Ephesians 1:11 In him we have also obtained an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in keeping with the purpose of his will.

 We have before us the doctrine of election. It is a wonderful truth of God, a comforting truth of God that all the more brings out the absolute grace of God in our eternal life and salvation. Yet people get hung up on things and often those hang ups are the result of our emphasizing something that should not be emphasized. Let’s work at making sure you grasp the total comfort, joy and marvel this teaching of our Savior is. Our theme will be: **IN HIM WE ARE CHOSEN.**

 Let’s take this section by section. Verse 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.”**

 Here is an opening line that simply wants us to marvel in the total and absolute goodness of God. God is to be praised. Not just any God, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the true God, the only God, the Triune God who with His Son and his Holy Spirit has effected and carried out by total grace our eternal life and salvation. That’s what this verse tells you. In God, through Christ we have been given every spiritual blessing. These spiritual blessings are found no matter where you are: in heaven, on earth, or under the earth. This is true because all of Creation is the realm of God. And God has made possible the total and absolute spiritual blessings we need to attain eternal life and salvation. Please note that the emphasis of this verse is God and God’s blessings to us in Christ. When you take your eyes off of that truth, you may lose this truth of God.

 Verses 4-10 **“He did this when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. He did this in accordance with the good purpose of his will, 6and for the praise of his glorious grace, which he has graciously given us in the one he loves. 7In him we also have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in keeping with the riches of his grace, 8which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. 9He made known to us the mystery of his will in keeping with his good purpose, which he planned in Christ. 10This was to be carried out when the time had fully come, in order to bring all things together in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.”**

Please note this section is truly and only about the work and redemption of Jesus. Let me make clear to you exactly what is being said here. Our gracious God and Lord, before he even laid the foundation of the world already had in mind our eternal life and salvation in Jesus. If you want to emphasize anything found here, please focus on God’s omniscience, that God knows absolutely everything or focus on God’s eternity, that God is timeless and as a result of that God sees his creation from beginning to end.

Why is this important? Because we are learning something about God and our salvation. As God was planning this creation of ours it is clear that God planned from beginning to end. God saw the whole of His creation even before that creation came into being. God saw the perfection he had created. God saw Adam and Eve bringing sin to his creation and literally destroying God’s goodness therein. God then planned, he choose to save us, in Christ Jesus, His Son and our Savior. That’s right, before even one atom of matter ever existed, God already knew everything that would be and God took steps to make sure that the prized possession of his creation, the souls of mankind had every opportunity to be restored and rescued from this horror of sin. Yes, all of this before creation’s time even began.

This salvation, this redeeming would be in and through Jesus. God predestined things in Jesus. God planned Jesus, promised Jesus, worked to deliver Jesus, and fulfilled all of our spiritual needs in Jesus. God sent Jesus to the cross where the sins of all of mankind, from beginning to end, were paid for. Not partially but fully and absolutely paid for by the redemptive work of Jesus. God’s intent from the very beginning is that we be saved, rescued from the sin that would plague our lives and souls.

 So Jesus came. Jesus fulfilled exactly what God had predestined: that the souls of mankind, all of mankind would be atoned for. Jesus did this by his sacrifice on the cross which brings us the forgiveness of sins. And did you see that line, great line: **“we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in keeping with the riches of his grace.”** Do you know why that line is there? To make sure everyone grasps and understands that Jesus paid for every sin for every soul for all of eternity. That line is telling us that God didn’t have Jesus just die for the sins of believers or just die for this select few or that. Jesus died for all. Jesus paid for all. And this payment, from the very beginning, was the gracious plan of God in accord with the depth and wonder of his grace.

Now, catch the next lines: **“He made known to us the mystery of his will in keeping with his good purpose, which he planned in Christ. This was to be carried out when the time had fully come, in order to bring all things together in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.”** I will tell you this section just makes me reel. Here is God pointing to the fact that everything, everything of this world of ours (and yes, including the realms of heaven) comes together in Jesus. Jesus has made known the mystery of God. Jesus has revealed God’s total grace and love, his power and awe, his complete mercy for his children and world. All is in Jesus. And need I remind you that Jesus is clearly and precisely called: The Word! The whole of Scripture, from beginning to end is rooted, founded, built upon and stands in and through Jesus.

Now comes 11-12 which simple amplifies this truth of Jesus. “**In him we have also obtained an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in keeping with the purpose of his will. 12He did this so that his glory would be praised as a result of us, who were the first to hope in Christ.”** These words emphasize Jesus. Notice the “we?” It is actually a reference to all those who were eye-witnesses to Jesus. Who experienced Jesus and his miracles and had a personal knowledge of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus. This group is defined as **“the first to hope in Christ.”** They grasped the wonder of Jesus. They were directly and personally impacted by Jesus! That first group of believers in Jesus, the living Jesus, were impacted by Jesus because that is exactly how God had planned things, that’s how things were predestined.

The next line: “**In him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and in him, when you also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. 14He is the down payment of our inheritance until the redemption of God’s own possession, so that his glory would be praised.”** Here is the truth for the rest of us. We heard of Jesus through the gospel message. We heard of Jesus and through the work and power of the Holy Spirit unleashed on us in Jesus’ gospel Word we believe in Jesus. We have eternal life and salvation in Jesus. We are kept in that faith through the Holy Spirit until our redemption is completed, pointedly, until you are called to your Heavenly home in Jesus.

So let’s kind of sum all of this up. God understood sin would happen. God planned our redemption from sin through his Son Jesus. God set up the promises, operated in the world in connection to those promises, delivered Jesus in accordance with those promises. Jesus revealed the scope and reality of this promise of God by fulfilling all that God had promised. That fulfillment included Jesus going to the cross to pay for our sins and Jesus’ resurrection to makes sure we knew absolutely the hope of Jesus: Because He lives we also will live! And then the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit to make sure we grasp everything that God has done in Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives us God’s Holy Word, that is founded, testifies to and grants the wonder of Jesus and all the truth necessary for us to get the reality of what God has planned: the forgiveness of sins and eternal life in Jesus.

Isn’t that simple? God has done everything for us in Jesus. Heaven is yours because of Jesus. God has so loved you that Jesus died for your sins and was raised just for your eternal salvation and life. The whole emphasis here is on Jesus and what has been done for us in Jesus, a plan God had even before the first nano-quark came into physical existence.

But people do foolish things. They see that word “predestined” and they decide that word means that their whole life is planned out, that God has already set whether they will believe or not. That is a horrid mistake and false teaching! It is true, you are saved because God has loved you, Jesus has died and risen for you, and then the Holy Spirit has called you to faith and life in Jesus. We know this as the doctrine of election to salvation: that God has called us, chosen us in Jesus to eternal life. Remember that Jesus died for the sins of all people. God loves all souls. God sends His Spirit to all. That has always been the plan of God. Everyone is adopted as God’s children in Christ.

What is not true is that God also elects us to damnation! No, this section makes it clear that God had Jesus die for all. This section makes it clear that the message of Jesus is for all. This section makes it clear that God’s Word of truth, “**the gospel of your salvation”** is available to all. You have been adopted as God’s heir of eternal life!

But souls reject this. They reject there is a God. They reject the wonder of Jesus. They scorn at sin and deride the idea of eternal life and eternal death. Men, of their sinful nature turn away from the perfect gift given to them in Jesus and then they blame God for it. Souls were blind: God gave sight and yet most souls gouge their eyes out! Souls were dead. God gave life and yet most souls commit spiritual suicide rather than live. Souls were adopted by God as his very own children and yet most souls act as if being a child of God is the last thing they would ever be. God has given his truth and souls reject that truth as foolishness and idiocy and they do that in the name of all sorts of things. You also need to be aware of the fact that the very world and our own sinful flesh work hard against this truth of God. It is our nature ever since sin. It is why Adam and Eve hid from God once they sinned, though nothing about God had changed. It was Adam and Eve who had changed, who had lost in that fatal act of disobedience the truth and knowledge of God’s grace and love.

Where then, you and me? Do we grasp this marvel of Jesus? Do we understand that God so loved us that he sent His Son to be our Savior? That is the point of Jesus. From the very plan of this Creation, God knew us, loved us, and planned for us to be with Him in Jesus.

But we have excuses. Why didn’t God stop Adam and Eve? I believe that God, through the whole process of their temptation, guided them, instructed them, gave them every truth they needed to grasp and know. Most important, God had given them a holiness and perfection. Yet Adam and Eve, of their own, determined that eating that fruit would be okay. God was not at fault!

Or the fact that our world has serious problems and difficulties. God explains it all. Reveals the truth of the destruction of sin and the evil of this world. Yet we get angry with God because of those struggles. We think God is being unfair to us or hateful and such. We fail to simply believe what God has said, he wants all to be saved. He works in every life for the eternal good and salvation of that soul. Yet we reject this working of God for our eternal life and salvation. We spurn Him because we think we know better!

And what happens when we turn away from the Word of truth? Did you not hear in this section that we are saved, sealed, and protected by the Word of truth, the Gospel of salvation in Jesus? Yet we stop going to church, we stop listening to God’s Word, we miss this food of life for this reason or that and we think it is no big deal. It is our spiritual food and nourishment! Let’s do this experiment. The first time you miss church, then for the next week, every day, you have to miss one meal. The second time, every day you miss two meals and so forth. How long before you can no longer function, mentally and physically? You can even do this on a weekly basis. Miss church once, miss one meal a week and so on. You and I know people, supposedly God’s children who haven’t eaten in months. They no longer remember God’s grace and mercy, his love and compassion for them. And you can see that their life is a struggle and their faith is weakened but they will claim they are as faithful as ever, all the while laying on their spiritual hospice bed.

God’s wonder in Jesus is awesome. Please, know God’s plan for you. His plan is your eternal life. Hear and believe. Wonder and marvel in Jesus. Be sealed in the Holy Spirit, through the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Amen.