

## Identity: Session 1

"Paul, **employed by the delightful resolve of God** and commissioned to represent Jesus Christ to the saints in Ephesus, also to every believer in Christ Jesus, I greet you with the grace and peace that proceed from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. LET'S CELEBRATE GOD! He lavished every blessing heaven has upon us in Christ!" [Eph. 1:1-3](#).

"Employed by the delightful resolve of God" is a wonderful picture of all the saints for in [Ephesians 4:12](#), the job of the different offices is to equip the saints for the WORK OF MINISTRY. This means that you also ARE EMPLOYED BY THE DELIGHTFUL RESOLVE OF GOD. I.e. He chose you to live in this specific time, location, and abilities to do His work. AND HE TAKES DELIGHT IN IT. **In fact, he designed you in specific ways in order to fulfill the work He has designed for you on this earth.** HOWEVER MANY NEVER REALIZE HOW GOD MADE THEM AND WHY LEAVING THEM SHORT-SIGHTED IN THEIR CALLING AS WELL AS MAKING THEM SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE ENEMY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THEIR WEAKNESSES.

Paul addresses the believers as "saints." Historically, scholars believe that this letter was written only to the Ephesians but was a letter sent there first with instructions to pass to all the churches in Asia Minor. Some have a rough time believing they are a saint because MOST CHRISTIANS DON'T BELIEVE THAT THE CROSS PROVIDED A NEW NATURE. INSTEAD THEY ONLY BELIEVE THEY ARE ADOPTED BUT STILL SINNERS. And, unfortunately, many pastors are teaching that as well in spite of overwhelming Biblical scriptures that reveal we are new creations, the old has passed away, Christ lives in us, our old nature is dead, etc. In the Catholic Church, for example, you are only a saint, if the church says you are. BUT THE BIBLE SAYS THAT EVERYONE IS A SAINT.

What is really interesting about the word "saint" is that Paul took it right out of the terminology of pagan Greek religions. In fact, it was the only word he could use that conveyed what he was trying to convey. In pagan religions, it means one "DEVOTED TO THE GODS." For example, a Greek worshiper would bring a gift to a god and devote that gift to that god. Or a magnificent temple was build and devoted to a god. That building was set apart from any secular use and separated only for religious purposes consecrated for the worship of that god.

But in those temples were temple prostitutes and all kinds of debase behavior. And so this word did not point to moral holiness BUT THE IDEA OF BEING DEVOTED AND SEPARATED TO GOD. The Greeks had no word or even concept of the holiness of the Divinity; therefore Paul used a word that was closest to what he was trying to convey and gave it NEW MEANING. **YOU ARE SET APART BY THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING IN YOU AND HIM TAKING YOU OUT OF THE FIRST ADAM AND PUTTING YOU IN THE LAST ADAM. And from now on, you spend your time learning your identity in Christ, what it means to be IN CHRIST, and coming into agreement with it.** The more this is done, the more power you operate in to back up the authority given.

### [Ephesians 1:2](#) (NKJV)

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no word more perfect that Paul could use for conveying the idea of "grace" than the Greek word "charis." To the pagan Greek, it referred first of all to "THAT PROPERTY IN A THING WHICH CAUSES IT TO GIVE JOY TO THE HEARERS OR BEHOLDERS OF IT." For example, a beautiful scene of majestic mountains and a stream winding through with wildlife. Or a person who is beautiful in features. Or a work of art. IT GAVE ONE JOY. Later it came to mean FAVOR FREELY DONE WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN. This in response elicits thanksgiving from the recipient. And it was AN ACT BEYOND THE ORDINARY COURSE OF WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED. It is this idea and word that the inspired writers of the NT take over.

There are verses in which the classical meaning of CHARIS is displayed but what took place at Calvary IS THE MOST PERFECT PICTURE OF CHARIS AND EVEN GOES BEYOND. Where the human race could and should have expected the wrath of God due to sin and external banishment from His presence, a holy God instead stepped down from His judgment seat, became a Man, and took upon Himself the guilt and penalty of human sin satisfying justice not just for His friends but also for His BITTER ENEMIES. Then He goes bountifully and extravagantly beyond this by giving us a new nature, His Holy Ghost, access to all of heaven, access to the promises of God, and a future with Him for eternity.

[1 John 3:1](#) says, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us..." The phrase, "what manner of," literally means "what foreign land of." THERE WAS NO GRID FOR WHAT CHRIST DID. HIS LOVE FOR THE HUMAN RACE WAS AND STILL IS FOREIGN TO US. It is for this reason that grace is given out of the BOUNTY and FREE HEARTEDNESS OF THE GIVER that NO MAN CAN EARN SALVATION OR WORK FOR IT. This grace is unlimited in its resources. **And then take its meaning even a step further in the Holy Ghost. It is the divine enablement of the Holy Spirit in you that transforms you from the inside out so that you begin to display the nature of Christ outwardly. DO YOU SEE WHY GOD POURS OUT HIS GRACE UPON US? IT IS THE REALIZATION OF THE WORK OF CALVARY AND THE LOVE OF GOD TOWARD US! And then top it off with peace, which means we can live IN A STATE OF UNTRoubLED AND UNDISTURBED WELLBEING AS A BELIEVER SO THAT WE CAN LOOK UP INTO THE FATHER'S FACE UNAFRAID AND UNASHAMED.** We experience this peace to the extent we are yielded to the Spirit and are conscious of Him and dependent upon Him.

AND SO YOU SEE THAT YOUR DESTINY AND YOUR ABILITY TO FULFILL IT IS ONLY BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS DID AND WHAT HE EMPOWERS YOU TO DO IN THE HOLY GHOST. Do you see why the next thing out of Paul's mouth was, "Let's celebrate God!"

And then Paul continues as if this was not enough to blow our minds! He says that God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. Spiritual is PNEUMATIKOS and always implies THE WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. And it doesn't necessarily imply only spiritual blessings but also physical and earthly blessings given us by heaven. ALL THESE BLESSINGS PROCEED FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"The Holy Spirit is our tangible link to the inheritance that was ransomed and preserved for us."  
Eph. 1:14a MIRROR BIBLE

The kingdom of heaven is embodied in the Holy Spirit. He is our spiritual link to all that heaven has NOW. In fact, Paul later explains that we are seated in heavenly places. How? By the Holy Ghost.

#### [Romans 14:17](#) (NKJV)

<sup>17</sup> for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

You could say, "The kingdom of God is RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST." This really does sum up the effects of salvation in three words. Right standing with God. Peaceful relationship with God. And joy because we can now dwell in His presence because the Holy Spirit lives in us. And so all THE GOOD THAT COMES TO US IS BY GRACE. The blessings are SPIRIT PRODUCED. **The Greek tells us that they are found in heaven and brought to us by the Holy Spirit. We can ENJOY THE BLESSINGS WE WILL ENJOY IN HEAVEN ON EARTH WHILE IN OUR PHYSICAL BODIES!** Could this be why Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." These blessings are found IN CHRIST. This means that apart from Him and what He has accomplished, the blessings could HAVE NO RELATION TO US. **HIS ACT OF REDEMPTION QUALIFIED US TO RECEIVE EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING.**

"He associated us in Christ before the fall of the world! Jesus is God's mind made up about mankind! He always knew in his love that he would present us again face to face before him in blameless innocence. He is the architect of our design; his heart dream realized our coming of age

in Christ. His grace plan to be celebrated: he greatly endeared us and highly favored us in Christ. His love for His Son is his love for us." [Eph. 1:4-6](#) MIRROR BIBLE

The NKJV says "HE CHOSE US." Note the MIRROR BIBLE says, "BEFORE the fall of the world." This means that **THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FALL ARE CANCELED OUT! I.e. God found us in Christ BEFORE He lost us in Adam!** He chose us before the fall; therefore, He implemented His plan of salvation to cancel all implications of the fall in those who accept His free gift. Chose means "to select or choose for oneself NOT NECESSARILY IMPLYING THE REJECTION OF WHAT IS NOT CHOSEN, BUT GIVING FAVOR TO THE CHOSEN SUBJECT KEEPING IN VIEW A RELATIONSHIP TO BE ESTABLISHED. I.e. God doesn't reject those not chosen for He already displayed His acceptance by dying for them. But the favor and the relationship He desires to enjoy with us can only go to those who have accepted His free gift of salvation. WE HAD TO MEET CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS TO ENJOY HIS FAVOR AND RELATIONSHIP BUT COULDN'T IN OUR OWN ABILITY AS FALLEN CREATURES. SO HE SENT HIS CHOSEN SON TO DO FOR US WHAT WE COULDN'T DO SO THAT WE MET HIS RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENTS BY FAITH IN CHRIST. **Jesus is God's mind made up about mankind!** AND GET THIS: HIS ACT OF CHOOSING YOU IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF YOU MAKING SALVATION POSSIBLE TO OTHERS!

So you see that the grace, the peace, the favor, the blessings are not just for us to enjoy as we wait for His return or our deaths. All of this is given to us so we can live in the design He created for us and one of those designs is to be a living epistle revealing Christ to others. The word "choose" means "APPOINTMENT FOR A CERTAIN OBJECT OR GOAL." **We become His own to be used for a certain purpose.** And this decision was a plan b after the fall of man. THE CHOICE OF US IS AS ETERNAL AS GOD HIMSELF.

Now let this blow your mind! The NKJV says that we should be presented holy and without blame before God. MIRROR states that "he would present us again face to face before him in blameless innocence." This DOES NOT refer to the CHRISTIAN'S STANDING AS A JUSTIFIED PERSON **BUT TO HIS CHARACTER IN GOD!** I.e. as He was in the earth so are we. This is important. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST IS IN US! WE DON'T NEED RULES TO TELL US HOW TO BEHAVE BECAUSE CHRIST'S CHARACTER IS IN US!!! As we realize and recognize this reality, we grow in the Christian EXPERIENCE. I.e. we begin to see Christ's character displayed outwardly!

And let me finish off the destruction of any religious mindsets that cause you to look at yourself as a sinner. The phrase BEFORE HIM speaks of "A PENETRATING GAZE THAT SEES RIGHT DOWN INTO A THING. IT REFERS HERE TO THE PENETRATING GAZE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS HE SEES RIGHT DOWN INTO OUR INNERMOST BEING, THROUGH ALL OF THE SUPERFICIALITIES, HYPOCRISIES, AND SHAMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. **THIS REFERS TO A PRESENT, SEARCHING GAZE OF GOD INTO THE INNER CHARACTER OF THE SAINT, NOT TO A FUTURE JUDGMENT...AND IT IS NOT A SEARCHING GAZE CONDUCTED IN A CRITICAL ATTITUDE WHICH LOOKS FOR FAULTS BUT A SATISFIED, DELIGHTED CONTEMPLATION OF THE REFLECTION OF HOLINESS AND SPOTLESSNESS OF THE LORD JESUS IN THE CHARACTER OF THE SAINT.**" **WOW! WOW! WOW!** This is a present event not a future one. I.e. the Holy Spirit gazes in your inner man and is satisfied and delighted as He contemplates CHRIST IN YOU, THE EXPECTATION OF GLORY.

**Oh God! Give us a revelation of the treasure we carry in earthen vessels!**

It implies a special nearness and dearness to Him--and bears a foretaste of the time when the elect shall be before the throne of God. GOD PREDESTINED THIS REALITY IN HIS LOVE BEFORE MANKIND FELL, BEFORE MANKIND WAS CREATED. This thought is eternal in its age. In fact, He predestined us in Him before time even existed. MIRROR says we are "HIS HEART DREAM REALIZED." God determined and decreed before we existed WHAT WE ARE PREDESTINED TO. He "MARKED OUT THE BOUNDARY AND LIMITS OF OUR DESIGN IN HIM AND ALL THAT INCLUDES." **HIS IDEAS AND PURPOSES FOR US PRECEDED HISTORY.**

Part of this foreordination of God literally means "WITH A VIEW TO ADOPTING THESE SELECTED OUT ONES AS CHILDREN." Adoption is not the same as our idea of adoption in the Western world. The original Greek uses "huiothesia, which means, "to place an adult son." Paul uses this term in [Romans 8:15](#) speaking of the "Spirit of adoption." It is the Roman practice of legally adopting a child bequeathing to him the material possessions of the parent but also giving him civil status. God does this with us. Redeems us making us His child (a born one) and has given us all things as well as civil status in His kingdom. He legally places us in the position as an adult son. We become joint-heirs with Christ having been raised to civil status as adult sons. We are legally heirs.

A child of wealthy parents is placed under guardians until he is mature enough to properly manage the estate. Paul explained in [Galatians 4:1-7](#) this principle.

“An infant heir has no more say than a slave, even though he owns everything. He would remain under domestic supervision and house rules until the day fixed by his father for his official graduation to the status of sonship. This is exactly how it was with us; we were kidnapped as it were into infancy and confined to that through the law. But then the day dawned; the most complete culmination of time! (Everything predicted was concluded in Christ!) The son arrived, commissioned by the Father; his legal passport to the planet was his mother's womb. In a human body exactly like ours he lived his life subject to the same scrutiny of the law. His mandate was to rescue the human race from the regime of the law of performance and announce the revelation of their true sonship in God. To seal our sonship God has commissioned the Spirit of sonship to resonate the Abba echo in our hearts; and now, in our innermost being we recognize him as our true and very dear father. Can you see how foolish it would be for a son to continue to live his life with a slave mentality? Your sonship qualifies you to immediately participate in all the wealth of God's inheritance which is yours because of Christ." MIRROR BIBLE

The last verse is crucial. If a child refuses to grow up, the inheritance left will be misused due to the heir's immaturity or even given to another. YOU CAN LIVE YOUR ENTIRE LIFE WITH A SLAVE MENTALITY NEVER ACCESSING YOUR INHERITANCE AND GET TO HEAVEN AND REALIZE ALL YOUR MISSED OUT ON AS AN HEIR. **Nothing we have done qualifies us to be adult-sons and heirs. IT WAS ALL JESUS CHRIST WHO QUALIFIED US. And He gave us His Spirit to seal our sonship and recognize Him as our true Father.** But even Spirit-filled believers live well below the wealth of our inheritance. The best example of this is the first generation Israelites who came out of Egypt. They continued in their slave mentality in spite of all the efforts of God to reveal His true identity and power to them. They could have possessed all the land God gave them but instead believed the bad reports from those with a slave mentality and died never enjoying the wealth of their inheritance. WE ARE IN THE SAME PLACE NOW. WE HAVE THE PROMISE LAND IN FRONT OF US AND A CHOICE. We can enjoy the full benefits of being sons on this earth! The full manifestation of our identity will not be seen until the resurrection. But all of the other benefits are ours!

The Wuest Word Studies says, "He previously marked us out with a view to placing us as adult sons for Himself, for His own satisfaction, that HE MIGHT LAVISH HIS LOVE ON US AS HIS SONS, THAT HE MIGHT GIVE US THE HIGH PRIVILEGE OF SONSHIP TO AND FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM THAT HE MIGHT BE GLORIFIED..." **To live below your sonship is to NOT BRING Him glory.** All of this amazing glory and inheritance, this incredible plan, originated entirely out of His own pure goodness from His own thoughts and counsel IN SPIRIT OF US! God knows we are sons; we are to know we are sons, and one day ALL OF CREATION WILL KNOW WE ARE SONS. **And being adult sons involves the conformity of the child that has the life of God in him to the IMAGE, PURPOSES, AND INTERESTS OF GOD and that spiritual family into which he is born.** I.e. HOW WE SEE OURSELVES (IMAGE), OUR EXISTENCE ON EARTH (PURPOSES) AND WHAT WE ARE DOING ON EARTH (INTEREST) MUST SHIFT FROM THE OLD FALLEN WAYS TO THE BORN AGAIN SONS OF GOD WAYS. The measure of this conformity will be seen at our adoption or resurrection when rewards will be brought and ranks and assignments given.

And so we are "ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED." Accepted is a "grace word" and speaks of high honor and favor that is divine. Wuest says, "God the Father freely bestowed on us the grace which saved us, and

did so in the sphere of the Lord Jesus, His Person, and His work on the cross. His grace could not operate in our salvation apart from the atoning death of our Lord, for God is not only a love God, but a righteous and just God..."

In summary: God so loved the world and desired to adopt us as His adult sons and lavish His love and goodness on us that He created a way to do so--He sent His own Son in the flesh to meet the righteous requirements of the law **THUS FREEING HIM TO LOVE US TO HIS HEART'S CONTENT**. That is why Paul says that **NOTHING** can separate us from the love of God because Jesus Christ is the sum total of His act of love toward us. **THE ONLY THING IS NOT KNOWING OUR IDENTITY NOW AS SONS AND LIVING IN THE PAST AS SLAVES. Hence the reason for this school.**