believed,

- God caused us to believe the message that was proclaimed to us.
  - We do not have the natural ability to understand the message and respond in faith, because we all begin dead and trespasses and sins.
  - **Titus 3:3-5: For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.**
    - The belief of the message of the gospel is by God's grace – because it is not according to our works that we believe, but according to the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

#### The grace of the seal and pledge

you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance,

- God has caused His Spirit to take up residence in the life of the believer.
  - **1 Corinthians 6:19: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?**
- Sealed – a mark in order to approve, confirm, or attest to a thing. – *Example of the birth certificate.*
- Pledge – part of the purchase money or property given in advance as security for the rest.
  - **Romans 8:15-16: For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.**
  - We cannot seal ourselves, we cannot pledge ourselves – therefore the assurance of our position IN CHRIST is not based on anything that we have done, it is based on what God has done for us!

#### The grace of present and future redemption

with a view to the redemption of God's own possession,

- What does redemption mean? *To take ownership by the payment of a price.*
- If we are in Christ – we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ – but we have not yet come to full redemption.
- God is faithful to finish the work that he began in us – and to bring to completion our redemption in Christ.
  - **1 Corinthians 15:51-53: Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.**
    - We cannot transform ourselves, it is a gift of God's grace!

#### For what purpose did God do all things?

to the praise of His glory.

- This is why God lavished his grace on us in Christ – that it would be to the praise of His glory!
- **1 Thessalonians 1:11-12**: **To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

God glorifies Himself in us! HOW? He does this by demonstrating the marvels of his grace upon us in Christ – as we walk according to the grace that has been given us through the Holy Spirit – the world sees the work of God IN US and gives praise and glory to God.

But how does this work out practically?

**1 Peter 4:8-11**: **Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; ----- so that in all things *God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.***

- Good works in his people to produce the fruit of good works, and it is by the grace demonstrated in them that God is glorified!

*You may be saying: Ok preacher, we get the point! Why am I harping on this issue?*

I do not pretend to know what the future holds – but I have a strong suspicion that the year 2024 is going to be a very volatile year. We saw all the strangeness that took place in the year 2020 – and it would not surprise me if we were headed into the same sort strife, confusion, division, and violence that we saw in years past – perhaps even more so.

But this should not depress us! Because when the world descends into chaos – God has historically used times such as these to vividly demonstrate his glory IN HIS PEOPLE – as they walk according to his grace through the chaos!

Believers have received the grace of hearing and believing the truth.

- As lies become pervasive and the world is struggling to know what to believe or if there is any truth at all, by God's grace He moves in his people to proclaim the message of truth with boldness and clarity. "There is no hope in politics, there is no hope in wealth, there is no hope in the prosperity and comforts of this life – but there is abundant hope in Jesus Christ! For He says in **Matthew 11:28-30**: **Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

Believer have been sealed with the Holy Spirit – producing the fruit of the Spirit

- When the times become dangerous – when there is fear pervading the mind of the world – God's grace is demonstrated when believers who have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise produce the fruit of the spirit.
  - When the world is filled with hate – the believer demonstrates love
  - When the world is filled with depression – the believer demonstrates joy
  - When the world is filled with chaos – the believer demonstrates peace
  - When the world is filled with mania – the believer demonstrates patience
  - When the world is filled with cruelty – the believer demonstrates kindness
  - When the world is filled with evil – the believer demonstrates goodness
  - When the world is filled with betrayal – the believer demonstrates faithfulness
  - When the world is filled with violence – the believer demonstrates gentleness
  - When the world is filled with sin and lust – the believer demonstrates self-control.
    - All of these things are works of God IN US by His grace – and when the world sees that there is something different in the believer – GOD GETS THE GLORY!

Believers have assurance of total redemption.

- If we ever get to a point where our very lives are threatened – God’s grace is demonstrated in setting our hope on Jesus Christ and noting in this world – not fearing death because of the abundant riches of his kindness that he has given us IN HIM.
  - **Romans 8:36-39: Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**
- As the Christian faces the worst thing that could happen to them with hope and faith, by the grace that God has wrought in their heart – God is glorified!

If all of these things sound unattainable to you, they are! We cannot glorify God, but God will glorify himself IN US! And he will do it in such a way that it is truly Soli Deo Gloria – for the glory of God alone!

I really hope that I am wrong, and that things like this will not come to pass – but we must be prepared.

If we desire to be used for the glory of God – how do we prepare?

- We cannot work ourselves into a frenzy trying to glorify God in our own power, that will be of no use.

These things are realized in us when we live our lives in complete surrender to the will of God – to be used as an instrument in His hand – so that Jesus Christ will get glory for Himself, simply using us as a tool in His sovereign hand.

What does this look like?

**Romans 12:1: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.**

A sacrifice does not make the decisions, he is simply surrendered into the hands of his master. Do you desire to be used **to the praise of his glory?**

Pray that the Lord would do this in us.