

God Did What???

Sunday, 7/15 – 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 7/16 – 7 PM

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost / Seventh Sunday after Trinity – 2018

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: You have heard of stories like this: A man murders a woman; then the woman's family says to him, "We forgive you!" *Such things are extraordinary!* Even more so is God **✦choosing** us sinners, **✦deciding** to adopt us into His holy family, and **✦purchasing** us with *the precious blood of His only begotten Son!*

Now – knowing full well that **we have sinned** and *deserve nothing good*, let us **✦marvel** at and **✦be thankful** for God's amazing *plan* and *work* as recorded in Ephesians chapter 1.

1. **GOD Chose Us:** 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,** ⁴ **...as he [God the Father] chose us in him [His Son] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.**

- a. When the Holy Spirit opened our spiritual eyes to see **✦where we were** – *condemned*, and, now, **✦where we are in Christ** – *saved*, then we must agree with Paul that *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is most worthy of our praise!*
- b. Even before creation, God knew **✦Adam** and **✦Eve** would fall, **✦we** would inherit their nature to sin, and **✦we** would commit our own sins; therefore, *God chose us **in Christ** to be holy in His sight!*

2. **GOD Adopted Us:** In love ⁵ he [*God the Father*] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the **purpose** [good pleasure] of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has **ble^ssed** [*highly favored*] us in the Beloved.
- Imagine seeing a very sad video of an orphaned child in a third-world country. Then deciding – *out of pure love* – to do whatever was necessary – *regarding time, money, and sacrifice* – to adopt that child into your family! You decided to do it, then you did it; *that is similar to predestination*.
 - For you and me – when God knew we were **✦**dead in our sins, **✦**separated from Him, and **✦**thoroughly unworthy to be members of His family, THAT is when God decided to do *whatever was necessary* to make us His own; then He did it *through our Lord Jesus Christ!*
3. **GOD Bought Us Back:** ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his **pur^ose** [good pleasure], which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
- The average cost to adopt a child from Ethiopia is \$30,000. The cost for God to adopt us into His family is *the shed blood of His only begotten Son!* But why? To be with God *we must be holy;*

therefore, God demonstrated *the great depth of His love for us* by giving His Son to be our substitute! First, *by living without sin*; second, *by receiving our sins and our eternal punishment!*

- b. When we think about God redeeming us – *thus, buying us back, making us His very own* – it’s not because of a quality in us; instead, it’s because of the riches of God’s grace – *God’s love for us!* When it comes to our salvation, we contributed only one thing: Our sin, *our need to be saved.*
- c. God has not only purchased us to be His own in Christ, *but He has also made that known to us.* So, yes, we have sin, *but we also have God’s gifts of forgiveness and peace through Jesus!*
- d. As an Ethiopian orphan may be happy to know he has been adopted, *he will be much happier when he is finally settled in his new home.* In a similar way, we are thrilled to be God’s children, *but we also long to finally be in His presence!*

4. **Through Jesus We Have an Inheritance:** ¹¹ **In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,** ¹² **so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.**

- a. Have you ever inherited something? If so, it was probably from a family member or a very dear friend – *someone with whom you were in a close relationship!* Also, you may have heard about your inheritance *but had to wait to receive it.*

- b. Since God has worked **by** the Spirit **through** Baptism **to** clothe us in Christ, we **◆**know we have an eternal inheritance and **◆**look forward to actually receiving it when Jesus returns!

5. **The Holy Spirit Is the Guarantee of Our Inheritance:**

¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

- a. For people who **◆***are baptized into Christ* or **◆***hear God's Word of truth and believe*, they are sealed or marked with the Holy Spirit. That is God's way of identifying who belongs to Him!
- b. Also, *regarding the Holy Spirit*, He is God's *guarantee* or *promise* that we will eventually receive His promised inheritance.
- c. The Holy Spirit is also with us to **◆**help us understand the Bible, **◆**convict us of our sins, **◆**assure us of God's forgiveness through Jesus, **◆**power us to tell others about Jesus, and **◆**keep us trusting in Jesus *to the very end of our lives!*

We are SO BLESSED now and forever!

Let Us Pray: Dear Father, *thank You for loving us*; dear Jesus, *thank You for dying for us*; and dear Holy Spirit, *thank You for being our guarantee of an amazing eternity!!!*

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