

## How Firm a Foundation!

✠ Chosen by God as saints (vv.3-10)

✠ Living for God guaranteed (vv.11-14)

In the name of Jesus, the **Firm Foundation** of our faith, dearly redeemed and eternally chosen of God:

If you reach that great day when the balance on your mortgage equals a big, beautiful ZERO, will you ring your hands, worrying about everyone still paying theirs? Or will you figure you can finally celebrate by fine dining, maybe even a little vacation? Does paying off your car leave you lost in guilt for everyone else's debts? Would you pay cash for a wide screen HD TV, then hang your head in shame for all the other shoppers drooling over your purchase? Strangely, in everyday life we know we can receive these gifts of God with thanks and praise. But when it comes to the Biblical doctrine of predestination or election we can't stop asking about the other guy. "Pastor, what about the others?" This is one of those rare times when God wants you to stop thinking about everyone else and focus on your personal relationship with God. And in the doctrine of election there should be nothing but pure joy in your heart and soul to see **How Firm a Foundation** we have in Christ because we were first of all...

✠ Chosen by God as saints (vv.3-10)

If you were following along with the reading of this text, you may have noticed "*God the Father*" (v. 3), "*Christ*" (v. 10), and "*the promised Holy Spirit*" (v. 13). This is all the work of the Triune God to lay a **Firm Foundation** for our faith that will revive us in this life, survive Judgment Day and thrive in the eternal mansions of God's heaven. Three Persons are here active in one Godhead which we cannot understand or explain. We can only fall down in humble worship and marvel at God's grace for us.

Personally, I'm just learning how mortgages work with the daily compounding of interest that could cost \$40-50 / day. Car loans have been a learning experience too, especially when I first discovered that incentives for new cars are bigger than for borrowing on a used car. But that big TV may have to wait for better times. Much of this we learn from our parents, friends and experience. But the work of the Triune God from all eternity can never be discovered unless God Himself makes it known.

And, dear friends in Christ, God wants you to know what it means for you that you were **Chosen by God as saints**. Don't worry about anyone else right now. Let God get up close and personal with some very encouraging concepts to keep your heart pumping pure joy for the rest of your eternal life on earth and in heaven. What can we say except, "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...*"? You don't have to watch the gurus and bhagwans on Public Television to find the meaning of life and gain spiritual insight. "*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*" Keep your eyes on Jesus and you have every blessing you need to make your heart sing. And God's eternal choosing is one of the greatest.

Christians as we age are often troubled by regrets. People look back wishing, "If only I'd have gone right instead of left." "If only I'd have stopped." "If only I had started instead of waiting!" Imagine if the eternal salvation of your soul was left up to your decision. No one would ever get it right because the Lord says through His Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2: "*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins....Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*" (2:1,3 NIV) That's why it's so awesome and comforting that "*[God the Father] chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*" Say that to your heart the next time you feel sorry for your sins. God "*predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.*" Why go back to the orphanage of Satan and sit in the fire of despair?

I would rather spend the rest of my days on earth and forever in heaven praising God's "**glorious grace which he has freely given us in the One he loves.**" My rotten selfish nature made me a slave of sin with no hope until God came into the slave market and paid my ransom price. What else could satisfy God's justice than the innocent blood of His own Son? But no one would have imagined, much less carried it out except God Himself. In Christ, it's as if God took both hands full of whipped cream and "**lavished on us**" His great "**wisdom and understanding.**" "**Wisdom**" in a worldly sense might mean you can crunch numbers to the bottom line. But "**understanding**" would have kept Mr. Madoff out of prison and saved billions in broken dreams for investors and charities. Spiritual "**wisdom**" recognizes how desperately we need Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. Spiritual "**understanding**" guards that treasure from a sinful Ponzi schemes of this world that always end in eternal destruction.

So much in life does not add up. Professors and pundits disagree on the problem, so how will they find a solution? If "human beans" can't even figure out our own economy, how about God's? He uses economic figures to forecast here: "**In His kindness it was His purpose in Christ to manage everything in heaven and on earth in such a way that, when the right time would come, all things would be organized under Christ as their Head.**" (1:9f NETNT) Only in Christ does everything add up in your life as the world keeps spinning beyond our control. Heaven is God's bottom where we see "**that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.**" (Romans 8:28 NIV) But without Christ, your life is a house of cards in a sandbox waiting for a storm.

### † Living for God guaranteed (vv.11-14)

The Christians in Ephesus must have been asking a very natural question okay for us too. "What about me? How do I know I am one of God's chosen ones?" Paul's points to their acceptance of God's Word as proof of being the predestined saints of God. For him and his fellow Jewish believers, Paul says, "**In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.**" God's plans came true for every Israelite who believed in the God of their fathers. But God's plans kept on going until they wrapped us Gentiles in the blanket of God's grace: "**And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.**" The fact that you even care enough to ask the question, "Am I one of God's own?" gives evidence of God's work already in you. For in Paul's letter to his dear Philippians, he says, "**It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.** (2:13 NIV)

Clearly the mortgage on our mansion in heaven was paid with the blood of God's own Son. Your mansion is prepared and waiting by God's grace. But then you have to wonder, "How will I get there?" Here the Holy Spirit has you covered as if God walked up and handed you a ticket on the train that's bound for glory. Your ticket is the company guarantee of getting on, keeping your seat and enjoying safe travel all the way to your destination. In spiritual language Paul says: "**Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.**" When this train rolls into the station of heaven, no one will have to tell you to praise God in that great family reunion.

The doctrine of predestination or election is always in a context of comfort in the Bible. If you feel uneasy about it, set it on the shelf and focus on what Christ has done for you. Be like a sailor on a floundering ship rescued from the stormy seas by a Coast Guard rescue swimmer. His powerful grip hooks you to the line – up and away to the waiting helicopter. Your sense of relief and joy should know no bounds. And if you're at all concerned about your fellow crewmen, members of your family and friends in your neighborhood, get to work telling them what great things God has done for them. This Good News of Christ-crucified and risen is universally and objectively true for all. Only unbelief chooses to stay on the sinking ship by refusing God's rescue in Christ. Hear and believe God's holy Word. God loved us from all eternity "**to the praise of his glorious grace**" in Christ Jesus our Lord! Amen.