

God Really Likes Me! - Ephesians 1:3-14 – January 14th, 2018

- I've titled today's teaching, "God Really Likes Me!"
- The reason I chose this title is because we live in a day and age where the word love has less of an impact than the word like.
- Were I to have chosen the title of, "God Really Loves Me," our response would be that God's love is a firm grasp of the obvious.

- When I come to the realization that God actually likes me and isn't mad at me it can completely change the relational dynamic.
- This because, if truly believe that God is mad at me, I'll keep my distance, lest I be on the receiving end of his wrath and anger.
- Conversely, if I know that God is not mad at me and that actually He really loves me, then I'll want to draw close to Him instead.

- Enter the text that's before us today, where the Apostle Paul almost seems somewhat giddy in writing how God has blessed us.
- It's important to note that verses three through fourteen are actually one long sentence making it the longest in the entire Bible.
- While we have punctuation in our modern translations, there were none in the original language of the New Testament Greek.

- One has likened this to an opera, which has an overture in the sense that it sets the tone for all the melodies that will yet follow.
- In verses three through six we have the first stanza of sorts with Paul writing about the blessings that are ours from the Father.
- In verses 7-12, it's about all that's ours through God the Son, and verses 13-14 it's all about what's ours by God the Holy Spirit.

- It seems that Paul is making this incredible claim of God's spiritual blessings in verse 3, only to list all of them through verse 14.
- In v4 He chose us, v5-6 He predestines us, v7 He forgives and redeems us, v8 He lavishes us, v9-10 He reveals His will to us.
- In v11-12 He conforms us, v13-14 He marks and seals us with the Holy Spirit, Who guarantees our rich inheritance in Christ.

- The common denominator with all these blessings is that they are all spiritual and not material, which is of much greater value.

Charles Spurgeon - "Our thanks are due to God for all temporal blessings; they are more than we deserve. But our thanks ought to go to God in thunders of hallelujahs for spiritual blessings. A new heart is better than a new coat. To feed on Christ is better than to have the best earthly food. To be an heir of God is better than being the heir of the greatest nobleman. To have God for our portion is blessed, infinitely more blessed than to own broad acres of land. God hath blessed us with spiritual blessings. These are the rarest, the richest, the most enduring of all blessings; they are priceless in value."

- This begs the question of why God chooses us, and blesses us, with lavish extravagance and riches that are priceless in value.
- Answer, the reason He chooses us is because, He likes us, and it's according to His good pleasure, which is God's will for us.
- This brings up another question and it's that of, if God chooses us and predestines us, does that mean we don't choose Him?

I like how one commentator asks then answers this question simply and scripturally, "How can God choose us but still give us the free will to choose Him? It's as if, when a person decides to choose the Lord, he walks through a door over which is written the words, "Whosoever will, let him come" (Rev_22:17). Yet the moment he walks through the door, he looks back and sees the words, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (Joh_15:16).

D. L. Moody - "I'm so glad God chose me before I was born, because I don't think He would have chosen me after I've lived!"

- This is probably as good of a time as any to address the issue of predestination, and with it, what's known today as Calvinism.
- At the risk of an oversimplification, Calvinism is the belief that you can't be saved unless God has predestined you to be saved.
- Then there's also Arminianism, which is the belief in man's free will when it comes to salvation, but that it can potentially be lost.

- You'll forgive me for the bluntness with which I summarily state this, but both Calvinism, and Arminianism, are not scriptural.
- For those of you who are interested in knowing more specifically about Calvinism, I want to recommend a book by Dave Hunt.
- It's titled, "What Love Is This – Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God," and to me it's bar none, the best book refuting Calvinism.

If you'll kindly indulge me, I'll share with you as simply as I can, the main problem with those who say only those who are predestined to be saved, can be saved. First Calvinism presupposes that God also predestines those who are to be eternally damned. This is patently, and demonstrably false, such that, it is inconsistent with the character and nature of God. Another problem, whether it's Calvinism or Arminianism, is that it's predicated upon a finite reconciliation of that which is only reconcilable by and in the realm of the infinite. By that I mean, one cannot, this side of heaven, reconcile predestination with man's free will to choose. However, once we're in heaven, the issue of reconciling the two will be a non-issue once and for all. The best way for me to understand this until then is to see "predestination" as God's "destiny" for me without erasing my responsibility to choose.

Consider these stunning from Jesus to the church in Sardis recorded in Revelation 3:5, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels." The reason this is stunning is because of it's implication, namely, that every one's name is written in the Book of Life until such a time as they, of their own free will choose to reject Jesus Christ, at which time, their name is blotted out.

- Here's the bottom line in closing, God has predestined us, and chosen to bless us, because He loves us, and even likes us too.

Romans 8:28-30 (NKJV) — 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.