

### CHRIST THE SUMMATION (EPHESIANS 1:9-10)

#### I. Fear

- Heb 2:15: “and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”
- 2 Tim 1:7: “for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

#### II. “In Christ”

- A. The main idea in Ephesians 1 is *blessing*.
- B. Ephesians 1:3: “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.”
  1. That is how much God loves us.
  2. He loves so much that he has lavished upon every good gift in the heavenly realm, where he dwells. He loves us so much that he pours out every treasure upon us.
  3. GOD THE FATHER ABSOLUTELY LOVES HIS CHILDREN AND DESIRES TO BLESS THEM WITH EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING!
- C. What spiritual blessings/treasures are these?
  1. In Christ, God chose us “before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him” (v 4).
  2. Out of his sheer love for us, God “predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ” (v 5).
  3. In Christ, “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (v 7).
- D. God’s heart is revealed in this chapter. God has an overwhelming desire is to do good to his children.
- E. But we must recognize that all this goodness that God wants to lavish on his children are intimately bound up with the person of his Son, *Jesus Christ*.
- F. The heart of the Christian Faith is union with the Lord Jesus Christ.
  1. The Christian life is not introspective, but *extrospective*—looking away from oneself to Christ.
  2. The Christian life is not about self-esteem, but *Christ-esteem*.

3. The Christian life is not about rules and regulations, but *union with Christ*. “Christ is all, and in all” (Col 3:11).
- G. This is the extent to which God loves us. He fuses us to his Son and lets his Son become our life before him (cf. Col 3:3).
- H. That idea prepares us for what we will see in verses 9 and 10, where we see just how central Christ is to everything that God wants to do—not just for us, but for the entire universe.

### III. The Mystery

- A. In v 9, Paul connects our blessing to the purposes of God.
- B. When we are in Christ, we are blessed with the knowledge of God’s will and our eternal destiny.
- C. Verses 9-10 show us what these plans are. God makes the mystery of his will known to us “according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ...” (v 9). There are several important things here.
  1. God’s very act of “making known” his will is in full agreement/accord with “his purpose.”
  2. God’s purpose in telling us about his will is “set forth in Christ.”

### IV. The Great Unification

- A. What is that great purpose, that great mystery that God has set out in Christ? What is this great plan that God has in store for his children—a plan so great that if we took it to heart, it will set us free from fear to truly live for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor?
- B. Here it is in verse 10: “as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him [referring to Christ], things in heaven and things on earth.” That’s what God has in store for us.
- C. When Scripture talks about “the fullness of time,” it is referring to the time that God has reserved for his special work.
  1. “Fullness of time” suggests that the universe is not ruled by chance.
  2. Everything in creation is under the direction of God himself.
  3. There is ultimately no such thing as a secular universe.
    - Heb 1:3: “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”
  4. By “fullness of time,” Scripture teaches us that the Lord God, the Master of the Universe, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ” (v 3), has both the *right* and the *intention* to impose his will on time and space.

- D. The big event that God has ordained is “to unite all things in [Christ]...”
1. To “unite” (Gk: *anakephaliaoō*) = “sum up,” “gather-up,” “consolidate,” or “summarize.”
  2. God has desired since the creation of the universe to *gather-up* or *unify* “all things in Christ.”
  3. Jesus Christ has always been at the very center and climax of the Father’s plans.
  4. Just as God chose us in Christ *before* the creation of the world (v 4), God has chosen Christ to be the *end* of the world, the conclusion, the summing-up of world history.
  5. Jesus Christ is God’s first Word as well as his final Word. Jesus Christ has always been the Father’s Intention for all creation. Jesus himself is the Plan.

## V. Jesus Is the Plan

- A. This has implications for how we read and apply Scripture.
- B. If Jesus was God’s Plan right from the start, then we must accept God already knew what he was going to do when Adam fell and dragged the entire human race into slavery.
- C. If Jesus was God’s Answer from the start...
1. God had Jesus in mind when he promised Eve that the savior of the human race would come from her (Gen 3:15).
    - Gen 3:15: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
  2. God ultimately had Jesus in mind when he told Abraham that his Descendant would bring about the blessing of the world.
    - Gal 3:16: “Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, ‘And to offsprings,’ referring to many, but referring to one, ‘And to your offspring,’ who is Christ.”
  3. God knew, from the very beginning, that the salvation of the world never lay in Israel as a people or in the various prophets, kings, or judges he sends to them.
- D. Jesus was never God’s Plan B.
1. God’s Plan has always been Plan A.
  2. Plan A is for Jesus to be the Hero of the Story.

3. Jesus has always been the designated Savior of sinners; the life-giving Lord who will heal the fragmented creation by gathering it all up into himself.
- E. When we use passages of the Bible to lead us to the Gospel (both Jesus and Paul teach us to do), we are not imposing some strange system of interpretation on Scripture.
1. We are using the very system of interpretation that Scripture requires us to use.
  2. Jesus has always been the Key to interpreting and applying the Scripture. It has always been about him! That's the great Mystery that is now revealed!
    - Lk 24:27: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."
    - Lk 24:44-47: "<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'"
    - Jn 5:39-40: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, <sup>40</sup>yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."
    - Rom 10:4: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."
    - Gal 3:24: "So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith."
- F. If God's plan is "to unite all things in him," then Jesus is our final destination.
- Jesus is your goal.  
 Jesus is your future.  
 Jesus is your end.  
 Jesus is your new beginning.  
 — It has always been about *him*.

## VI. The Whole Universe

- A. The “all things” are “things in heaven and things on earth”; the entire creation, the entire universe.
  - William Hendriksen: “literally *everything*, things in heaven, things on earth, everything above us, around us, within us, below us, everything spiritual and everything material, has even now been brought under Christ’s rule.” (*Ephesians*, 86)
- B. Not only is creation *not* secular. Creation will ultimately be...*Christian!* —All creation will be summed up in Christ. All creation will be (and is already being) brought under the rule of Christ.
- C. Just as the first Adam brought creation down by his sin, the new Adam Jesus heals and raises creation by his resurrection.
  - 1. Jesus’ very life is the life of God’s new world.
  - 2. Jesus’ rule is a nourishing, and cherishing, and life-giving rule, not an abusive one (cf. Eph 5:29-30).

## VII. Headed to Jesus

**If I know that Christ Jesus is the goal of God’s purpose in history, and I am headed to Christ as Christ reconciles all things to himself, I don’t have to live in slavery to the fear of death anymore. While I can still choose to live in fear (and still often do), we don’t have to anymore. Instead of living in fear, I can live under the liberating rule of Christ’s Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit “not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”**

- A. But let’s keep the focus where it should be. We focus not on our faith or freedom *per se*, but *Jesus*.
  - 1. What generates faith and freedom is not our focus on our own faith or experience of freedom.
  - 2. The only way to have faith is to take our eyes off ourselves and onto Jesus Christ.
    - Sinclair Ferguson: “Only where our piety forgets about ourselves and focuses on Jesus Christ will our piety be nourished by the ongoing resources the Spirit brings to us from the source of all true piety, our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Cited in Douglas Bond, *Grace Works!*, 136)
- B. Look at the promise. Ephesians 1:10 is not on what we do, but on what God is doing in Christ. None of it is our work. It is all of God. Jesus is the Savior. Look to him.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything with which you disagree or found difficult to accept?
3. What does Eph 1 show us about God's heart toward his children?
4. What does it mean that God has set forth his purposes in Christ (v 9)?
5. How does Eph 1:10 affect our understanding of secularism?
6. How does Eph 1:10 shape our understanding of the story of Scripture?
7. What is included in the unification in Christ? How comprehensive is it?
8. Think about the Sinclair Ferguson quote. How does it speak to you?
9. If Christ is all, what small moves can we make daily to look to Christ?
10. A suggested prayer to pray often: "Lord Jesus Christ, you are my home. Keep me in you."
11. If Christ is your end, the goal of your life, how would that shape the way you live today? What are somethings you would do differently?