

March 12, 2017

Who are you?

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will..." Ephesians 1:3-5

When you were growing up did you play kick-ball or dodge ball in school? Do you remember what it was like to wait for the two captains to choose their teams? Maybe you remember what it was like to be the last one chosen. "Okay...we'll take him if we have to." Were you ever the one who was not chosen? Do you remember how bad you felt when that happened?

Not being among the chosen is heart breaking for kids and it is heart breaking for us as we grow older too. Within each one of us is a driving need to be so valued that someone else would choose us and choose to be with us and choose to value us. This need to be valued; to be chosen, is the most essential need all of us share.

We long to be valued. We long to be chosen. We long to be loved. So, when the Apostle Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus he tells them, that God ***"...chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight"*** he is telling them how very, very valuable they are. While it would be easy to make this a generic statement globally applied, in doing so I think we would miss Paul's point.

I am convinced that the truth that the Apostle wants you and I to understand is that God, the Creator of the whole Universe, chose us specifically and individually to be his. That means that God chose me before the creation of anything to be his. "One day," he said, "Mike will get the opportunity to be mine." And everything he has done from that time to this was specifically designed to make that possible.

In living day to day I don't think most of us understand this truth. We tend to see life as a haphazard sort of thing where good things and bad things happen by pure chance. We come to believe in luck as the primary driving force at work in our lives. If we are lucky good things happen and, if we are not, they don't. In the end our lives are all just a series of chance events.

The apostle Paul wants us to understand that this is not so. He writes, ***"In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will..."*** Predestined does not mean, as some have suggested it does, that God chose some people to be lost and some people to be saved. The Apostle John's beautiful statement makes this impossible. ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*** Peter's words also make this idea impossible, ***"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*** No, I am certain that God has chosen all of us specifically and individually to be his adopted children.

He predestined all of us to be saved, but not all of us will accept his call. Some of us will reject his wish to adopt us as his children. Remember what we talked about last week? God created us to have the capacity to choose for ourselves between the good and the evil. He created us with the capacity to choose him or to reject him. But he chose us to be his children, if we will.



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So, stop and think about your life in this light. If God chose me to one day be his child, then he chose me to be born on this side of Jesus life, death and resurrection. He directed that I should be born into a family living in Montana in 1952. He decided that I would have the opportunity to become involved in a church family through my Grandmother. He invited me to become one of his children, not just once or twice, but over and over again.

My loving Father did not force me against my will to become his child, but he showed me more than once that I could chose to become his child if I wanted to. God, the Creator of all, chose me to be his child. He chose you to be his child too. Fifty years ago I chose to become his child. You can chose to become his child too.