



International Conference - Sept. 2022

General Theme: **Our Mission - The Building Up of the Body of Christ**

Message 03: **The Blessing of The Father: Choice and Predestination**

Ephesians 1:3-6

Word given by brother **Pedro Dong** at the Conference of Churches of Ecuador, held in the city of Santo Domingo and transmitted by Life For All Institute on **08/14/2022**. Text not proofread by the author and may contain errors.



After enjoying the book of Matthew, we are within the scope of the book of Ephesians. In message 2, we deal with the preface, salutation, and background of Ephesians. **The church in Ephesus became an advanced center of evangelism and missions.** The apostle Paul stayed for three years in that city, because it was very important in the commercial aspect, because many people passed through it and there Paul formed many missionaries to conquer all of Asia Minor.

Eph 1:3

"Blessed" in Greek means: to say well, to speak well, to bless or praise. **The eternal purpose of God has man as its chief beneficiary**, and that purpose was made according to his good pleasure, which means: pleasure, satisfaction, desire of His will; it is what pleases His will, His heart's desire. And it was God who chose us and predestined us. It was He who sent His own Son to bring about our redemption through His blood; he sent the Holy Spirit of promise and saw to it that we would hear the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance. This is all in Ephesians 1.

Isa 57:15; Gen 2:7; Prov 20:27; Job 32:8; 33:4; 34:14; Eccl 3:11

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. Why? Because **God is in the spiritual, heavenly dimension**. He inhabits eternity, as reported in Isaiah 57. He is not subject to time and space, like man. And when He created man from the dust of the ground, the Lord God breathed into that man's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. **The origin of man's creation is God.** That word for "breath" in Hebrew is *neshamah*. So man has the spirit that came from the breath of God, came from the *neshamah*, came from the Eternal God. That's how God made each of us have a different personality, he didn't create us as equal robots. And God will make these different men a Body of Christ, under a harmony and unity. That's beautiful!

In Prov 20:27 the word "spirit" is the same word as *neshamah*, meaning breath of life. God breathed *neshamah* into man and that breath of life became man's spirit. You are of heavenly origin, you come from above, from eternity. The only thing that belongs to the earth is your body which was made from the dust of the earth. So, **our essence is heavenly, it comes from eternity.** God wants to bring all spiritual blessings into man that was created from the dust of the ground.

The word "spirit" in Job 32:8 is distinct: *ruwach*, which is the general word for spirit. The word "breath" here in Job 32 is *neshamah*. God created a spirit in man and the breath of God made him wise. Already, in Job 33:4, the word "Spirit" is *ruwach*; and "breath" is *neshamah*.

And, as we see in Job 34:14, if God were to withdraw His spirit (*ruwach*) and His breath (*neshamah*), all flesh would expire together, and man would return to dust. Man is only alive because he has spirit, **the breath of God is what makes man have life, understanding and wisdom**. If God withdrew His breath, all at once all would die. Man has no idea what God has planned and all the works He has done, but God has placed eternity in man's heart (Eccl 3:11). Even though our bodies are subject to time and space, **we were created with an eternity in our hearts**, created with a celestial element, with the breath of Eternal God. That's why in Eph 1:3 we read that the blessing that God wants to give to man is spiritual, in the heavenly regions. It's not a car, house or many material possessions. **The real value for us is the spiritual blessing of heaven.**

Dan 12:2; Eccl 12:7; Jn 3:3, 5

When a man physically dies, his body returns to dust and his spirit and soul sleep in the place God prepared called Hades. But one day when Jesus returns and when God comes to judge all things, all will be resurrected, some to eternal life, and others to shame and eternal horror. **Let's preach the gospel and bring people out of this fate of eternal shame and horror**, give opportunity for everyone to be resurrected to eternal life. One day the spirit returns to God, which confirms that you are not from this earth, but from God, from heaven, from eternity. That's why God wants to bless us with all sorts of spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

If you are not born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God because the kingdom is heavenly. Here, in Greek, "to be born again" is to be born from above. We were born of the flesh and we live in the flesh, but one day, when we believed in Jesus, we were born of the Spirit, and that new birth gave us a regenerated spirit. **When we believe in Jesus we are born from above.**

With the new birth, we gain an ability to receive things from the heavenly realm. Anyone who has not been born again has no way of receiving spiritual blessings. So this blessing is not from the material sphere. **What blessing did God make me win?** It is not the blessing of winning the lottery, it is the blessing of another realm – celestial. This blessing includes all that God is in His nature, authority, power, life, and glory with a view to building up the Body of Christ, for God's purpose to bring all things under Christ to establish His kingdom on earth. **Now I can enter into Message 3.**

MESSAGE 03

Eph 1:4-6

What is the Father's first blessing? The choice, along with predestination, are the blessings we receive from the Father. God, among many, chose us before the foundation of the world. That choice was made even in eternity past, before there was the world. This is wonderful. Man is the only item of creation that was created to accomplish God's eternal purpose and his choice was made in Christ, according to his divine foreknowledge. God, who inhabits eternity, has access to the dimension of time, since before time existed. He has the ability to know each of us in advance. **Whoever is in eternity can access the dimension of time whenever they want, even before time exists.** At that moment, God can access our future that will be a year from now.

God chose us before the foundation of the world **to be holy**. **And how to be holy?** As we explained in the previous message, when we believed in Jesus, we were transferred from position: **from the world, to being in Christ**. God wants to dispense His holy nature and His life, but if man, as a vessel, is in the position of the world, as God is not in the world, but in Christ, there is no way for Him to dispense His life and nature into that vessel (we). So being holy first implies a change of position, so that from that change God can sanctify us from within.

Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; 2 pet 1:4; Eph 5:25-27

This change of position is for God to continually supply us with His holy life and nature. Thus, we are being **metabolically transformed**. Let's assume that, as of today, decide to eat a healthier physical diet. What starts happening in your body? The old elements are being eliminated by metabolism and these cells are being replaced by new cells resulting from healthy eating. If you stick to this diet, after a while all the cells in your body will be replaced. This is called **transformation**.

God sanctified us by changing our position. Now, in the church, God is sanctifying us, changing our disposition: **the elements of fallen man, of the flesh, of the old man are being removed - replaced by God's holy life and nature**. We are being changed from glory to glory in the image of the Lord.

On the one hand, we partake of God's holy nature, on the other hand, the corruption of passions that is in the world is being eliminated from within us (2 Pet. 1:4). Christ gave himself to the church, died for her and rose again for her. But for what purpose? To sanctify her (v. 26). **Christ wants to sanctify you through the water washing of the Word**. The prophetic word that we have received, what effect does it have? It eliminates the natural elements that make us fight with each other. That's why the Word is the solution for the unity and building up of the church. **A mere change in behavior is palliative. Only the Word of God solves.**

In these last five years, the prophetic word has brought us closer together, making us run to have less natural man and more spiritual man living in us. For what purpose? To present Himself a glorious church (v. 27). **God desires to present an edified church**. Christ wants a glorious church as his bride and we are working towards that today. A church without spot, wrinkle or blemish - without blemish, perfect. So, sanctification is not just a change in behavior from a life of sin to a life without sin, which is the concept of Christianity; **sanctification is a change of nature, of essence**.

Eph 1:4-5

"Flawless" means without blemish and is the same word as in Eph 5:27. And, "before him," means that this standard of holiness and perfection is in God's standard. Christians today, especially those of the holiness line, have a lot of human moral standards, but the standard here is God's. **To be holy and blameless before God, in God's standard**. And "in love" means that it is **in God's sphere of love**, for that love is agape. The chosen ones are sanctified and reach the condition of being flawless and perfect. It is within the sphere of God's love. God's love is the source of our love for Him and for men.

The second blessing of the Father is predestination, which means: God has foreordained, decided beforehand, through His sovereign will. He has this power, this right because He is sovereign; **He chose you and chose no other**. Election and predestination have always been very confusing items among Christians. In theology, we have **two schools of interpretation**:

- 1) **Calvinist**: comes from Calvin – who holds that, in the Bible, it is written that God has this power and right to determine as He wills, both in election and in predestination.

- 2) **Arminian**: defends that it also depends on man's attitude, that is, on what man is going to do in relation to the things of God.

There is a dispute between the two schools. The Calvinist school is not wrong, because in the Bible we see that God has a right to end as He wants. But this causes a problem in practice, for if everything has already been predetermined by God and nothing depends on man, we may have the misunderstanding that there is no need to preach the gospel. If someone is already predestined and elected, does it not depend on man and, on the other hand, if everything depends on man, does it have nothing to do with God's sovereignty and his determination? How is this explained?

Rom 9:11-16, 18-21, 23-24, 30-33; 10:1-15

God's election is not by works of man, but by him who calls. If you take this portion of Romans literally, you may come to the erroneous conclusion that there is no need to seek much of the Lord, because if the Lord has mercy on you, He will have mercy until the end of your life. If the Lord didn't choose me to have mercy, it's no use for me to run or want to.

From v. 30 begins a new element: faith. God's election and predestination are not by works, that is, not by his natural effort, but it does not say here that it is not by faith. In v. 32, we have two elements: faith and works. **Where is the secret, the key? Believe!** (v. 33). As for the difference between being elected or not elected, being predestined or not, we see that the word is close to you, in your mouth, in your heart (10:8). So what's missing? It is only to believe (v. 9) and this God cannot do for us, even though He has the force of predestination. How will God do justice regarding you as righteous? **Only one attitude is missing from you: the exercise of faith** (v. 10). **Whoever believes, God chooses and predestines him.** And, believing is not works, because Romans makes it clear that it is not by works. In v. 15 enters GTC, enters the practice of "May I pray for you?", the Colportage, the Godspeed Young People!; the Producing Overcomers.

1 Pet 1:2

Do you know what all this means? The election of God is sovereign, He has mercy on whom He wills to have. He has that right, but Peter makes it clear to us that **God's election is according to his foreknowledge.** In other words, before we existed, He already knew us, He has seen this moment now. But the problem is that **foreknowledge is not according to our works, that is, it is not what we do for good or evil; but according to our faith.** Therefore, it is very important that we go out and practice "May I pray for you?", otherwise, we would be denying people the right to hear the word of faith, because their election and predestination is according to the word of faith presented and they need to believe.

Heb 11:1

So foreknowledge is not according to one's works, but by faith. That is why it is so important today to live by faith. Why? **Faith is the only way for us to have access to heavenly things,** because faith makes it real (substantiates) what is in eternity, what is spiritual. Faith is a window that leads us to spiritual blessing in heavenly places. Faith is not the result of our work. We simply believe. When we believe, we have access to heavenly things. And the foreknowledge of God sees that we, by faith, have access to the things of the heavenly realm. It has nothing to do with our ability. So, everything that is in the heavenly area, for God counts, it's worth it.

Faith is the key to everything and it has to be continuous, because it says that we are predestined for sonship, which comes from the Greek *huiōthesis*. The word *huiōs* means mature son, and *huiōthesis* means the birthright – right of the mature son to have the Father's inheritance. So it's not just believing the first time we were saved, but the righteous will live by faith. We must live every day accessing

heavenly things by faith. **The prophetic word works and it requires you to believe.** If you don't believe, you don't have the reality of heavenly things, but when you believe, you obey.

Samuel was taking long and Saul ended up sacrificing for an urgent problem (1 Sam 15). Samuel said, "Does God delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying his word?" (v. 22). Our faith and obedience to the Word pleases God because it makes every spiritual blessing real in heavenly places when we believe. **Let us live a life by faith!**

Rom 1:5; 16:26

Faith leads to obedience. The prophetic word is a commandment of God. The word of God is not for discussing doctrines, but it is always a command to carry out His will. It's not just hearing and pleasing to our ears, because **God does his work through the prophetic word.** So, **what is our attitude toward the Word?** For obedience by faith among all nations. When we believe, obey and practice the commandment of God through the prophetic word. And then His will is done.

Heb 11:6

Why has everything changed in the churches of Colombia? Because they exercised faith in obedience, they laid aside all the complications of man, and simply believed and obeyed. This pleased God and made things happen and the Lord will do the same here in Ecuador. **Let's believe, obey and practice with simplicity what God has commanded.** God will raise up an army to do GTC and many will become good colporteurs and renewed leaders. Amen!