

Readings

Scripture

¹¹In 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, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³In 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, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:11-14 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

Paul could hardly have insisted more forcefully that our becoming members of God's new community was due neither to chance nor to choice (if by that is meant our choice), but to God's own sovereign will and pleasure. This was the decisive factor, as it is in every conversion...Not that we were ourselves inactive, however. Far from it. In this very context, in which our salvation is attributed entirely to the will of God, our own responsibility is also described. For (verse 13) first *we heard the word of truth*, which is also called *the gospel of your salvation*; then *we believed in him* (Christ), and so *were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit*. Let no one say, therefore, that the doctrine of election by the sovereign will and mercy of God, mysterious as it is, makes either evangelism or faith unnecessary. The opposite is the case. It is only because of God's gracious will to save that evangelism has any hope of success and faith becomes possible. The preaching by which he delivers from blindness and bondage those whom he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, sets them free to believe in Jesus, and so causes his will to be done.

- John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians* (p. 48)

Sermon Outline

It's Whose Inheritance?

Ephesians 1:11-14

The Theology of Tears

Brad Anderson

The magnitude of God's blessing is revealed in Jesus Christ...

What does our relationship with Jesus Christ reveal about the magnitude of God's blessing?

In Jesus Christ, God reveals his multi-ethnic inheritance... (Ephesians 1:11-14)

In Jesus Christ, God reveals his sovereign activity... (Ephesians 1:11-14)

In Jesus Christ, God reveals his glorious grace... (Ephesians 1:11-14)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- Describe one or two of the biggest blessings you have seen in the life of a close friend or family member. How has your life been shaped by these blessings? How have others been shaped by these blessings?
- Look at the pronouns in verses 12-14. Paul makes a distinction between Jews (those who were the first to hope in Christ) and Gentiles ("in him you also"). Reading the verses again with this insight, how is the magnitude of God's blessing revealed? You may also want to read Ephesians 2:11-22.
- God's sovereign activity is seen in these verses. How might God's sovereignty be a source of comfort in your salvation?
- Read the reflection quote by John Stott. Describe in your own words what Stott has said. How can you see this dynamic worked out in your own conversion experience?
- To receive an inheritance one would typically have to die in order to trigger the inheritance and its distribution. Describe how the death of Jesus triggered your inheritance from God. Describe how your death in Christ is actually the trigger point for God to receive you as His inheritance.