

## Text— Ephesians 1:3-14

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

The book of Ephesians, from which our sermon text is taken, opens with the following words: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 1:1-2) Thus, the words of our Scripture selection are specifically addressed to true Christians— the “saints” and the “faithful in Christ Jesus”; that is, people with heart-deep faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord.

Therefore, fellow Christians, our sermon text supplies us with some wonderful words of comfort, as it teaches:

### “CHRISTIANS CAN BE SURE OF THEIR SALVATION”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why Christians can be sure of their salvation
- 2) What is the Christians’ proper response to God for being sure of their salvation

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Verses 3-6, ----- (Ephesians 1:3-6)

The Apostle Paul is addressing ALL Christians when he opens our sermon text, saying: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

Realize that we Christians would have NO blessings in heavenly places without the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent into this world by His heavenly Father to save us. Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest, has earned us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, by keeping God’s Law perfectly for us and then paying the price for our

lack of keeping God’s Law. “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.”— reports Hebrews 7:26-28.

Thus, we Christians can be sure of our salvation because it depends not upon our works, but rather upon the Lord God’s perfect work. If salvation depended in the least part on our own sin-stained works, we would all be lost and damned, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”; declares Romans 3:23. And, Romans 6:23 plainly states, “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Hence, let us Christians never forget that heaven is our home only because of God’s grace shown to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Yes, ALL spiritual blessings in heavenly places are ours because we are blessed by God the Father in Christ!

And, why is it that we Christians are so blessed by God the Father in Christ? Our sermon text answers— it is: *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

Fellow Christians, just think about it. God the Father elected us to salvation, choosing us in Christ before this world was created! God the Father chose us to stand before Him holy and blameless by means of the redemptive work of Christ, adopting us as His children in view of the fact that His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, would provide us with the perfect righteousness we desperately need! Yes, God predestinated us to salvation or we

would be lost and damned; and, it happened because of the saving work which would be and was accomplished in time by God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Galatians 4:4-5 states the case, for we read, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Indeed, Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son, who kept the Law perfectly for us and paid for our lack of keeping it by shedding His holy and precious blood while nailed to the tree of the cross, that we might be God's adopted children. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." — declares Galatians 3:26-28.

God hath made us accepted in His only begotten Son, His well beloved Son, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." — relates 2 Corinthians 5:21. Accordingly, all thanks and praise be to God the Father for His grace shown to us in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Take it to heart that we Christians can be sure of our salvation since God Himself has chosen us, adopted us, and seen to it that we are accounted holy in His sight for Jesus' sake.

Verse 7, ----- (Ephesians 1:7)

Fellow Christians, notice again our dependance on the merits of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for *we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace.* It's as 1 John 4:9-10 also informs us, where we read, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Yes, God lovingly sent His only begotten Son into the world as the slaughter-sacrifice for our sins! No other blood could pay for

sins, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." — declares Hebrews 10:4. But, in 1 John 1:7 we learn, "the blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin." Oh beloved, we can be sure of our salvation because Jesus has paid for ALL of our sins in full; and, God the Father has therefore graciously and fully forgiven us our sins, for Jesus' sake.

Verses 8 & 9, ----- (Ephesians 1:8-9)

God's rich grace in Christ, providing us the full forgiveness of our sins, is that *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.*

Think about it. God's divine justice had to be satisfied; and, God graciously saw to it that His divine justice was fully satisfied by sending His only begotten Son into the world to keep the Law perfectly for all people and to pay for all the sins of all people. Such is the height of true Godly wisdom and the proper application of the same to obtain the desired results. Furthermore, God made known unto us the mystery of His perfect plan of salvation according to His own good pleasure and will. Oh, God's gracious will to save us sinners is truly amazing, for He carried it out. Thus, Christians can be sure of their salvation.

Verses 10 & 11, ----- (Ephesians 1:10-11)

Observe that in God the Father's perfect plan of salvation for those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, all took place in time with Christ keeping the Law perfectly and then shedding His holy blood in payment for all sins of all people, *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*

Accordingly, when the time was just right, God in His perfect wisdom sent His only begotten Son,

Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem the world, that all the believers – all those whom God chose and gifted with faith in the Messiah, the Christ – might be gathered together into that one body, the Holy Christian Church, whether they were believers whose souls were already gone to heaven or believers yet on earth, they would be perfectly united in Christ. Yes, Ephesians 1:22-23 reports that God the Father, “hath put all things under his [that is, Jesus Christ’s] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Hence, Christians can be sure of their salvation since there is but one saving Church, the Holy Christian Church, which is the mystical body of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, for Acts 4:12 plainly states, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

My friends, so great is true unity in Christ in heaven and earth, that, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” – as Jesus relates in Luke 15:10.

Fellow Christians, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior is He, *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

Just think of it: our inheritance in heaven awaits us because God our heavenly Father predestinated us thereto as He works all things in accord with His own gracious will. Thus, we Christians can be sure of our salvation.

Fellow Christians, note well that heaven is our INHERITANCE and NOT something we have earned or could earn. God graciously chose us as His own and provided salvation for us by sending His only begotten Son to redeem us. Again and again we see that our salvation is based upon the atoning work of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Verses 12-14, ----- (Ephesians 1:12-14)

Salvation is the work of our gracious God who sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to redeem the world, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” – declares John 3:16-18.

Accordingly, bearing the fact in mind that God graciously does the saving, all of it, having sent His only begotten Son into the world to redeem the world, and having gifted those with faith whom He chose before the foundation of the world; the apostle Paul writes: *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Yes, salvation provided by God to Paul and his fellow Christians of old and to all later Christians – yea, all Christians of all times – redounds to the glory of God, for whether early Christians or later Christians, FAITH in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord is a gracious gift of God, worked by God the Holy Spirit in the hearts of human beings through the Gospel of Christ.

It’s as the apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:16-17, Romans 10:17 and Ephesians 2:8-10, for we read, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. For by grace are ye

saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." So, Christians can be sure of their salvation because GOD DOES THE SAVING, ALL OF IT!

Fellow Christians, think about the fact that we have been *sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Take it to heart that the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Ghost, has sealed us in the faith of Jesus Christ; and, that very Holy Spirit is the earnest – the down payment – on our heavenly inheritance until we reach our perfect home above, unto the praise and glory of God.

The only way we could possibly lose salvation is if we would deliberately and willingly turn from faith in Christ by neglecting the means of grace which God has provided us with and through which He works— His Holy Word and Sacraments. Let us never forget that Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Savior, plainly says to His believing followers, in John 8:31-32, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Furthermore, Romans 8:11-17 clearly states, "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of

God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Hence, we Christians, being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, are to be led by Him, thereby continuing in the faith of Jesus Christ and being fruitful in the same.

My friends in Christ, we Christians can be sure of our salvation, thanks to our gracious God. Let us be grateful for the Holy Ghost – the Holy Spirit of Christ – who dwells in us, urging us to continue in the Word of God so that we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, holding fast to Him in heart-deep faith.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us see what is the Christians' proper response to God for being sure of their salvation.

Fellow Christians, our proper response to God for being sure of our salvation has been shown to us throughout our sermon text, for we have read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; "to the praise of the glory of his grace"; "that we should be to the praise of his glory"; "unto the praise of his glory." Thus, we see again and again that God is to be PRAISED and GLORIFIED— God is to be WORSHIPED, for such is our proper response to God for being sure of our salvation.

We also observe in our text the three divine Persons of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Oh, the three Persons are but the one true God, for we read in Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Note well, one NAME but THREE PERSONS— the one true God. Hence, our worship must ONLY be to the one true God and no other, for such is our proper response to God for being sure of our salvation.

Additionally, fellow Christians, our proper response

to God for being sure of our salvation, includes the fact that we are to take matters of faith seriously, making regular use of God's Word – the pure, preserved Holy Scriptures – and the Sacraments as instituted by Christ. It's as 2 Peter 1:10-11 directs us, where we read, "brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." James 1:21-22 and 2 Timothy 3:15-17 add, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us keep our full trust and confidence in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord; and, let us go forward in God's Word, taking comfort in the fact that Christians can be sure of their salvation. Amen.

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