



Sermon– September 16, 2018

Verses Covered

Ephesians 1:8 – 12

Galatians 1:17 - 18

So open your Bibles to Ephesians 1. We're continuing through the text. I am wearing this shirt in honor of the college students who are here after a night game. Which the Aggies did do some damage. Now college students that are here, they're starting Life Groups after this. We decided to alter the college ministry where we'd run them through classes that would prepare them, not just what college prepares. It would prepare them for life in ministry and in a church. So there are four classes: theology, Biblical manhood and womanhood, how it impacts singleness, dating and marriage, missions and disciple-making, how to glorify God and lead in your vocation, which is exactly what we'll look at today, and how to follow Christ as a freshman. Those are great. So take that opportunity.

We're going to walk into Ephesians 1 today. We're continuing through the text. It's interesting where he comes to. When I grew up I loved this movie, it's embarrassing to admit this, but when I grew up one of my favorite movies was Wizard of Oz. It is embarrassing. But nonetheless, loved that movie. I will admit to this also, that the flying monkeys scared the bejeebies out of me. But in the movie there's this goofy story about this girl who gets knocked into Oz, this land, and she meets these three strange people. And so she's trying to get to the wizard. Because if you can get to the wizard, he can get her home because he's great and powerful. So you go through all this turmoil. They finally get to the wizard and make a horrifying discovery. That when they run the curtain back, he's not an all-powerful wizard, he's really the mayor of Hearne. So it's, I know, I've been waiting for that all day. So you can imagine the immense disappointment that they feel. And so they're crushed because their dreams are shattered. They can't get home, get her home.

Paul goes through almost an identical thing in his life. And that's what he's addressing in the verses before us. Now we're going to have to walk through this, so we're just going to take our time. I want you to walk through each phrase with me. Have your Bibles open. But understand, remember when we started Ephesians, talked about the fact that really and everything in the Bible boils down to two words: position and condition. The position is who you are in Christ. What is your relationship like with Him? Are you and the Creator of the universe OK? When Adam and Eve were created, their position is perfect. He has a relationship with them. Everything's fine. And their condition is perfect. That is, the lifestyle, how you live, and whether or not you reflect

His glory, remember in verse, in the first chapter in Ephesians when we looked earlier, and he said He predestined us in verse 5 into adoption through Christ. And he talks about us being predestined, verse 4, to be holy and blameless before Him. Well they were. They were holy. They were set apart to Him. And they were blameless in that holiness. Their condition perfectly showed off the position they were in. Now Adam and Eve will fail. They will lose their position and their condition will not only reflect that, but it will be passed down to every child that's been passed down to us. They will have a son that will kill a brother. And so the condition of this loss of position is now all over the world. That's why the Bible says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It made that statement 2,000 years ago. It is still true because we're born out of position and our condition reflects our lack of position.

So chapters 1 through 3 in Ephesians is about how you get your position back. And 4 through 6 is going to be what condition should reflect that position. Now if you're the Apostle Paul, you've grown up, remember he's a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He's a noted Pharisee. We see a couple of things. He studies under Gamaliel, the best teacher of his day. Probably the best academic seminary president of his day. He's only going to take a few guys. He's in there. When they kill the very first Christian martyr, Stephen, when they take stones out to hit him, they want to be fully relaxed, so they take their jackets off and they lay them at the feet of the guy that wrote the book we're reading. So he's guarding their jackets while they beat this guy to death. When they're done with that, they take Paul, and he's totally into this, they said, "Listen some Christians have run off since we killed Stephen and they've left northern Israel. They've gone into Samaria to Damascus. Chase them down. Find them. Bring them back. Let's kill them all." He's totally good with this because he believes that their teaching is horrible. Paul has been raised his entire life, and his Phariseeism has contributed to this, and he's taught people his entire life that as a Jew, both corporately and individually, if you're going to be OK with Jehovah, your condition how you live will create your position with Him. Now that's what he's been taught. It's what he has taught. He believes that about Israel. If they don't have the right condition, then they won't have a position with the Father and He won't bring the Messiah and kill off the Romans. And he fully believes that he's got to live a perfect condition to get into the right position. That's why the Pharisees had all the rules. That's why they had all the stuff. And so Paul is living that life. He's lived it his whole life. And he's done it so well that the leading academic of his day pulled him in, he's done it so well they put the clothes at his feet. He's done it so well he's hunting down Christians to kill them. And as he says in one other place in the Greek, he ravaged the church. He hated the church because he believed that your condition, how you lived, would create your position with the Father. That's been his whole life. And then on the way to Damascus, bright light appears, he meets Jesus, and I want you to listen to an interesting statement that he makes. Now listen to this. He, this is what he says in the book of Galatians about that moment. He talks about it and he says,

¹⁷neither did I go up to Jerusalem to the apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and again I returned to Damascus. ¹⁸Then after three years I went to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, that is Peter, and I stayed with him fifteen days.

He meets Jesus on the road, but it's so mind-blowing to him that he has to go off and spend three years trying to figure out why these uneducated guys like Peter and John got what he, one of the most educated men in all of Judaism, didn't. Because he's now realized my condition does not establish my position but, in fact, quite the opposite. My position establishes my condition. And

he is stunned at this. This is why, look at what he says in verse 8. This is where we're going to start. We last week, through the blood of Jesus we have forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. Listen to this:

⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and knowledge

He is completely blown away. He is just shocked when he's learned that everything he's been taught in his life, everything he has taught in his life is absolutely not only wrong, but backwards. That he sent people away from God because he's told them that their condition creates their position when, in fact, what he's now discovered is the very opposite that God gives you a position. He does it for you. You don't do it for Him. He has done it for you. And that is staggering to him. And so he says, "Man He has lavished this on us in all wisdom and knowledge." And here he goes. Now listen to what he says.

⁹by making known to us the mystery of His will.

The mystery of His will is 1:3 through 8. The mystery of His will, what he's shocked about is that not that God created us, that doesn't blow him away, but what he's shocked at is what he says. That God, before He created us, had already figured out that if we blew it, that He wouldn't do away with us, but in fact, he had already set up a system by which He would adopt us back into the position as children. He's blown away by that. That God not only created us, but created us with the idea if you fail, I will still re-adopt you. I will bring you back to me. I will do it for you. You will not live in a certain way that would create your adoption. I in fact will adopt you. How will He do that? Through the death of Jesus Christ, His arrival, His death, His resurrection. Here's the thing, right, that Jesus creates that adoption. He never saw that coming. That God, that the Trinity, that God the Father would send God the Son in the flesh, now watch this, right, who will enter here as a virgin, His mother's a virgin because He is in fact God. So He will come in the perfect position. He's God the Son. He's co-equal, co-eternal, with God the Father and God the Spirit. His position is perfect. And what kind of life does He live according to the Bible? Tempted in every way like we are yet without sin. His condition is perfect. Out of that condition He will go to the cross and on the cross lose His position. My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me? He's lost His position because His condition was perfect and God took my condition and put it on His back. So that through Jesus as he writes through this ransom payment of Jesus on the cross, I don't change my condition. Through that He lost His position because of His perfect condition and then at the resurrection regained that position and now because of that I can have His position because He did it for me. He took my place. And so Paul is stunned. He says, "Man He's lavished this on us." There's a minute, it took him three years to work through the Old Testament to figure out what in the world happened on that cross. He says there's a mystery of His will based on, now if you have the English Standard it's going to say based on His purpose. In the New American Standard it's going to say based on His kind intention. The New American Standard is correct. The ESV's writing from a reformed background. I love the ESV, but that's their position. But here's literally the Greek. By making known to us the mystery of His will which is based on His good pleasure which He purposed in Christ. God has a kind intention about us. That's what blew Paul away. Let me tell you something. If you spend your life thinking you've got to live a certain way to get God to be OK with you, you are sooner or later not be sure whether or not He loves you. Paul says the other thing blew me away I found out not only was I

wrong here, but God had a kind intention. Best illustration I can give is a grandparent. We have kind intentions with our grandchildren. We didn't have it with our children because they lived with us. Grandchildren come and go. So we have a kind intention toward our grandchildren. It blew him. When I grew up every Sunday at some point in all the children's classes, growing up in a Southern Baptist church, the teacher would say, "You know, better not do anything bad this week because God is watching and He sees everything you do." So you leave class going. I mean you were terrified to walk out to the car because you figured He really didn't like you. And He was just kind of hoping you'd mess up so He could but you. Paul says, and I guarantee you that's what he thought. You spend your life thinking your condition will make you OK with the Father, then you're scared to death that you don't think He really loves you. Paul says, "You know what blows my mind? Is His redemption was based on the kind benevolence He had for us which He performed in Christ on the cross." And then he says,

¹⁰with a view to the management of the fullness of time,

It blew away Paul that he was living in the fullness of time and that Jesus came in the fullness of time, that He wasn't some accident. God wasn't sitting up there and looking around going, "Hey I think We need to do something." He worked the whole world.

So He did four things. He gave the Jews two things, right. He started the nation. Got them in the land. Gave them two things. Gave them the law which they continually failed because we all fail it. And He gave them blood sacrifices which ostensibly would forgive them for the law. But the problem is, they had to do this one particular blood sacrifice once a year. Only one guy could go in. He stepped in the veil, closed the veil, they literally really did tie a rope to his waist in case he sinned and God killed him so they could drag him out. Because nobody else could go in there. And he has to do it over and over every single year, every year, every year, every year because it doesn't work. And so what He did is create, He hoped, a nation of people who would get that. Now the vast majority of the nation doesn't. But an unusual thing occurs on Pentecost. One of the greatest books we have in the New Testament is the book of Romans. That Paul wrote to a church he never founded. The way we think they were founded is some of those Jews at Pentecost that came to Jesus went home and what happened there is what happened in every other synagogue. These guys went home, blown away like Paul, but came to the synagogue and they said, "Hey, listen, got to tell you what we found out. We've been wrong, man. That Jesus we've all heard about, He died and He will give us forgiveness. He'll give us an established set, never to change position with the Father. We'll be OK." So two things would happen. They go to the synagogue; they'd preach that two things. What happened? They'd kick them out, but some Jews would join them. And then here comes the second thing. They would leave the synagogue, couldn't go back, so they'd begin to worship on Sundays and they'd gather Gentiles who were as broken as these Jews. Remember Paul in the book of Acts? He's in Athens.

That doesn't sound good. You always worry about a trap door as pastor.

So he's in Athens in the street and he's walking along and there are all these idols that represent all the different gods of Romans, of the Roman empire. And so there are all these different gods. Now the problem, and when you get to the end remember, there's an unknown god in case they missed somebody and he was hacked. He can look down and go, "OK." Now the problem was if

you were Roman here's what happened. If you were Gentile, this is how you lived your life. You believed the gods were totally in control. The gods, plural, were totally in control of your life. And if you woke up one day and the banker called you and said, "Hey, man, I'm reposing your all your camels." If you got that message, then what you had to do that next day is try to figure out which one of these gods you made mad and what do you have to do to make him OK. So you spent your life as a Gentile trying to figure out which god was on your side, which god cared about you, how, what would you do to make him OK. And so you spent your life there. So when the Jews came along and said, "Hey, listen, it's not a bunch of gods. There's just one God." That was relieving. And when they said, "That one God isn't expecting you to fix your life, He'll fix it for you." OK. And all of a sudden when you read the book of 1 Thessalonians and you read the first chapter, Paul says the gospel has not only gone out from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place. People are talking about your reception of the gospel. The gospel began to flow into the world because the Jews are leaving the synagogues, gathering Gentiles who are as broken as they are, and they're buying into Jesus. As a matter of fact, Ephesians chapter 2 is going to be totally about this.

And then he did two other things. He gave them this. When the Greeks conquered the world, they made Greek, kind of like English today, the language of nearly every country. Now there are two kinds of Greek. This Greek in this book, the best way I can call this, it's Jeff Foxworthy Greek. It's redneck Greek. It's Southern Georgia Greek. It's Alabama Greek. We don't do high stuff in Alabama. We just play football. So they have, slipped that in. So it was a common Greek that anybody could read. And then He did the last thing. The Romans built all these great roads. As a matter of fact, TxDOT really should go to Israel and take a look. Oh, I'm in trouble for that one. So they built these roads so that when Jesus came, God, from the minute He booted them out of the garden, He had gone to work and in the fullness of time He sent His Son at the perfect time, when the Jews are broken, the Gentiles are broken, everybody speaks the same language, and you can go anywhere you want. The missionary effort was on because Jesus came in the fullness of time. A time God had orchestrated. And then Paul makes this statement. Listen to this.

So that all things might be headed up in Christ on the things in the heavens, things on the earth. In Him

The next thing he says is this Jesus who died on the cross that everything at the end of time will be headed up in Him. See we look at a Jesus, we look at a Jesus that we see a crown of thorns on, we see hanging on the cross, we see beaten up, we see mocked, we see laughed at, we make fun of Him, but at the end of time when it's all over, that will not be the Jesus we see. Listen to this.

Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

That is the summation. That is the headship. And that day is coming. We all love being with winners. I know they mock us, but I'm going to tell you we're the ones that win in the end. Because we're connected in position with the One that is the head of the universe. And then He says, listen to this.

In whom, also, we have been given an inheritance.

And then he says the very same thing in verse 4 except he lengthens it out, that we have been predestined according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will so that we might be to the praise of His glory who hope before in Christ. You know what He does? It's where Adam and Eve, perfect position, perfect condition, we fall, we lose position, we lose condition. God works everything, gets it ready, roads, language, Gentiles broken, Jews broken, pops a message out there. It goes nuts in the world. And now you have millions of people who have discovered that their condition is bad and therefore their position's bad. And they don't know what to do until the word comes to them, listen, you don't have to change your condition, you have to re-establish your position. And you don't do that. He's already done that for you on the cross. So now I get a new position. What he says here is that one of these days when I die and when He comes back, He heads up the universe and the glory that Adam and Eve showed as the apex of His creation, when Jesus heads up this universe, is restored to every one of us who have hoped before in Jesus Christ. Because in this time, in this time, you make a decision to let Jesus re-establish your position so that everything works out for you. It is true, your only hope is in the change of your position and you can't fix that. He already has.

Let's pray.

Father burn it in us. What You did for us is simply staggering. Father I've read this book I don't know how many times and I am just staggered at what You did for us. I don't understand it. I don't understand that love. I don't understand that kind intention. I don't understand what you did. I'm just grateful that my junior year in high school You told me about this and I joined. That what You did for me is what works. And Father I just thank You. And so, today, Father You speak in this room as only You can. In Jesus Christ name.