

Accepted Only In The Beloved

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If you will this morning, turn with me to our text which will be found in Ephesians 1:6.

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thou art. We ask again this morning, Lord, according to thy faithfulness, Lord, we know you have told us where two or more are gathered in thy name you will be there also. Lord, I pray that you would, indeed, be here this day, fill this place with thyself, bring us away from ourselves, bring us away from all the things that easily get into our minds as we see things and hear things and, Lord, may you fill us this hour with thy fear. May you bring forth thy love. May you bring forth thy mercy to draw us away from the things in this world. O Lord, may you reveal this day who our Beloved is and what you are to thy people. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

I find in the word of God there are some passages that when I hear them, my soul smiles. This is one of them, focusing mostly on the end of this passage where it says, "he hath made us accepted in the beloved." And when I think about that being accepted in Christ and Christ alone, I think of what great security that is, what eternal security that is.

I woke up this morning and read the headlines and saw all the problems in the world again, the threats of nuclear war, the threats of many nations speaking up against other nations, and seeing things going on in our own country, going on in our own city, going on in my own family or whatever, and the Lord quickly revealed this text to me again, the depth of it, what does it mean to be accepted in the beloved, to be brought to see that our security is in one who is our surety.

Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:14 wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever." That security that we have, that acceptance in the beloved, is a union that we have that will never be dissolved. It cannot be dissolved by your sin, it cannot be dissolved by a nuclear warhead, it cannot be dissolved by some other man. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him." I pray

this morning in this hour that the Lord gives us a holy fear, a holy reverence as we look into what these words mean in light of the Scriptures. Who is the beloved? What does it mean to be in him? What is this union that we have in him? And finally in closing, some words about what it means to be accepted.

I think all of us in this life want to be accepted. As children, we want to be accepted by our parents. As we go out into the world, we want to be accepted by the world. As we get jobs, we want to be accepted by our bosses. And we want to be accepted by our peers. We want to be accepted. Accepted means a kind receiving with satisfaction. Now think about that definition a minute: with satisfaction. And the only way that we as the children of God will ever be accepted by this Almighty God who has created all things as we look around us, has created all trees, has created all men, has created everything, and this Almighty God that rules all of the world, how can we ever come before him in acceptance? And that's what the Holy Spirit is telling us in verse 6, he has made us, which takes the creature, the human, the responsibility of man totally out of it. He has made us accepted in the beloved.

As I said, I want to start with the beloved this morning and it's very hard to even put a beginning. I'm often reminded about how John ended his Gospel in John 21:25, he said the world could contain all the books written about all that Christ did and that's quite a statement. The world could not contain all the books that if it was written down all that Christ did and I think about that and I think about all that he's done for me and all that he has done for his bride and all that he has done from eternity and I say, where do you start to describe or to speak about the beloved? And I say as the Lord brings me to his word, we have to start with a pronouncement of the Father. It is the Father who said in Matthew 3:17 at the baptism of Christ, "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We see a union there. We see that definition being satisfied and acceptance with satisfaction. This is my beloved Son. He has come down from heaven, he has come to save his people from their sins, he is now being anointed with the fullness of the Holy Ghost as the heavens are opened and the Father says, "This is my Son. This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." That's why I say when I hear that I hear satisfaction, that the Father is satisfied with the Son. And I think about how deep that means for me today, that if he's satisfied with the Son and if I'm in him, he is satisfied with me because of my union in Christ who he is satisfied with, who he called his beloved. He is the most glorious Christ of the Father. As I said this morning, it's hard to just find words. It's hard. That's why I stick to the Scriptures, it's hard to sit here and just expound on the depth or the unsearchable riches of Christ. That's what Paul called them, unsearchable riches.

How can we begin to talk about him being a beloved? The Father later would say in Matthew 17:5 when the Lord was transfigured before the three of them, he says, "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He said it again, but then he said those three words, "hear ye him." It is truly the Father's will that we hear the Son; that we hear the voice of the Son; that we hear the voice of the Shepherd. That we hear and the Lord Jesus Christ said, he said, "When I go away, I'll send the

Comforter," and we know the Comforter to be the Holy Spirit and I think, you know, sometimes man and their religion gets very lost about exalting the Holy Spirit, being the third person of the Trinity or focusing on the Holy Spirit. But Christ said, "He will testify of me. He will take the things that I have done, he will take the things and he will show them to my people and he will seal my people." So we don't demean what the Holy Spirit has done, we exalt what the Lord said that his purpose was, to reveal to the children of God the finished work of Christ.

But what is he to you and I today? We've heard the testimony of the Father this morning, that it is his beloved Son, that everything has been placed in his hands, that he has been given the preeminence, that we are to hear him, but what is he to you and I today? How do we know that he is our most beloved? How do we know when the Scriptures say that he is our brother born for adversity? Do we see that? That kinship and that union that he, being our brother who was born for adversity, came to save his people but to stand in our place, to stand as a propitiation to appease the wrath of the Father? Do you see him as that brother who has stood in your place? Do you see him as the glorious husband of his church who is the head, the husband, the provider, the preserver, the protector of the bride?

That's what I was alluding to at the beginning as we have all these things that we wake up to in this life and so many things can burden the child of God, but if the Lord doesn't reveal to you that you're accepted in Christ alone, then that leaves you to work out your own acceptance before the Father. It leaves you to where Cain was left to say, "Listen, I need to bring an offering before God," and his offering, the difference was it was not mixed with faith, it was not given in faith. He gave the best of the ground or of the ground because that's where he had come from. He said, "This is what's going to be accepted."

That's the idea and the mindset that we have today when we come even to worship on a day like this. This is the Lord's day. He has ordained that his people gather together and worship in his name and we offer worship. We say, "Lord, look, I went to church for you today. I spoke to the people of God today. I preached for you today, Lord. I sang hymns in your name. I prayed while I was there." But if it's not born of him, if it's not out of the union of Christ, if it's not brought forth from his fruit, it's nothing. It's just as good as Cain's cursed offering before God. Do you have that on your heart today? Is your beloved so worthy that you don't have the words to describe him?

We're going to listen to some descriptions here in a moment. Well, let's not wait. Let's go over to Proverbs 8. Proverbs 8 is what we call the wisdom chapter. Not the wisdom of this world, Christ is revealed as wisdom. He is revealed as wisdom to all of his people, wisdom for his people. Remember, we're told Paul said in 1 Corinthians, he's made unto us wisdom? The wisdom of Christ is our wisdom if we be in him.

Beginning in 22, these are the words of Christ. "The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old." What you have before you is a unity of

the Father and the Son when the Son was made Incarnate, when he was given a body prepared for him before the foundation of the world.

"The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." We have an eternal Christ. As I said, when I hear those things, when the Holy Spirit quickens an eternal Christ to me, the first word that comes to me is preservation, safety, oneness in the Lord long before I was even thought of or thought on this earth. It is a deep thought and a deep truth and a growth in knowledge of the Lord to know what he has done for us in eternity.

"I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When [there were] no depths, I was brought forth; when [there were] no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." It wasn't any haphazard idea. It wasn't, "Oh, my people are down there and they're struggling, let's come up with an idea to send forth the Son." No, he was there. He was there before the world ever was and that's what he's telling us.

"While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I [was] there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him." I was by him. We're so inundated in this life by the word "chance," the word "happens, I wonder what will happen? I wonder what will happen to that person when that comes in their life? I wonder how he's going to react to that? I wonder how..." But for the child of God, what he has is finished in the Lord, the eternal Lord whose presence was with the Father and with the Holy Ghost before he ever walked upon this earth. He is the eternal Lord.

"Then I was by him, [as] one brought up [with him]." That's the oneness that we have in John 17, the oneness. And I want you to take a moment, just a moment, and I'm going to ask you a couple of times in this sermon to close your eyes and see if the Holy Spirit speaks to you in the words. But for a moment, think about this union that the Father has with his Son, how glorious it is that they are one in that union, that everything that they have is for each other, the depth of love is for each other. And now think what Jesus said in John 17 that we are in that union because we are in Christ. An indissoluble union. A union that can't be broken. A union that's fixed. That's sure. That no man, as I said, or nothing, no false ideas, no lies of Satan, nothing can penetrate that union. We are in that union, that same union that we just...

"Then I was by him, [as] one brought up [with him]: and I was daily [his] delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights," here is our part, here is where we come in, "my delights [were] with the sons of men." It was the joy that was set before him to come and lay down his life for his church. It was a great joy to save his people from their sins, to save them from being in the first

Adam and being fallen in Adam, as all men are. And there is no other way to be accepted except we be in this union in the beloved.

Now, while we're freshly thinking about this, let's turn over to Song of Solomon 5. You know, if you ever have time on your hands and you want to read the word of God and he draws you to the word of God, the Song of Solomon is deep deep union between Christ and his church. And I told you earlier, I'd ask you to close your eyes again and I'll read these words to you of the church describing who their beloved is. And yeah, we may not understand the metaphors, we may not understand what Solomon used at that time as the most excellent things that the Holy Spirit enabled him to write, but I believe the unity of the Spirit reveals to the child of God how excellent Christ is.

Look starting in verse 9 and these are the daughters of Jerusalem asking the church, "What [is] thy beloved more than [another] beloved," what makes him different? I ask you the same thing today: what make Christ in your life different than your relationship with your loved ones? What makes him different than the relationship with the world? What makes him different than your relationship with yourself?

"9 What [is] thy beloved more than [another] beloved, O thou fairest among women? what [is] thy beloved more than [another] beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" Remember, the church didn't want to be bothered, it did not want the communion broken. Why? Those ask, "Why? Why would you not want that communion broken? Why would you charge us this way?" And then the description beginning in 10. I'd close my eyes if I could but I have to read this.

"My beloved [is] white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head [is as] the most fine gold, his locks [are] bushy, [and] black as a raven. His eyes [are] as [the eyes] of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, [and] fitly set. His cheeks [are] as a bed of spices, [as] sweet flowers: his lips [like] lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands [are as] gold rings set with the beryl: his belly [is as] bright ivory overlaid [with] sapphires." By now you should start to understand that from the church flows all of the description of who and why their beloved is so precious to them. That's what we hear here. As I said, you may not understand what they're saying but what about your soul? Does your soul go on about how beloved the Lord Jesus Christ is to you? Because the church isn't finished here.

"His legs [are as] pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance [is] as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth [is] most sweet." Is the Lord's mouth most sweet to you? Do the words that the Lord speaks in his word, that he speaks by the Holy Ghost, are they sweet to you? Are they the words of life? Are they life themselves?

"His mouth [is] most sweet: yea, he [is] altogether lovely." He is altogether lovely. He is all-in-all.

"This [is] my beloved, and this [is] my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." I wonder for all of us in here, Paul said that he wasn't ashamed of the Gospel and Paul wrote beautifully

and as the Lord enabled him to speak the truth it flowed so beautifully from him as it did Peter and all the saints that the Lord has ever empowered in the day of his power to speak the blessedness of Christ, and I wonder as we sit here this morning, how is your vocabulary? How is your experience with this beloved? Is he your beloved? Is he your friend? Can you speak that way of him who has been everything to you? And if you can and if you can speak with a love that we just heard from the church, it is only because 1 John 4:19 tells us, because he loved us first. He is faithful to himself, to bring forth that love and the fruit of him to his people.

And that brings me now to the terms, "in the beloved." We've heard now about the gloriousness of the beloved but those words, "in the beloved," speak of that great union, that eternal union that is so vital for the child of God's life. We have this glorious union in him. We have eternal predestination. We have sovereign election. We're in him by spiritual regeneration. We're in him by his gracious preservation. We're in him by his everlasting glorification. In him. These terms you hear in the word of God and not only do you hear them, do you understand them? That all of those things, of those glorious truths, are because of him, of being in him? Everything is by him.

Hosea says it this way, Hosea 14:8, "Ephraim [shall say], What have I to do any more with idols?" And the Lord brings his church which is referenced in the Old Testament as Ephraim. Ephraim backslid a great amount but the Lord was faithful to Ephraim, to bring Ephraim back. And Ephraim comes back and is brought back and says the testimony of the Holy Spirit says, "What have I to do any more with idols?" That's the conviction of sin over all of the things that we idolize in this life.

"What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard [him], and observed him." And at the end of this verse, the Lord speaks and he says, "I [am] like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found." From me is thy fruit found. You know, it's an amazing thing the Lord came looking for fruit. It's his fruit. He knew where to go. He knew where his people were. He knew what questions to ask. He knew everything that would reveal fruit. The union of Christ brings forth his fruit. We all know what the fruit of the Spirit is, that fruit is of Christ.

Turn with me now to 2 Timothy 1. Paul at the very end of his life would write these words to Timothy and why is that important? Because you see the accepted in the beloved, how Paul was preserved throughout his life and the testimony here, and we'll just back up to 8, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." That's what we're seeing. We're accepted, we're made to be accepted because of the power of God. The Lord brings forth his truth in our life in his fruit because of the power of God. He reveals his Son in our life because of the power of God, in the day of his power, and the child of God will have many of those days because of the faithful one who has called us who will do it, because of the faithful one that is greater in us than the one that's in the world.

Verse 9 and 10 is what I wanted to hit on, "Who hath saved us, and called [us] with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Paul as he exited this life, he spoke of the union of Christ. He spoke of the grace that we have in Christ because of this union and how everything is in Christ.

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ," and I hope he has. I hope he has manifested that union to you in your life, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." I started this sermon by alluding to some of the problems we have in this life today, the things that we hear, the things that we see, the devastation going on in Houston. We see death. We see great works of God, of just destruction. We have all these rumors of wars. We have all of these things but the Lord has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. And what is the Gospel but the finished work of Christ, that he came to save his people from their sins?

Now let's go back to our text in Ephesians 1 because we need to look at these verses around us that speak of this union, starting in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." In Christ. There's that union again. The spiritual blessings and all that we have is stored up in this union in Christ. Understand what that means. There are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ. I've said it many times from this pulpit: the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ and leads to Christ. He will never lead you to find refuge in anything other than Christ. Not in situations. Not in men. Not in relationships. Not in this world.

All that we have, he has blessed us with all spiritual blessings and I have to ask: are there any other blessings that you want? Oh, of course we sit in this life and we say there are temporal things that I'd love to be blessed with. Do those temporal things touch your soul? Do they? Is that what makes up who you are? And if it is, you have no idea what I've been speaking about today, the presence of your beloved.

Verse 4 tells us, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." We are chosen in him, elected in him. "Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Words I don't associate with myself: holy and without blame. I could list many things that I could blame myself for today: my inabilities, my sinful nature, my quick temper, my this, my that. But in him, in him I'm chosen in him that I should be holy and without blame before him. The Father looks at me through the righteousness of his Son that is put upon me by Christ himself. It is imputed to me as righteousness but it's his and it's his gift to every child of God to stand accepted in him before the Father. So the Father looks at the church with love and looks at his people with great love because of the work of his Son as he sees his Son's righteousness. Isaiah saw his and he said, "What filthy rags it is." I hope we all have that testimony of the filthy rags of our righteousnesses.

Verse 5 tells us that our predestination is in him and by him, we are predestined. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." No other way.

To himself. He did it to himself. This is the union that we have. "According to the good pleasure of his will." Once again, taking the creature, "Oh, let me look down in time and see who's going to accept me." No. "Let's see who's going to do something for me?" No. There is nothing good in the creature. Nothing. "I looked down from heaven and I saw none good, no not one." But the new creature that's created in Christ Jesus, there is everything good and everything holy and everything without blame because of the beloved.

To our text, "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." He has even man us accepted in the beloved. Just as Psalm 23 tells us, he makes us to lie down in green pasture. You see the rebellion that we have but not in the day of his power, not when he puts down that flesh, not when he puts down our evil nature and he exalts the nature of him, the seed of Christ that lives in the child of God.

Verse 7 tells us that we have redemption in him. "In whom we have redemption through his blood." He has paid all the debt. He has bought us. He has purchased us. He has taken us from that line of Adam and we are in the line of Christ as our federal head. All men are in that first line. We must be adopted or put into, elected out of that first fallen head. And that second head, the second Adam, is the life in the beloved of all of the children of God.

"We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." That's not all. We go down now to verse 9,

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." He is the revelation of truth in this union. We know truth no other way. We stand just like Pilate and say, "What is truth?" And that isn't hard to believe in this day and age. It's hard to even turn on anything to hear any man's voice anymore, it's hard to watch any tv. I don't want to hear any commentary. I don't want to hear what people think because there is no truth in this world. Every man speaks for himself as it has always been. Every man delights to do what he wants to do in his own eyes. But he has purposed in himself in this union truth for the children of God.

Verse 11 it says, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." Our inheritance, the life to come, the life without sin, the life of unbroken communion, the life with all the saints worshiping the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in perfect unity. That's the inheritance and that's in Christ and we can't lose that and we cannot sin away that inheritance because it's secure in our surety.

"We have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Then verse 13, all faith and all trust and everything that we'll ever need is in whom?

"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," our faith is in him, it's in whom? It's in Christ. I love the beginning of Ephesians here because I truly believe the Holy Spirit

anointed Paul and opened the heavens here and I do mean a beautiful vision to see what was done in eternity and what is given to us in time to see.

"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." As I mentioned earlier, the Holy Spirit seals what Christ has done in the soul. That's how we're kept. That's how we believe. That's how we know. That's how we live. That's how we act. All by him, by the glorious power of being accepted in the beloved.

These words "in him" and "in whom," you think about that. We were in him before the foundation of the world, chosen in him. We were in him when he came down and he was born in that manger. We were in him. We were in him as he walked this earth as a teen and an adolescent. We were in him. As he went and was baptized, as we talked about earlier, we were in him. That's why the child of God desires to be baptized, to show forth the glorious union we have with the Son to being one with him in death and life and resurrection. In him. We were in him when he was crucified, when he said it was finished, when he paid the debt. He took us and all of his church with him to the cross and we were with him in the resurrection. We are with him in the ascension and the glorification.

All that we have is in him. When I read these words in our text, "wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," as I said, I'm overwhelmed with the gloriousness that's couched in these words. The beloved, how glorious he is, and then being made to be accepted. As I said, the hardest thing for me to get by and this is what carnal reason brings you, is trying to figure out how a sinner like me can be accepted before a holy God. And every time he reveals to me how holy is law is, you must die, you transgressed that law, you must die, you must die, you must die, as I keep transgressing his holy law and I think, "Lord, it's of your mercy I'm not consumed every day because I'm accepted in your Son, accepted in the beloved with satisfaction. You have received me. You have received his perfect sacrifice on my behalf. You have accepted me because of him and there is no other way."

I hope young, old, middle-aged, whatever you are, that the Lord brings you to see this morning that there is no other way in this life or the life to come to be accepted. As I said earlier in this message, we desire many times in this life to be accepted by people, by groups, by bosses, whatever they are, we desire those things. We desire somebody to pat us on the back but if we're not accepted in the beloved, if we're not accepted by the Lord Jesus Christ and all of these "in whoms" and all that he has done, we truly have nothing and we shall surely perish for life is in Christ and Christ alone. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

Dear heavenly Father, may you add thy power and thy clarity and reveal to thy children this hour how glorious you are and how we are only accepted in you. To the praise and glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.